Papers from the 26th Communication Skills Workshop

Identity Explored: Language Centre, Language Professional, Language Teacher, Language Learner

University of Helsinki, 13-15 September, 2013
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Foreword

The Communication Skills Workshop celebrated its 30-year anniversary in 2013 – 30 years as a forum for language teachers in Finnish and Estonian universities to share and shape practices. From its beginnings in 1983 as the Oral Skills Workshop for English oral skills teachers in Finnish university language centres, it has widened its reach to include teachers from Estonia, teachers of other languages, and other language professionals such as revisors, researchers, and administrators. The 30 years have also seen major change in the concerns of participants, as we react to developments in research and, of course, the needs of language learners and users and the contexts in which they operate.

The following volume is a collection of papers presented at the 26th Communication Skills Workshop – Identity Explored: Language Teacher, Language Professional, Language Centre, Language Learner – held at Helsinki University Language Centre in September, 2013. The workshop’s theme was identity and dealt with the broad but vital questions of who we are and what we do. Our plenarist, Professor Ken Hyland, set the tone with his talk, Identity: individuality and community in professional academic writing, and this was followed by presentations and posters on themes such as academic writing, culture and identity in language learning, English-medium instruction, course design, and teacher and learner skills and competences.

The event also brought together a diverse group of delegates; in addition to the ‘home’ countries – Finland and Estonia – CSW 26 was unique for the range of countries represented, with delegates from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the U.K., and the U.S.

We are delighted to be able to publish here seven articles which were originally presented as papers at the workshop. In addition to the themes mentioned above, the articles also engage with corpus linguistics, English as a Lingua Franca, professional language use, technology in teaching, and language testing, which clearly shows the complexity involved in exploring our identity. We are also pleased to have articles not just from ‘home’ universities – Aalto University, the University of Helsinki, and the University of Oulu – but also from the University of
Miskolc (Hungary), Clackamas Community College (Oregon, U.S.), and the Greenwich School of Management (U.K.).

This volume is the fifth publication by the University of Helsinki Language Centre in their Language Centre Publications series. It also marks further collaboration between the Language Centre and the CSW, following their generous hosting of CSW 26. As well as collections of peer-reviewed articles, the series also includes dissertations by staff members. Like the Communication Skills Workshop, the publication series was born out of a need to share teaching and research practices, both within its community and with the world outside. This makes Language Centre Publications and the Communication Skills Workshop ideal partners.

Finally, thanks to the contributors and reviewers for making this volume possible.

*Fergal Bradley*

*Pia Lappalainen*

*Eva Braidwood*

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*The Communication Skills Workshop Organising Committee*
1. A Multi-Perspective Approach to Writing Research Articles: Teacher and Learner Contributions to Customised Writing Courses in the Disciplines

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ABSTRACT

While the numerous writing guides available provide an invaluable tool for second-language writers in research, the generic models presented can mislead novice writers about the features constituting a successful publication in a particular discipline. For this reason, we have taken a collaborative approach to the teaching of scientific writing in the disciplines, where learners and writing teachers explore together and from different perspectives the features of research articles in their disciplines. We use a six-competence communicative model (Braidwood and McAnsh 2013) both to identify the features worthy of examination and to illumine the linguistic, pedagogic and disciplinary perspectives needed to inform the writing process. In doing this, we recognise the role of the learners as informants of their own disciplinary practices, as well as acknowledge the complexity of the work of teachers as mediators of research into Writing in the Disciplines (WID), producers of new knowledge through analyses of research articles in the learners’ disciplines and pedagogical specialists, who help the learners to gain insights into writing conventions in their own fields. To illustrate our methods and findings, we discuss our approach to a series of courses in scientific writing taught in 2012-13 for researchers working in the disciplines of electrical and electronic engineering, transportation science and engineering, and architecture and urban planning and design.

1 INTRODUCTION

Second-language writers have access to a great deal of resources designed to develop their skills in writing scientific articles and provide support for their writing teachers. Assistance is available on a wide gamut of aspects of writing, from textbooks on writing for researchers (for example, Weissberg & Buker 1990, Swales 1990, Swales and Feak 2000, 2004, Reid 2010) to volumes on teaching academic writing (for

Nevertheless, despite the invaluable assistance provided by the wealth of works on writing for learners and teachers alike, there is a danger that the advice offered in the literature can misinform second-language writers whose job is to disseminate their research by publishing articles and cause their teachers to mislead them. The economics of book publishing drives publishers to strive for a wide readership, with the result that writing textbooks often present generic instruction on writing and fail to account for discipline-specific characteristics of writing. Even books and research articles which narrow their scope to a particular field may, for instance, contain information which has become outdated, neglect to account for the distinctive preferences of different journals, ignore considerations of the research approach, or disregard issues of writing articles in multidisciplinary research groups. Although a great deal of wisdom has been published in textbooks and journals on academic and second-language writing, the picture is far from complete.

For this reason, in our own work, we take a collaborative approach to learning about writing research articles in the disciplines, where writing teachers and second-language writers of research articles apply their collective expertise to the challenges of writing research articles in the disciplines. In working together to this end, writers and writing teachers reflect on the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to produce a scientific article for publication, and identify which of these knowledge/skill areas should be considered essential to their own professional competence repertoires. Through sharpening this awareness, teachers can better support their learners, and novice scientists are able to manage and control their own learning process.
In this paper, we discuss the competences needed for writing in the disciplines, and explore how teachers and learners can provide different types of input, leading to dialogue which can deepen understanding of what is involved in writing in the learners’ disciplines. We present the practical application of our communicative competence model in the EAP setting within various writing courses provided for engineers and architects. Finally, we outline what learners and teachers can gain by using the model and point out the future of this approach in our own context.

2 DEVELOPING COMPETENCE: ROLES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

Traditionally, EFL/EAP students rely mostly on the teacher/instructor for monitoring and regulating their progress as writers. In discipline-specific courses, on the other hand, the focus shifts from the artifact of the writing itself to writing as a vehicle used to demonstrate subject-knowledge, as well as to gauge and monitor learning. Students in the university setting today are expected to produce, by the time of graduation, new knowledge and demonstrate by means of their writing both cognitive and metacognitive development. When producing texts for this purpose, they utilise multi-disciplinary competences involving communicative skills in general, and writing in particular. Thus writing courses in the best cases, especially at the tertiary level, should both expose students to field-specific texts and invite them to problematise and explore various perspectives of text-production. In this way, while teachers, as mediators of WID research, can engage novice writers in the conceptualisation of writing itself, they can support the learners in gaining a deeper understanding of the particular disciplinary field in which they work.

EAP courses at tertiary level typically concern themselves with the multifaceted nature of writing, such as a writer’s need to express themselves, readers’ approach to a scientific text as well as the demands of the medium, which in our case is L2 English. Through these approaches, courses at tertiary level promote “an understanding of the cognitive, social and linguistic demands of academic disciplines” (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons 2002, 2). To this end, writing instructors employ various
pedagogical and research tools in designing activities, which by nature invite learners to adopt various roles in order to craft and evaluate their writing during the course and beyond. Through the switching of perspectives that different approaches and roles can foster, learners develop their ability to process texts on a metacognitive level, familiarise themselves with discourse analytical tools, and enhance their overall communicative competence.

Below, we provide some examples of an approach where both teachers and students assume various roles. We consider the teacher's primary role as mediator; implementing pedagogical means to make linguistic research accessible to the learners and foster awareness of what is known about the skills needed by writers. Furthermore, we explore the role of the teacher as action-researcher, who can complement existing knowledge with an analysis of writing from specific disciplines in order to provide a deeper understanding of the communicative practices of the members of those disciplinary communities. Finally, we discuss the learners' role as members of their disciplinary communities, who can provide inside information about the attitudes and customs of their communities.

2.1 Teacher as mediator of established knowledge

To support novice writers at tertiary level, teachers need to create writing courses which are “guided by learner needs” (Benesch 1996, 723) and thus facilitate rehearsing the genres typical of students' target situations. Such an approach goes beyond the aim of enhancing language skills separately and should necessarily focus on a comprehensive set of communicative competences. EFL/ESP/EAP teachers are commonly trained in language teaching methodology and in the best cases have studied linguistics and applied linguistics, but rarely have a thorough understanding of the target fields of students, for instance, of technical, medical, or life sciences. To highlight the discipline-specificity of tertiary level language teaching, BALEAP, the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, an organisation promoting the professional development of those involved in learning, teaching, scholarship and research in English for Academic Purposes, has proposed a set of guidelines of competencies for teachers in EAP. According to the BALEAP Competency Framework for Teachers of
English for Academic Purposes, teachers should “be able to recognize and explore disciplinary differences and how they influence the way knowledge is expanded and communicated” (BALEAP 2008, 3).

In planning and realising courses in our own context, at the Extension School of the University of Oulu, Finland, our brief may include the provision of writing instruction for undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers or staff in a variety of the nine faculties of the University. Owing to our experience of writing courses at our own institute, we are well aware of the existence of disciplinary differences in communicating knowledge and the multiple perspectives on communication that must be considered in the support of novice writers in the disciplines. The literature is prolific, and the work of teachers includes the role of mediator of useful findings from various fields of linguistic research, including genre studies (see above), research into communicative competence (see above), studies in stance (for example, Hyland 1999, 2004, 2010; Charles 2003, 2006) and the teaching of writing (see above).

As teachers, we recognise our further role as catalysts in raising learners’ awareness of what skills and knowledge are necessary for good writers, as well as stimulators of critical thinking. To encourage learners to increase their awareness of what communicative competences are needed by writers, we have developed a model describing the facets of communicative competence needed in writing (Braidwood & McAnsh 2013).

The traditions on which our understanding of communicative competences is based go back a long way. Advocating “more useful and effective second language teaching, and allow[ing] more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills,” Canale and Swain, in 1980, identified three different sub-competencies that are required for communicating successfully: grammatical competence (linguistic competence revised), sociocultural competence and strategic competence (derived from Hymes’s communicative competence in recognition of the strategies used by learners to enhance communication). Later, Canale (1983) extended this model with the addition of discourse competence, which he defined as the ability of the writer to create chunks of language in a meaningful way according to (con)textual requirements. Since the 1980s, the line of enquiry into
learners’ ability to use language effectively has produced several competence models. The most recent model intended for language teachers was proposed by Celce-Murcia (2007, 46-50). This model included six aspects of communicative competence: discourse competence, sociocultural competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, interactional competence and strategic competence. While the model comprises a complex view of language use, the definitions of the various competence areas are anchored in spoken communication and intend to aid language teaching.

To augment Celce-Murcia’s model and to account for the written media, we have produced a learner-friendly representation of the communicative competences required for successful meaning-making in various texts (Braidwood & McAnsh 2013). The flower of communicative competence, as we call it, captures the complexity of written communication by visualising the various aspects of successful text production relying on the bare minimum of technical terms, which may pose further difficulties for second language writers.

The illustration of the flower model of communicative competence is presented in Figure 1. We have retained Celce-Murcia’s six competence areas (see above), but revised their definitions and specified subcategories within each component making them relevant to written rather than oral discourse. These definitions and specifications of each component are described in detail in Braidwood & McAnsh (2013). In addition, we attempt to express the dynamic nature of communication and the interplay between the components by the shift in the writer’s attention as they consider the effects of language choices from the perspective of each component of communicative competence. This is depicted in the figure by the movement of the ball along the dotted lines, backwards and forwards between the competence areas.
In our role as pedagogical specialists, the model has many uses. It guides us during the course-planning stage in ensuring comprehensive course content. We use it in mini-lectures, when demonstrating how a text operates on different levels. Here, the model provides us with the means to stimulate the awareness of novice writers of the complex nature of language, and alerts them to what should be kept in mind during the act of writing. In addition, the model helps us justify course assignments inside and outside the classroom by allowing us to explain more clearly why we set the novice writers particular tasks. Furthermore, while giving personal feedback to writers, the model provides us with a tool for identifying and addressing problems, revealing to us also what is missing from a novice writer’s text and allowing us to question what is appropriate for a particular discourse and in a particular discourse community.

However, it is difficult to comment as teachers on the conventional features of genres produced by a particular disciplinary community without some measure of knowledge of these conventions. While we have much to learn from the published literature on necessary competencies for writers in the disciplines and writing practices in certain disciplines, we often find that we need to augment our knowledge with our own linguistic explorations of the discourses relevant to our students and the courses we offer them.
So far we have focused on the ways in which teachers of writing in the tertiary level act as arbitrators of knowledge that is already available: mediating knowledge gained from WID research, raising awareness of the complexity of competences necessary for writers in the disciplines, and introducing these ideas in ways that will engage the learners and stimulate their critical appraisal of text creation. Next, we describe and demonstrate our work as linguist-teachers who supplement existing knowledge by producing new genre knowledge within the disciplinary contexts of the learners, in preparation for providing research-based instruction.

2.2 Teacher as researcher: genre analysis of abstracts

For disciplines and aspects of writing that have not been explored in detail in the research literature, we believe that we can support better our learners if we carry out our own studies in preparation for teaching. This ultimately means that we are complementing the existing research on genre knowledge by mapping out new, so far unexplored segments of disciplinary writing. In this section we describe our methods and present some findings of the analysis we carried out in preparation for a series of short courses in Scientific Writing run for researchers in engineering, as well as for undergraduate and graduate students in the discipline of architecture and urban planning.

In investigating the discourses produced in the disciplinary communities of our students, we have taken a genre-analysis approach, following methods described in Biber et al. (2007). Our research has focused so far on research-article abstracts and introduction sections, and we have employed a variety of models (Swales 1990; Bazerman 2000; Swales & Feak 1994, 2000, 2009) fine-tuned by our own observations. We invariably carry out such action-research to help us identify the common and less common features of disciplinary writing, leading to the construction of tentative discipline-specific variants to the models proposed in the literature. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that our aim is not principally model-building. Rather, we apply the models for pedagogical purposes, and use the new knowledge of disciplinary variations produced by our study to sensitize our own students to likely areas where sections of research articles may differ across disciplines, in different publications, and over time. This information will help novice
writers writing in multidisciplinary fields and will help writers keep abreast of changes in writing practices in their disciplines as discourse-community cultures evolve.

Our analysis of research-article abstracts comprised a corpus of 30 abstracts from the disciplines of electrical and electronic engineering, transportation science and engineering, and architecture and urban planning. Ten articles were selected from each discipline. The engineering articles were selected from the ISI Web of Knowledge Journal Citation reports on a semi-random basis. Articles were chosen only from the top impact journals in each discipline as ranked by impact factor; and only one article was selected from each journal. Since the ISI Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Reports does not include journals of architecture, the articles from this field were selected from journals found to be useful to the researchers in the School of Architecture at our University. This selection process was guided by subject teachers in the discipline. All articles selected in all fields were from 2011 or later.

Here, we illustrate some of our findings of the genre analysis of abstracts (a full report of the research will be produced in a separate article at a later stage), with a view to illustrating how we introduce them in the classroom to our course participants. Already in the first session of our courses, we expose the participants to our “flower of communicative competence” and refer to the schematic representation (Fig. 1) throughout the course in order to enhance analysis of research articles, comparison of discourse features and assimilation of communicative competences. Thus, since the flower model is familiar to the learners, we can represent the findings of our action-type genre research according to the model (Fig. 2). The aspects of communication under discussion are indicated by reference to the relevant petal in the flower model (see highlighted petal in the corner of slides presenting findings, as illustrated in the figure).
Our findings suggested that abstracts from the discipline of architecture and urban planning exhibit a tendency to open with a mention of a phenomenon and may include generalisations about the topic of the article:

(1) *US public housing policy changed significantly in the 1990s in order to transform primarily high-rise developments into low-density mixed-income communities.* (Smith 2013) [architecture and urban planning]

Abstracts from the engineering disciplines, on the other hand, typically focus on action in the opening move, stressing what the researchers themselves do:

(2) *We address the problem of motion deblurring using coded exposure.* (McCloskey et al. 2012) [electrical and electronic engineering]

In terms of our model of communicative competence in written discourse, we can point out these tentative findings as an example of the sociocultural aspect of communication, where different disciplinary communities develop conventional practices over time as they work together, read each other’s work, and absorb influences from more senior members of their community.
While all abstracts in our study introduced present research, we observed that architects appear to prefer to outline the development of their thinking:

(3) ... *We argue that ... we propose ... we therefore introduce ... We discuss ... and draw preliminary conclusions ...* (Boonstra and Boelens 2011)

(4) *Since the 1970s, spatial planning and urban/regional development policies have increasingly paid attention to challenges of city regions......Accordingly, the article argues for defining and analysing city regions more as places of social and political conflict.* (Hamedinger 2011)

In contrast, engineers state the main action of their research or purpose of the research article itself:

(5) *This paper presents the results of a before-and-after probe-vehicle-based operational comparison of optimized time-of-day (i.e., before control) and SCATS (i.e., after control) traffic control system performance.* (Hunter 2012)

(6) *In this paper, we present the first fully automated solution for the estimation of tissue motion.* (Gilliam 2012)

We explain this by suggesting that, for architects, the research article itself is the vehicle for creating knowledge through argumentation, while engineers produce their findings outside the text, often through modelling, innovation based on experimentation and testing. This intention of writers in architecture is manifest in the use of inter-sentence connectors, thus reinforcing our understanding that the construction of arguments is a device used by architects to produce new knowledge. In contrast, such linking words were practically non-existent in engineering. In drawing the attention of our students to these findings, we can make use of our flower model of communicative competence to illustrate the architects’ need for a high level of discourse competence in constructing their arguments, as well as differences in community practices on the sociocultural level.
Our observations also indicated sociocultural disciplinary variations in the mention of methods and procedures in the abstracts we studied. Both architects and transport engineers mentioned methods used:

(7) *Through analysis of ‘live’ student design-build projects, the paper explores three distinct conceptualisations of sustainable design practice...* (Farmer 2013) [architecture and urban planning]

(8) *...we analyze roughly 1 year of usage data for each of 133 instrumented vehicles in Minneapolis–St. Paul.* (Tamor 2012) [transportation science and engineering]

On the other hand, methods were rarely mentioned in articles in our corpus from electrical and electronic engineering. One explanation might be the complexity of the methods used, which would make it difficult to summarise the methods concisely for inclusion in an abstract. Many of the research articles in our corpus from electrical engineering devoted a large proportion of the article to methods, and involved exposition of theory, description of practical models and mathematical deduction. In addition, abstracts in this field appear to be shorter than in studies in the other fields, thus leaving less space to include all possible information.

We noted that articles from engineering explicitly indicate the value of the research described more than in the discipline of architecture:

(9) *The findings of this paper offer important insights into features of BRT systems...* (Hensher and Lee 2012) [transportation science and engineering]

(10) *These results can inform policymakers...* (Jacobsen et al. 2012) [transportation science and engineering]

(11) *...making it particularly suitable for microscale applications.* (Dicken et al. 2012) [electrical and electronic engineering]

In architecture and urban planning, however, it appeared to us that value was conferred on the present research by the writers’ demonstration of their own credibility through the display of knowledge in the text of works by other architects. In this practice, many aspects of communicative competence are required. To illustrate this to novice writers, teachers could demonstrate, for example, whether the value of the present research tends to be mentioned at all in specific disciplines.
(sociocultural competence), how value is introduced through the unfolding text (discourse competence), how readers can be persuaded of the value of the research through arguments and emotive choice of words (interactional competence) and which words and phrases are typically used to express value (linguistic and formulaic competence).

An interesting observation from our corpus was that architects appear to make more effort to engage readers in their arguments using a variety of linguistic devices, such as rhetorical questions or appeals to the readers:

(12) *What is material as such in architecture?* (Poerschke 2013)

This attention to the readers is evident in other ways too, such as the incidence of sentence-connectors and other linking words which help readers to follow arguments, as mentioned above. When used for the purpose of engaging readers, these devices are good examples of interactional competence at work.

On account of our relatively small sample, the findings discussed above must be considered tentative. However, we believe that our observations have shed light on some interesting distinctions between the fields we investigated. When presenting our findings in the classroom, we emphasise our approach, which is adjusting and complementing available research in discourse analysis. Nevertheless, despite our best intentions, we language teachers rarely understand completely the mindsets of the disciplinary communities of students. Therefore, we rely on learner's observations and input in revealing the likely motives behind generic and stylistic differences. Here below, we continue with a discussion of the role of the learners as inside informants.

2.3 Learner as writer engaging in disciplinary community practice

Above, we explained how we teachers are able to contribute to an understanding of writing in the disciplines by applying methods related to two roles of a writing teacher, an applied linguist and methodologist. In the first one, we study the discoursal practices of skilled writers in the disciplines of the learners, and in the second, we use the flower model to help raise learners’ awareness of the relevance of aspects of
communicative competence to their professional lives in their fields. Although teachers can observe the linguistic realisation of disciplinary practices in the samples of writing they analyse in their research, rarely are they able to go beneath the surface and penetrate the reasons why certain linguistic choices are made and for which communicative purpose. For these reasons, the input of the learners themselves can help to reach a fuller understanding of communication within a given discipline.

EAP teachers of writing can stimulate this desirable collaboration with students by encouraging dialogue in the classroom, where the course participants themselves contribute to their own writing development by bringing to the conversation their own accounts and experiences of practices in their own disciplines.

With discourse competence taking centre-stage in our courses, learners are introduced to small-scale discourse analytical research as a classroom activity. They build their own corpus of research articles and analyse these for features representing the six areas of communicative competence symbolised by the petals of our flower model. By doing this, they develop a new approach to reading scientific texts, which is different from their usual focus on reading for information content. They share their observations of disciplinary discourse practices in the classroom and compare with those of other participants as well as the teachers. This way we facilitate a collaborative development of discourse competence to the benefit of all participants. When the group contains participants from different fields, we find that the learners’ awareness of discipline-specific features from their own field is heightened through contrast with observations of practices in other fields. Occasionally, we get further support from experienced researchers or disciplinary professionals, who can act as role models and informants to novice members of their disciplinary community.

Through the classroom dialogue kindled by the learners’ own analyses of research articles from their fields, we have collected some enlightening examples of observations by the learners. Here, we will provide some examples.
• We had previously noticed that Introductions sections in research articles in Transportation Science and Engineering tended to be longer than in many other fields. After classroom discussion of this, the course participants from this field concluded that members of this disciplinary community frequently expect that their articles will be read by a non-specialist readership of municipal bureaucrats, who will use the scientific evidence in the article to support their decision-making on municipal-planning issues. As a result, extra effort may be required to explain the background for the research, raise awareness of problems, and justify the need for research to be carried out. In order to introduce the research in a convincing manner for readers who are administrators rather than engineers, the authors perceived a need to write more text in this part of the research article.

• In research articles in Electrical and Electronic engineering, we observed that references to “future directions in research” were frequently missing. In response to this observation, course participants representing this field informed us that this omission was fully justified. Our informants claimed that, in a highly competitive research field where researchers vie for funding and the opportunity for employment, it would be foolhardy to reveal an attractive research topic to potential rivals. In fact, at least one participant related a personal account of finding his intended research niche occupied by another researcher after unwisely revealing his future research directions in a paper written in conference proceedings.

• On the method of corpus building and analysing discoursal conventions, in a writing course integrated with the urban planning course, Sari Hirvonen-Kantola comments (2012: 1, 9) as follows: “Communication skills are crucial for any serious professional. However, teaching argumentation ... for architects has not been regarded as central. To encourage students of architecture to notice their political role as designers and planners, first we had them acquaint themselves with the most remarkable urban design classic books ... . Connecting with the roots and the bridging of traditions, learning from the forbearers
... is key to “rewriting the city” as part of the education of architects ...”

- A student who formerly studied biochemistry commented on differences in disciplinary conventions as follows: “Taking the [English writing] course has been an eye-opener. We should all be reminded how different professions announce their ‘research findings’ and how architects argue for their own opinion. It’s so different from the natural sciences.”

We have found this type of learner involvement to be invaluable, allowing us to augment teacher input with insider information from students who are in the process of becoming professionals in their own fields and who can already offer many insights into disciplinary practice.

3 AWARENESS OF DISCOURSE CONVENTIONS

Our model responds, in a pragmatic manner, to the objectives of CEFR’s action-orientated approach (Council of Europe 2001, 9)

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposals in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in learning activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.

By using the model in the writing course, we enable novice writers to act as social agents when they are invited to compare and comment on their own performance with that of other practitioners of their discipline and to those of related and more distant fields. This in turn enhances their engagement in learning about community practices as well as communicative language use. Consequently, their identity as learners in
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a writing course shifts towards becoming a member of a discourse community, and as a result they assume new identities of novice research-writers. This process in our writing courses is scaffolded by us assuming and acting in the multiplicity of roles of EAP teachers described above.

In addition, the use of the flower model highlights the central role of the metacognitive function assigned in L2 use in the monitoring of self-performance and production, as indicated by David Little (2011). Awareness of what it takes to produce a reader-friendly text according to genre-expectations of the discourse community enables this self-monitoring of the writing process and allows learners to create their own autonomous practice of reading-learning-writing. By undertaking action-research of the kind we have described here, and demonstrating and discussing our findings with our students, we wish to facilitate such learner autonomy. This approach and course structure, we believe, enhances our students’ capacity to make and implement choices. It also provides a tool which supports their reflection on learning as well as communicative language use and, in particular, text-production processes in their own and related disciplines.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Using the flower model of communication competences in our writing courses, we set out to probe its potentials as a means of supporting students’ metacognitive development as novice writers in their own discipline. In other words, our research aims to investigate, in response to the most recent paradigm shift in education, our learners’ self-directed study of writing and to promote metacognitive knowledge and regulation. The practical application of the model is expected to support teachers’ preparation of the material for genre-based writing courses in the disciplines. We assume that the use of the model enhances teachers’ competence, which requires “knowledge of genre-theory, corpus tools, scaffolding techniques, as well as metacognitive and metadiscoursal awareness building strategies” (Belcher 2010, 11). In short courses with a mixed group of learners, representing somewhat different levels and several subspecialisations within disciplines and related fields, instruction should be customised and effective in view of not just the end-
product, which is often one particular text, but also regarding longer-term development. While the metacognitive development of second language learners through genre-based teaching has been studied earlier (Negretti & Kuteeva 2011), enquiry into the “important mediating domain of metacognitive, procedural knowledge” (Bruce 2013) in the development of novice writers writing in disciplines other than English still needs further illumination.

The flower of communicative competence, which visualises in a simple and memorable manner the complexity of written communication, encourages the adoption of multiple perspectives necessary for rich understanding in research writing. Through awareness of and reflection on learner/teacher and reader/writer roles, identities of participants develop constantly in the writing course and beyond. The mnemonic flower inspires a sense of own competences, the ability to benefit from engaging with the discourse community and a curiosity to explore and develop professionally.

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6 REFERENCES


Suzy McAnsh & Eva Braidwood


2. Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the interference of the speakers’ mother tongue in the discourses of the VOICE Corpus (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English). The focus is on discourse participants speaking Finno-Ugric mother tongues (Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian), who account for approximately 4.5% of the whole material. Since the dominantly synthetic-agglutinative Finno-Ugric languages are typologically quite distant from basically analytic-isolating English, phenomena of interference have been found in several fields, as expected. The findings are compared across the three related languages. The paper is not meant to be ‘error’ analysis (after all, the speakers involved were all able to achieve their communication objectives) but rather attempts to reveal how the mother tongue exerts its influence in a specific group of non-native speakers of the English language.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the interference of the speakers’ mother tongue in the discourses of the VOICE Corpus (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English). As I myself speak one of these languages, the focus is on discourse participants with Finno-Ugric mother tongues (Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian), who account for approximately 4.5% of the material. Since the dominantly synthetic-agglutinative Finno-Ugric languages are typologically quite distant from basically analytic-isolating English, phenomena of interference have been found in several fields such as verb tenses, verb complementation, the use of the plural, the use and sequence of determiners, word order or concord-agreement. The findings are compared across the three related languages.
By increasing students’ awareness of the most conspicuous phenomena, we can increase their level of language proficiency and may make it easier for them to communicate with both native and non-native speakers of English. We may also make them aware of the typical features they may expect from other non-native speakers with a particular mother tongue.

2 METHODS

According to the corpus description, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English currently consists of 147 recorded interactions of varying lengths (from a few minutes to one or two hours). These 147 interactions equal approximately 120 hours. They represent three domains or areas of activity: education, leisure and profession. The domain of profession is further subdivided into three areas: business, organizational, and research and science. The material represents 10 types of speech events from conversation to workshop discussion. Interference was searched for across the corpus in all the contributions of speakers with Finno-Ugric first languages. Three of these languages are represented in the corpus with the speakers of Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian. Their contributions to the corpus are 0.4%, 2.99% (the largest) and 1.15% respectively, 4.18% altogether. All of them were looked at in all the corpus discourses.

The investigation focused on grammar and the lexicon. Although a significant portion of the discourses can also be listened to, the phonological level of the language was excluded. Every item diverging from Standard British English in terms of grammatical rules, as described in Quirk et al. (1985), or the use of lexical items, as presented in the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995), was attached a label referring to the type of divergence (e.g. tense, article, agreement) together with their original file and turn numbers in VOICE. The reason for choosing Standard British English was not any assumed superiority of this variety, instead, the choice was justified by the following considerations: 1) this variety is basic in the sense that historically, all the other ‘Englishes’ originated from it in some way or other; 2) as regards the grammar of language, it displays the greatest variety of structures. On the other hand, as the primary aim of the paper is to find clear-cut cases of
interference, any standard variety of English could have been chosen as a reference point from American to Australian English. The examples are presented without the tags describing phonological features in the corpus. There are items in the sample which display more than one non-standard form. The examples also require careful evaluation as the quality of recording and the noises in the communication channel should also be taken into account. Therefore, an effort is made to illustrate the different findings with as unambiguous examples as possible. In this, it also has to be taken into account that a particular deviation from Standard British English may be due to several factors, such as the speaker’s level of language proficiency or even the interference of another foreign language the speaker has acquired earlier so that it has an effect on his/her English competence. For the interpretation of the examples, and particularly, for giving the Estonian, Finnish or Hungarian equivalents, the printed sources – Karanko et al. (1990) and Keresztes (1992) are used. In addition, the following online sources were also consulted: Finn nyelv és kultúra (2006) and Uusi kielemme: Finnish for busy people (2007), as well as the online dictionaries Glosbe.com, Englishestoniantictionary.com, and Wiktionary.org.

3 RESULTS

In presenting my findings, I refer to the relevant piece of discourse using the code and number assigned in VOICE, and highlighting the relevant part with bold type. In the codes, the first segment in capital letters refers to the topic area: ED stands for education, LE for leisure, PB for professional business, PO for professional organisational and PR for professional research and development. The second segment describes the speech event: con= conversation, int= interview, mtg= meeting, pan= panel, prc= press conference, qas= question-answer session, sed= seminar discussion, sve= service encounter, wgd= working group discussion, wsd= workshop discussion. The last segment is a number. The code is followed by a colon and the number of the conversational turn in the corpus. For example, in the code EDwsd304, ED refers to the topic area of education, wsd stands for the speech event of workshop discussion while the last element is an individual number given to the particular piece of discourse in VOICE. Following the example, the mother tongue of the speaker is always indicated with the first letter in
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

brackets: E stands for Estonian, F stands for Finnish and H stands for Hungarian. If there are examples available, the particular phenomena are illustrated with examples from each of the three languages.

3.1 Phenomena of interference concerning the verb phrase

This section examines mother-tongue interference related to verb phrases.

3.1.1 Verb forms

This category consists of cases affecting the form of the verb (e.g. non-standard past form, base form instead of participle etc.). It can be noted that in this respect, a characteristic American English feature, the use of the forms wanna and gonna can be found in the performance of Finno-Ugric speakers. Other examples concerning the use of verb forms include the following:

(1) EDwsd304: 426: so my trend is ... what I'm gonna get at ...is diversity and unity ... vice versa ... so I was written a song from the Beatles Imagine like a nostalgic song ... looking back to the moment we make the decision to make English as lingua franca. (F)

This example was produced by a Finnish speaker. Obviously, the intended meaning of the verb form in bold type is not passive but active. Consequently, it mirrors one of the Finnish aspectual verb forms (plusquamperfectum) which is formed as a combination of the imperfectum of the Finnish verb be, functioning as an auxiliary, and the participle of the main verb.

(2) POmtg541: 1245:...when did you circulated this... (H)

This Hungarian example may be accounted for by the fact that in Hungarian, no auxiliary is used to form the tenses so a main verb in the past always carries the past suffix.
3.1.2 Verb complementation

This group has been introduced to cover the non-standard use of verb complements (e.g. infinitive clause instead of standard ING-clause, bare infinitive clause instead of full infinitive clause, lack of some complements obligatory in Standard English). A notable Hungarian example is the following:

(3) PBmtg269: 526:... it seems to be the situation a bit chaotic... (H)

Here, the non-standard combination of the two possible structures (It seems that the situation is a bit chaotic. and The situation seems to be a bit chaotic.) is most probably due to the fact that the Hungarian equivalent of the English verb seem only subcategorises for a finite clausal complement in the language:

Úgy látsz|ik, (hogy) a helyzet kissé zúrzavaros.
It seems that the situation is a bit chaotic.

From the gloss, it can also be seen that Hungarian uses no copula if the subordinate clause is in the present so the second half of example (3) mirrors the Hungarian structure.

3.1.3 Tense and aspect forms

In this subclass, there are a relatively high number of Hungarian examples. This may be accounted for by the fact that in Hungarian, aspect (continuity, perfection, telicity) is not expressed with inflectional suffixes or auxiliaries but typically with pre-verbal elements (similar to German), derivational suffixes or adverbials. Modern Hungarian has just one present or past tense form of verbs (this was, however, different in the past) so this is often carried over into English. Here is a turn which displays three of such cases:
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

(4) PBpan25: 3: ...since nineteen... he is fulfilling his current position...
    ...he is vice governor of [ ] since nineteen ninety-nine ...
    ...since nineteen ninety-two he is serving as governor of [ ]... (H)

Interestingly, there are also similar examples in the corpus produced by Finnish and Estonian speakers although these two Baltic Finnic languages have aspect verb forms:

(5) POwgd26: 652: ...and did you already put assessment? (F)
(6) POwgd317: 575: ...we are a network for several years ... (E)

3.2 Phenomena of interference involving the noun phrase

This section examines mother-tongue interference related to noun phrases.

3.2.1 Plural and singular forms

Hungarian examples abound here. This is due to two facts: Hungarian uses the singular form after numerals or quantifiers denoting a number bigger than one, and the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns is unknown. This gives rise to examples such as:

(7) POmtg541: 980: ...do now comes two more important question ...
    (H)
(8) PRqas495: 158: ...and young people lives in two society... (H)
(9) PBpan25: 6: ...I'll just mention a few advantage... - (H)

Finnish makes no distinction between countable and uncountable nouns, either, so here, there are some Finnish examples, as well:

(10) PBpan25: 6: ...no need to go into much details ... (F)

The one of - construction also yields some examples. In Standard English, it requires a plural form but in Hungarian, one of its equivalent structures takes the singular form of the noun:
(11) PBpan25: 3: ....perhaps he is dealing with one of the most touchy issue...
       ..... one of the longest serving governor...  (H) (twice in the same turn)

In all the three Finno-Ugric languages represented, there is one plural marker for nouns (Estonian –d, Finnish –t, Hungarian –k). This may be the reason for irregular or foreign English plurals being reinterpreted as singulars in the performance of both Finnish and Hungarian speakers so they are either marked twice for the plural (with the –(e)s suffix, as well) or they are combined with a verb in the singular:

(12) PBpan25: 19: ...there might be other criterias ... (H) (double marking)
(13) PWgd26: 482: ...no no no the criteria is ninety to one hundred ... (F) (foreign plural analysed as singular as it is followed by a singular verb)
(14) PMtg541: 1147: ...this proposal or criteria relies heavily on these two... (H)

3.2.2 Article (determiner) use

In this type, there are many more Baltic-Finnic (Estonian and Finnish) examples than Hungarian ones. It could be expected as neither of these languages uses articles. So in comparison with Standard British English, a definite article is missing from the following examples:

(15) EDwsd499: 172: ...we always communicate with media ... if there are some of the bigger ...bigger ... subjects... (E)
(16) PWgd325: 2084: ...and student needs to get credit for that... (F)

In other cases, there is a lack of the indefinite article:

(17) PWgd317: 777: ... there should be also administrative part involved... (E)
(18) LEcon545: 859: it was huge thing. It’s been like the thing of the year last year in Finland. (F)
(19) PRqas495: 158: ... I think this is problem as well... (H)
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

There are significantly fewer cases when an article is used but would not be necessary in Standard British English:

(20) POwsd266: 439: ...so in that ways the work life doesn’t ... (F)
(21) POcon543: 586: ...but as far as I remember its focus would be the quality assurance in general... (H)

The last Hungarian example illustrates a systematic contrast between English and Hungarian: an abstract noun used in a general sense does not take the definite article in Standard British English but it does in Hungarian.

3.2.3 Use of quantifiers

Only three cases were found but speakers of all the three languages are represented among them. Here, in comparison to Standard British English, there is a switched use of quantifiers as regards the countable-uncountable distinction. They can be accounted for by the fact that Finno-Ugric languages do not have this contrast:

(22) POwgd317: 445: ...gives you so much benefits for university and for students .... (E)
(23) POmtg403: 1382: ... much more pages coming up ... (F)
(24) PBpan25: 6: ...no need to go into much details ... (H)

3.3 Phenomena affecting clause level

This section examines mother-tongue interference at the clause level.

3.3.1 Word order

This is a category where one can expect deviations from Standard British English, especially in the performance of Hungarian speakers since the main rule of Hungarian word order is that the focused element is placed before the verb in sentences. This gave rise to examples where the strict adjacency of verb and object is broken up with an intruding adverbial coming in between:
...with this paper we can get today this ticket... (H)
(26) PBpan25: 19: ...what might be the pros and cons for adopting unilaterally the euro... (H)

There are also some Estonian and Finnish examples like this in the corpus:

(27) POwd317: 603: ... if rector doesn't approve it or somehow support it then it's really difficult to get later money... (E)
(28) POwd26: 598: ...should we put on the list the teaching methods? (F)

In a Finnish example, a PP modifier which in Standard British English is put after the noun head appears before it:

(29) POpnc522: 3:... perhaps the only from their point of view international actor which they had confidence in... (F)

3.3.2 Lack of obligatory clause element

In most of the cases, the missing obligatory clause element is a dummy subject or copular verb.

Examples lacking dummy subject:

(30) POmtg403: 402:...indeed and judging by the work that has been doing on is very likely that they will present both of these papers ...
(F)
(31) POcon543: 904: ... according to my mind was not a task of this project to invent or to determine points of convergence in the national high education systems... (H)

Here, in both cases, a dummy subject is missing from the main clauses of complex sentences that function as appositive to the grammatical subject, which is either a finite or a non-finite clause. Such examples are due to the fact that it is not necessary in either Finnish or Hungarian to have a main clause surface subject when the grammatical subject of the sentence is a clause.
Examples lacking a copula:

(32) POwgd12: 247: ...this I think somewhere missing and this is an administrative part to get it available ... (E)
(33) POwsgd379: 20: ...they also able to implement something if needed. (F)
(34) POmtg539: 1: ...how will this: er the work of this two working groups be united at the general assembly or will there after the general assembly some other part or working group which... (H)

In example 33, the omission of a form of be is probably due to the fact that the Finnish equivalent of able (an adjective by category) is voida (a verb by category). In Modern Hungarian, the future form of verbs is made with the help of an auxiliary followed by the infinitive of the main verb – the verb be is the only one which has a separate inflectional future form. So in example 34, the speaker uses just one verb in the English future form, as well, similarly to Hungarian.

3.3.3 Concord/agreement

There are numerous examples here which affect three types of concord. One is subject-verb concord. Here, several non-standard examples can be found involving the indefinite pronoun starting with no- or any-:

(35) LEcon545: 973: ...nobody were expecting ... (F)
(36) POwgd325: 2276: ...if there are anything... - (F)
(37) PBpan25: 35: ...no one really think of that ... (H)

Another characteristic group involves relative clauses:

(38) POmtg314: 1015: ...these are the things that needs to be discussed and agreed on ... (F)

In the case of Finnish, examples 35 and 36 are most probably due to the fact that the Finnish equivalents of these English pronouns (ei kukaan, joka) have plural forms, as well. On the other hand, English relative pronouns (who, which, that) may be used with a plural meaning but their form does not indicate it. In example 37, the NP that dictates agreement
(the things) is farther away from the verb and the form of the relative pronoun (that) does not overtly show plurality.

A relatively large number of examples affect there-constructions. In this, in Standard British English, there is verb-complement agreement, that is, the verb matches the subject complement in number. However, informal English allows the use of the singular form of BE even if the following NP is in the plural. This can be observed in the performance of Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian speakers in the corpus, too:

(39) POwgd317: 1353: ...because in that case there is a lot of questions to be solved there... (E)
(40) POmtg403: 443: ...there is two things which can be done...(F)
(41) POmtg541: 364: ...because there's brackets here ... (H)

In example (42), this is corroborated by the fact that the complement NP represents a foreign plural:

(42) POmtg542: 132:...and there was of course very detailed criteria ... (H)

3.4 Non-standard lexical forms

This section examines non-standard lexical forms.

3.4.1 Non-standard preposition use

The biggest group of examples here involves the use of prepositions. The findings are presented in a table form, separately for the three languages. In the tables, the examples are listed where the interference of the speakers' mother tongue can be detected. The equivalents of the English prepositions are case endings (suffixes) in the Finno-Ugric languages, and the cases are identified with the Latin terms commonly used in Finnish grammars.
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

Table 1: Lexical examples of mother tongue interference for Finnish speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kesällä (adess.)</td>
<td>at summer (LEcon545:329)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikutus + ill.</td>
<td>effect to (PBqas410:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sisällyttää + ill.</td>
<td>include into (POmtg403:375)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alussa (iness.)</td>
<td>in the beginning of (POprc558:50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erilainen kuin</td>
<td>different than (POwgd26:816)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mennä yliopistoon (ill.)</td>
<td>go into the universities (POwsd866:552)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Lexical examples of mother tongue interference for Hungarian speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>csatlakozik valakihez (all.)</td>
<td>join to (PBpan25:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>köszönetet mond vala kinék (dat.)</td>
<td>say thank you for all the participants (PBpan25:70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reggelen (superess.)</td>
<td>On the morning (POmtg542:351)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>részéről (delat.)</td>
<td>from the part (of the eurozone) (PBpan25:47)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1, vaikutus + illative is not a complete equivalent of the English effect to, nor is részéről in Table 2, including the delative suffix, of from the part but there is a parallelism in the image used in the non-standard English expression with the expressions in the native languages of these speakers: i.e. the illative case and the English preposition to share the meaning 'movement towards sg' while both the delative case and English from denote movement away from something.


3.4.2 Collocations and false friends

Table 3 presents cases where a non-standard English equivalent of the speaker’s native language expression is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lépést tesz</td>
<td>the next steps we have to do (PBmtg269:550)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igazat mond</td>
<td>say the truth (P0con543:888)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>néztem/elképzelésem szerint</td>
<td>according to my mind (P0con543:904)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other cases, similar form or analogy account for the non-standard form:

(43) PBpan25: 3: ....since nineteen... he is fulfilling his current position... (H)
(44) PBpan25: 3: ... on the optimal adaptation of the euro before the end of this decade... (H)

In these examples, similar sounding fulfil and adaptation are used instead of standard fill and adoption.

The analogy of the preceding forms made a Finnish speaker produce the following example:

(45) POprc558: 50: ...Croatia is in many ways a very developed country politically, economically and societally... (F)

3.5 Sporadic phenomena

There were also a few phenomena with relatively low frequency – just in one or two cases – and usually just one of the Finno-Ugric languages was involved in them. Still, some of them clearly show interference from the mother tongue. In the following conditional sentence, the Finnish
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

speaker follows the Finnish pattern instead of the Standard British English pattern, using the *would* form in an *as* if-clause:

(46) POmtg541: 1114: ...so that this gives me the impression as if follow-up *would have been included* in the recommendation... (F)

Irrespective of the grade of the adjective, there is just one conjunction used in Hungarian comparative structures (*mint*). So, in the following sentence the Hungarian speaker uses *as* with a comparative form, as well:

(47) POcon543: 761: ...these programs are usually *shorter as* the previous programs... (H)

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian are three European Finno-Ugric languages the speakers of which are represented in the VOICE corpus. Although they belong to the same language family, they do not always behave uniformly according to the results of investigation.

As regards the structure of the verb group, Hungarian is different from Finnish or Estonian in that its major devices to express aspect are pre-verbal elements, derivational suffixes (e.g. iterative –*gat/-get*, etc.) and adverbials. Consequently, the perfect and progressive forms of the English language present a problem for Hungarians so they were inclined to replace them with the aspectually unmarked simple form (example 4). It also stands apart from Finnish or Estonian in that it does not use auxiliaries to express tense (example 2). For Finnish speakers, on the other hand, the different structuring of a parallel form caused interference in example 1 (plusquamperfectum).

All the three languages have one plural marker for nouns. Therefore, speakers reinterpreted irregular or foreign English plurals as singular nouns in examples 12-14. Finno-Ugric languages use the singular form after numerals and quantifiers. This is reflected in utterances 7-9. They do not have the countable-uncountable distinction, which accounts for
the switched use of the quantifiers in examples 10 and 22-24.

As regards article use, there are two notable phenomena. The omission of articles by Finnish and Estonian speakers (examples 15-18) is due to the lack of articles in these languages. Hungarian does have both a definite and an indefinite article but in contrast to English, the definite article is used with abstract nouns and plural nouns used in a general sense (example 21).

Being synthetic-agglutinative languages, word order does not play such an important role in the Finno-Ugric languages as in morphologically weak, analytic English. This is reflected in the breaking up of the strict adjacency of verb and its object in examples 25-28.

If the speaker’s mother tongue applies a different pattern or an element of different category to express the same idea, this may be transferred to English. When an obligatory clause element was missing in the utterances, it was either a dummy it (examples 30-31) or a form of the copula be (examples 32-34). In the case of it, omission was due to the fact that in the equivalent Finno-Ugric structures, no dummy appears. As regards the omission of be, in example 33, it was caused by the different categorization of the equivalent elements in English and in the speaker’s mother tongue (Finnish). In example 34 (Hungarian speaker), it was due to Hungarian expressing the same idea with one word. The patterns of the speaker’s mother tongue appear in their English utterances in the case of conditional and comparative structures in examples 46 and 47.

The lexical differences found involve the use of prepositions, collocations and false friends as illustrated in Tables 1-3, and examples 43-45.

To sum up, this paper is not meant to be an error analysis. While the speakers who produced the utterances certainly have a varying level of competence in English, they were able to manage in the communication situations in which they participated so in this sense, they are competent speakers of English. As now, there are more English discourses going on between non-native than between native speakers in the world, it is worth investigating the factors influencing the use of the language of these non-native speakers. One of them is the effect/interference of their mother tongues. Such investigations may have the practical benefits of
Examples of the Interference of the Mother Tongue in the VOICE Corpus in the Utterances of Finno-Ugric Speakers

raising the language awareness of the speakers themselves or preparing them for what linguistic features they may encounter in their interactions with speakers with certain types of mother tongue.

5 REFERENCES


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http://voice.univie.ac.at (10.09.2013)
3. Educating Engineers for Working Life

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ABSTRACT

Various economic, social and industrial trends are altering the industrial operating environment, while simultaneously shifting attention in engineering education from specialized but narrow technical content to a broader competence base that better accommodates to societal demands. Tomorrow’s engineering tasks are understood to necessitate a more personal configuration of capabilities facilitating graduates’ productivity and contextual performativity at work, which requires consideration in curriculum design.

As a result of a study I conducted at Aalto University, I propose the inclusion of professional competences in engineering syllabi to help transform domain-specific engineering expertise into effective individual and organizational outcomes. I regard advanced English language courses as a natural venue for developing such personal abilities, owing to the high level of English proficiency among engineering students that allows working-life simulations in the classroom context. I conclude this article by discussing pedagogy for implementing the teachable and learnable intra- and interpersonal competences that bear relevance for engineers’ career advancement and organizational outcomes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Workplace transformation and the changing nature of work are alarmingly straining the personal resources and work ability of today’s employees. The expeditiously evolving technology is not the sole source of disruption, but also society-wide emphases and valuations, global market trends, and changing earnings logics pose emerging requirements on postmodern employees. (Näsi & Neilimo 2006)

Over the past decades, work has morphed into fragmented, virtual, ICT-based, global, mobile, remote, multicultural, networked and dialogical activity characterized by fast-paced, temporary nature and feelings of
insecurity. Employees are further loaded by challenges caused by job redesign, demotivation and disengagement, and demands for a wider and deeper competence base. (Rintala 2005, Saarinen 2007) These trends urge educators to keep up with broader industrial trends and proactively repurpose their syllabi.

Traditionally, engineering education has revolved around technical abilities, which constitute a well-substantiated learning content accommodating to the types of abilities previously accentuated in industrial processes. However, today’s globalized operating environment and the growing organizational demands for wider competence bases necessitate a more personal configuration of capabilities facilitating engineering graduates’ employability, career advancement, and productive contextual performance at work. (Fox & Spector 2000, Kolmos 2006, Lehmann et al. 2008)

This study identifies such professional competences that help transform field-related engineering expertise into effective individual and team outcomes. It considers advanced English language courses a natural forum for developing such personal skills, thanks to the high level of English proficiency among engineering students that allows working-life simulations in the engineering classroom context.

Finally, I suggest pedagogy through which English courses could pave the way for a grander reform of engineering degrees. Language and communication courses could equip engineering graduates with professional qualities speeding up the application of their substantive knowledge in work communities and shortening their induction periods, while supporting the more effective build-up of their professional identities already during university studies.

2 ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION FOCI

Thanks to the increasing complexity of social conditions at today’s workplace, the professional interaction among engineers is taking new forms. This invites attention to the phenomena materializing in the inter-human interface in the industrial context. (Emilsson & Lilje 2008)
Currently the language and communication courses at Aalto University focus on technical writing, academic writing and presentation skills, with emphases on readability, style, organization and oral delivery aspects such as structure, metalanguage, vocal qualities, body language, and audience contact. To support curriculum development, it is essential to investigate both student needs and industrial demands to seek possible new accents of relevance to industrial operations.

2.1 Student needs analysis

My prior research (Lappalainen 2012) suggested that engineers need training not only in social skills but also more widely in interpersonal social competence. The findings indicated that engineers’ professional competence could be organized into a framework (Figure 1) that addresses three levels of expertise: 1) the substantive level, including theoretical, practical and strategic knowledge of one's field; 2) the personality level that includes personality motives, overall life and professional values and attitudes; 3) the skills level that accentuates different competences according to the company and industry in question. Generally, in engineering, this level includes various emotive and communication skills, cultural awareness and language skills.

![Figure 1: The professional competence framework](image)

To expand these suggestive findings and to monitor learning needs with regard to professional development as part of university language and communication education, I conducted a student needs analysis among Aalto University students. The survey included 14 items extending from
intrapersonal communication abilities such as self-confidence to interpersonal foci such as inspirational skills.

236 students of Aalto University were asked to rate the importance of the themes for their employability, career advancement and overall success at work. The question items are listed in Table 1 below, in their order of priority in student responses on a scale 1 (not important) – 5 (very important).

### 2.2 Survey findings

Table 1 presents the survey findings in a sample of 236 Aalto students. Out of the 14 question items describing learning contents for integrated language courses, *Motivation and coaching* ranked highest, *Knowledge of industry and business* second, and *Listening skills* third.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication topic</th>
<th>average (n=236)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and coaching</td>
<td>4,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of industry and business</td>
<td>4,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>4,28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion and negotiation skills</td>
<td>4,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>4,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration and energy</td>
<td>4,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and values</td>
<td>4,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>4,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>3,97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionariness</td>
<td>3,69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open expression of emotions</td>
<td>2,89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scores are in alignment with recent management and organization studies (Kelloway et al. 2013, Kort 2008) and make sense in the engineering context: in Finland, engineers take on managerial duties on average within five years from graduation, making them well aware of leadership requirements. The ability to *motivate and coach* others is considered a key leader requirement in today's work communities, as a resource enhancing subordinate commitment (Lappalainen 2012). Further, communication that conveys enthusiasm contributes to trust
build-up in teams. (McNair et al. 2010) Similarly, positivity and optimism, both of which represent factors of inspiration, tend to induce cognitive trust in the leader and perception of effectiveness. (Norman et al. 2010)

Knowledge of industry and business forms the foundation of engineering education, and the substantive, hard-core technical knowledge has traditionally been at the core of engineering curricula. Technical expertise has therefore been a critical factor determining employability and career prospects. This self-evident role of technical substance probably explains the score for this question item and, in language course design, justifies the efforts put to building integrated content/language courses.

The scores on listening in this survey are supported by recent findings in organization studies (Jauhiainen 1992). Due to the complexity of verbal communication, information exchange should be facilitated by active listening and not be left to passive hearing. Effective listeners do not merely listen, they give their full attention, attune to the other person's feelings, and ask questions to better understand the background. Their attunement is not jeopardized by preoccupation; full listening maximizes physiological synchrony and emotional alignment, resulting in their presence being truly felt by the other person. (Goleman 2007)

These results indicate that focus should be directed to competences that support professional interaction and leadership build-up in organizations. Emotive communication skills that affect the quality of two-way interaction, especially inspirational communication strategies and listening skills, serve as essential leader merits. Such education, however, calls for longer-term investment in students' intrapersonal development and new types of pedagogy. Knowledge of industry and business, then, serves as a theme that provides a context and authenticity to language classes through exercises and materials that draw on real-life corporate challenges, and an essential and relevant content element for integrated courses.
3 PEDAGOGY FOR INTEGRATING SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Engineers are often judged as socially incompetent, and some international studies have, in fact, found evidence that their level of emotional intelligence is lower than in other professions. (Duse et al. 2009) In Finland, a needs analysis of the Finnish engineering education identified several competence gaps in the same direction, accentuating communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills, in particular, as required future earning objectives (Korhonen-Yrjänheikki 2011).

3.1 Methodology supporting social competence build-up

To bolster the entry of social competence themes into university classrooms, novel and up-to-date teacher training and pedagogic development measures are needed. In order to pass on constructive, inspiring and socially intelligent practices in the classroom, teachers need to adopt and experiment with new types of pedagogy.

To integrate working life skills into language studies at the university level, the following three methodologies could be found pedagogically instrumental:

1. what: socio-emotional skills - the socio-emotional competence model. (Bar-On 2006)
2. why: attitude and capacity change - the intentional change model. (Boyatzis & Akrivou 2006)
3. how: socially competent teachership - teacher immediacy. (Cagiltay 2008)

Let us next consider ways of integrating socio-emotional and communication competences into engineering syllabi. My work proposes so-called teacher immediacy as pedagogy for integrating working life skills into higher education, to enhance student empowerment, personal autonomy, accountability, self-actualization, self-management ability, attitude change and reflective practice in the language and communication classroom. (Cagiltay 2008, King & Witt 2009)
3.2 Teacher immediacy as a pedagogic approach

This study suggests that the oral language and communication education in engineering be moved from presentation and negotiation skills towards socio-emotional competence such as inspirational tactics and listening skills, calling for new approaches to teachership. I propose more systematic development and adoption of teacher immediacy, which is a form of socially competent teachership. In its essence, such teachership serves as an example of self-leadership, a model in intrapersonal skills development, and a platform in interpersonal student-teacher interaction. (Lappalainen 2012)

Socio-emotive learning takes place most effectively in environments where students feel valued and respected and can experience feelings of belonging, fulfilment and responsibility. Such caring and supportive classrooms are characterized by open interaction, free dialogue, critical thinking, high standards of behavior, safety, collaborative problem-solving activities, equity, fairness, respect for diversity, and positive learning experiences. Students’ emotional needs for friendship, acceptance and love require reflective rather than reactive practice of educators as well as justified action in the classroom based on well-conceived frameworks and research findings. (Elias et al. 1997)

Goleman et al. (2008) have yielded findings that are applicable not only in the context of organizations but also in the university classroom. They report that smile and nonverbal cues prove instrumental in feedback provision. Socially intelligent teachers recognize that the extent to which feedback will be accepted and received depends on the delivery: negative performance feedback that is accompanied by positive emotional signals leave the recipient feeling encouraged and empowered. On the other hand, positive performance feedback that is delivered critically with frowns and narrowed eyes, privy of nods and smiles, is interpreted in a demotivating way.

Also, a teacher’s social competence becomes manifested through her ability to create relational space in the classroom. He or she needs to invest all his or her personality and expertise in building up a communication zone that facilitates the establishment of social bonds and identities through discourse interactions. Such discourse behavior is
characterized by accountability for misunderstandings in the classroom interaction, acknowledgement of student contribution, willingness to be flexible with practicalities, expressions conveying desire to contribute to interpersonal collaboration and relational motivation, positive affirmation of and constructive feedback on student progress, but also candid concern for potential student setbacks, feedback and information solicitation. Last but not least, communication that signals enthusiasm and passion is an effective way of building trust and motivation in the classroom. (McNair et al. 2010)

Humor can also be found in the socially competent teacher's toolkit. Research findings related to the impact of humor on student learning seem somewhat conflicting and equivocal, but when examining the quality and role of the humor used, the results become more consistent. When applied in a prosocial and positive manner to relate to others, humor can facilitate learning. Conversely, when used in an offensive and disparaging way to demean others, it correlates negatively with student learning. (Wanzer et al. 2010)

Teacher assertion should be underscored, as well. As one of its building blocks, clarity correlates with learner empowerment and learning outcomes but also predicts student-perceived meaningfulness. Teachers who are clear use previews and summaries to refer back and forth, they stress the essential points, use visual aids, and assist students in preparing for assignments. In brief, they help students understand. (Houser et al. 2009)

As a summary of all the afore-mentioned, the change in higher engineering pedagogy materializes through socially competent teachership that is built on the four building blocks presented in Figure 2.
Teachers need to meet requirements for caring, immediacy and credibility, on top of substantive expertise, reflecting the paradigm shift from teachers as knowledge transmitters to coaches. Coaches who know how to challenge students at the right pace and point in time drive the learners to higher performance levels, not only in terms of skills development but also in personal growth. Gradually such teachers help students become more and more independent self-coaches who eventually take ownership of their own development. (Ericsson et al. 2007)

4 CONCLUSION

The starting point in my study was the acumen that value-adding employee performance in engineering industries is the outcome of persistent, deliberate practice and coaching. Instead of focusing on innate talents or personality trait, such skilling could focus on learnable qualities such as social and emotive competences (Ericsson et al. 2007), which are considered relevant to working life. The ultimate educational objective is to develop individual engineers and organizational leaders who not only possess traditional analytical and technical expertise and substantive knowledge but are intelligent also creatively, practically, socially and emotively.

Such holistic and broad education is crucial as social competence is considered increasingly vital in terms of competitive edge and efficacy targets. Luckily, intellectual or human capital is not in short supply— it can be uncovered and discovered in each and every operator in the classroom. Emotional intelligence and social competence constitute
topics that open new avenues for language teachers, both professionally and personally.

5 REFERENCES


Pia Lappalainen


4. ESL in America: Teaching Multilingual, Second-Language Students Academic and Technical Writing

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ABSTRACT

Some American English as a Second Language (ESL) students make their way through the elementary and high school system with minimal English skills, and do not always receive a high school diploma. Later, these students could go on to take the General Educational Development (GED) exam, which allows them to by-pass normal high school English courses and still receive a high school diploma equivalent. However, this course of action may mean that they have not completed certain composition classes, so that by the time they reach Community College, they may not have developed sufficient writing skills to pass courses that are required for their certificates or degrees. This paper reviews research that has begun to identify and define the specific areas and issues that contribute to these deficiencies. Some students may not have learned proper spelling, while others may lack critical thinking skills necessary for an advanced writing project. Formulating and employing effective cultural literacy strategies are essential to ensuring ESL student success. This paper recounts the author’s case-study instances of ESL, second-language learners’ experiences in the community college classroom learning basic grammar, academic writing, and advanced technical writing. Assessment as well as feedback rituals are described and sample student papers are summarized. The literature review documents challenges similar to those observed by the author and suggests better ways to assess ESL learners’ skills upon enrollment and develop more ways to support them during their time in college.

1 INTRODUCTION

American English as a Second Language (ESL) students may make their way through the elementary and high school system with minimal English skills, and not receive a high school diploma. Later, they may take a General Educational Development (GED) exam, which allows them to by-pass normal high school English courses and still receive a high school diploma equivalent. However, this course of action may mean that they
have not completed certain composition classes, so that by the time they reach community college, they may not have developed sufficient writing skills to pass the writing courses required for their certificates or degrees. They may still have to take some non-credit courses to brush up on English writing skills (grammar and paragraph construction, for example) before they can even take the first required academic writing courses for credit.

Not all students are motivated for the same level of success. Some students only desire to learn enough English to succeed in the unskilled job in which they are already employed. Others may see beyond their current employment and know that they will have to receive training in order to advance both economically and educationally. While those who are most motivated have the best chance of success, even those who have strong desires for advancement may be hindered by lack of skills or programs designed to fit their needs.

Here the different kinds of ESL students will be described followed by a summary of research that attempts to identify the particular learning challenges each group faces, and proposals for improvements that would result in higher levels of academic success will be noted. Finally, an example of ESL student work will be described, along with some sample assessment tools. The conclusion points to areas that need further research: some are as simple as properly identifying the needs of ESL students, while others require more funding for teacher training in cultural sensitivity.

Typical ESL students at community college in the US can be adults of any age because they may be recent immigrants, and second-language learners, or they may be second-generation language learners who still speak their mother tongue at home and use it in the workplace as well, so their English language skills lag behind. These students may not have the financial resources for school and/or may be functioning on financial aid as a total means of support. This financial stress is added to the normal stress of school, because failure in the academic world may mean a loss of income and financial support for them and their families. They may not have studied ESL previously, but learned English by living and working in the United States. They may have a GED rather than a diploma that represents a history of consistent English studies in school. Finally,
they may lack long-term motivation for using English, and hope to acquire enough English to be successful in a current or future job. Females in this cohort may lack family support for their education at all, as they are often expected to place first priority on home and family obligations.

In contrast, the portrait of foreign ESL students is entirely different. They may be on a student visa and have some independent or secure financial support for the duration of their studies. Often, they have already studied ESL in the home country and are very motivated to achieve a higher level of fluency while studying in America. These students enroll in community colleges due to the lower tuition fees; furthermore, community colleges may allow them to quickly accumulate needed credits as a way to fast track to future four-year college or university studies. Highly motivated, these students may have already received orientation or guidance that encouraged them to take advantage of campus-based tutoring or other support for learning.

The last category of ESL student observed at community college is called an Integrated Second-Language Learner (ISL). This student is on a formal course of study, with the aim of transferring to a four-year college or university in a nursing, IT or engineering program. This student may be of any age, as the determining factor here is familiarity with and usage of language. He or she excels at English language usage in writing and uses English at home and in the workplace, while native language use may continue in certain social, church, or other activities. This student has mastered English courses and learned to use the campus help services such as tutoring and the writing center; however, he or she may still exhibit writing challenges due to vocabulary and grammar.

When these three types of students reach the classroom, they immediately have challenges regardless of their backgrounds. That is the subject of the research reviewed here. There are challenges due to labeling of students as ESL, English Language Learners (ELL) or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners. These acronyms will be further explained below.
2 TERMS AND PRACTICES

Educators at all levels are aware of the problems faced by second-language learners, but the degree to which they have tools to help assess such students or help them in other ways varies greatly. Many researchers agree on the importance of cultural context in trying to help students learn, and this begins with early childhood education, on through elementary, middle, and high school. These tactics work well for students who begin their education in the American system, but for those who enter at a later stage, assistance may be paltry to non-existent. What is worse is that these ELL students may, at any stage, be diagnosed as special education students because of their poor performance academically or socially.

Xu and Drame (2007) explored the effects of the use of various kinds of special education diagnostic tools in sorting out students who truly have such problems from those who are simply struggling in a culturally inappropriate learning environment. This represents an effective strategy in the early stages of education, but again, may not work for those in later stages of high school, or even community college. The researchers presented the idea of using a Response to Intervention (RTI) model for assessing student needs. They suggest that this tool more effectively diagnoses students with genuine learning challenges and sends them into the proper educational environments, while leaving out the students whose needs should be addressed by receiving high quality instruction from teachers who have been trained in cultural relevance. The RTI model consists of three tiers in which first proactive strengthened instruction is offered to all students; any students who are not at the success level in their achievements are then evaluated in Tier 2 and receive additional instruction as well. At the Tier 3 level, individualized instruction is offered. Because of all these steps, students are more likely to receive assistance with their actual learning constraints, and if they do not, because they may actually have other special education needs, only then are they directed to special education channels. This sort of targeted diagnosis and instruction takes place on a weekly basis (Xu and Drame 2007, 307). Xu and Drame (2007) emphasize that this system is successful as it does not separate the ELL learners from other learners in the classroom, and aims simply to identify special education needs students.
These kinds of studies and analyses can be very helpful to upper-level educators and community college instructors, although the latter likely do not have access to such diagnostic tools and programs. They are not the only teachers who are not prepared to deal with the deficiencies and needs of ELL learners; in lower level education, although 41% of teachers may deal with ELL students, less than a third of them have had professional development training in ELL issues and curriculum (Xu and Drame 2007, 310). The issue of training and especially cultural training is important because this instruction can help teachers and instructors identify the modes of learning more familiar to ELL learners. If curricula are modified slightly to incorporate these modes of learning, academic success rates may increase, as is shown in research on culture in the following section. However, there is an additional challenge, as Xu and Drame estimate that although up to 75% of the ELL learners are Spanish-speakers, they are not homogenous themselves and may come from a variety of Hispanic cultures (2007, 305). Thus, it is difficult for teachers and school systems to develop programs that will address all of the different forms of cultural learning that might exist within the school population. Furthermore, this estimate is comprised of Spanish-speaking ELL learners, while there are other, though smaller, minorities of multilingual Asian speakers whose cultures, obviously are entirely different from those of Hispanic Spanish-speakers, no matter their country of origin.

In their article, “Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education in US Classrooms,” Andrea DeCapua and Helaine Marshall (2010) coin a new term for students who, because of their native language origins or proficiencies, are unable to attain academic success. They chose the phrase Students with Limited or Informal Education (SLIFE) to characterize these students and propose some changes in attitudes, preparations, and classroom exercises that could improve the success rate of these students. They focus on the differences between what they call High Context (HC) and Low Context (LC) cultures, the former indicates the typical cultures from which ESL students come, and the latter the typical American classroom.

ESL students who find their way into high school or community college classrooms may or may not have begun their formal education in their original home countries, in which case their education may be
interrupted. However, it is not only interrupted; it may also have undergone a change in context. DeCapua and Marshall note that in HC cultures, even the teaching attitudes and styles may be HC, and thus not prepare students to transfer to an LC school later on. They quote studies that showed that educators in these HC cultures often engaged in playfulness and developed friendships with students that were interwoven with their academic activities (DeCapua & Marshall 2010, 165). The contemporary community college does not emphasize this sort of personal interaction, even though it might help students.

In reviewing the traits of HC cultures, DeCapua and Marshall highlight the areas that are most likely to cause a disconnect for HC students when faced with an LC classroom. For example, HC cultures are more collectivistic and social; familial relationships are highly valued and carry with them responsibilities and commitments. When these responsibilities and commitments interfere with schooling, the student may not succeed. LC cultures and the American education system are individualistic and a student is expected to perform at as high a level as possible, sometimes overcoming personal limitations by planning, scheduling, and communicating (DeCapua & Marshall 2010, 161).

These explanations from DeCapua and Marshall are very familiar as conflicts between family life and academic obligations have been repeatedly observed during my teaching at the community college level. These interruptions to learning typically happen for female students, but male students are also under duress as a result of familial relationships or commitments. There are several reasons for this disconnect between student aspirations and students’ actual accomplishments. First, one might ask why they are in school in the first place. Do they see the connection between class work and eventual success or are they merely taking classes to access financial assistance or a temporary improvement in a job situation? DeCapua and Marshall emphasize that SLIFE students ‘need to see the direct connection between what they are learning and the practical realities of their lives’ (2010, 173). However, in HC cultures, the long-range goals are not nearly as important and it may be very difficult for a teacher to convince students of the importance of sticking with schoolwork and assignments when family obligations call.
3 OBSERVATIONS

There have been countless instances when it has been difficult to convince students of the importance of continuing their education. For example, a Hispanic female student from Mexico with an A average, and every hope of completing the 4-credit, upper-level course with an A, was required by her family to care for the children of her mother’s sister, so she had to drop out of the course. Help was offered to her in the form of an Incomplete so that she would still get credit, but it was not possible to award her the A grade that she would have received had she completed the coursework in a timely fashion. Another young woman, a Mexican Hispanic, also an A-student, could not maintain her A because of various demands on her not only from family, but also from friends who expected her to attend their court hearing, which may have led to their deportation. Again, despite counseling, she could not be convinced of the importance of her own work (individualism) over her responsibility and commitment to her friends (collectivism). The result was that she too completed the course with a B instead of an A. Granted, in both of these cases the student ended up with a respectable B grade and did pass the course. However, there are implications for the great majority of SLIFE students, who struggle to maintain a C average and whose familial commitments interrupt their learning to the point where they then receive a D grade, or do not pass at all. They may lose scholarships and other financial aid, or simply fail the course. Such was the case with a Chinese national female student, who took nine of the ten course weeks to admit that her parents could not provide her with transportation to the school, so she was consistently late and unable to turn her work in on time. She managed to avoid a failing grade, but again, her abilities should have gained her an A. These brief narratives of students who fail despite all the efforts of teachers and the administration to provide productive learning environments for them raise questions about what more can be done.

4 THE EFFECTS OF BACKGROUND ON LEARNING

Students’ reasons for learning English are paramount in determining what sorts of learning support they need at the community college and
university level. Gable Richards (2011) in his Capstone project on City College of San Francisco (CCSF) ESL students did case studies on two very different types of students trying to find strategies to support their academic learning. The students were simultaneously enrolled in ESL and academic content courses and he followed their study habits, assignments, and progress to estimate how ESL teachers might support academic learning outside their own classrooms.

Ultimately, however, both the Chinese and the Italian students in Richards’ study had problems with analyzing the materials and writing about them. Richards concluded that this was the area that deserved the most attention from ESL teachers in the future, and he recommended smaller, shorter, scaffolded exercises so that students could build up to the longer essay lengths that would be required in later academic content courses. Two other recommendations have more to do with the modes the students use themselves to manage learning: tutors, writing centers, and peer groups. All of these sources “help them when they are missing background or important cultural information” (Richards 2011, 24). While the Italian ESL student already had an American girlfriend and had no trouble engaging culturally with American topics, the Chinese student, with her intention to use English only for practical purposes, or other CLD students mentioned by DeCapua and Marshall, are much less likely to use tutors and peer groups to improve their academic success.

DeCapua and Marshall have some interesting proposals, as they see a need for teachers to be more aware of the differences in learning styles between HC learners and the LC educational setting. However, their main suggestion is something they call a Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP), which acknowledges that ways must be found to help the HC learners shift to LC learning styles so that they can succeed (DeCapua & Marshall 2010, 167). Constructing course work that has more relevance to HC learners is important, as well as preparing exercises that emphasize relationships a bit more than individuality (DeCapua & Marshall 2010, 173). For example, they actually promote the idea of teaching decontextualization skills rather than just focusing on content in the courses, and they suggest using surveys and shoebox activities to accomplish these goals.
5 THE EFFECT OF HC/LC ON ESL LEARNING

While these suggestions are a step in the right direction, DeCapua and Marshall do not seem to account for classrooms that consist of both HC and LC (native speaker) learners, so that the activities suggested might be good for HC learners, but what would the LC learners be doing in the meantime? More effort must be spent trying to develop well-integrated activities that accomplish the goals they are suggesting, while not boring or alienating the LC learners who are also there to achieve and deserve to have a curriculum that is designed for their success as well. The mode of integration of ESL students in mainstream education rather than separation into specific learning modules seems to be well-entrenched in education today, so the possibility of keeping these SLIFE learners in other classrooms far past their ESL studies, seems unlikely. However, there is little doubt that training and awareness of educators who are faced with teaching both types of learners could certainly contribute to an improved outcome for the HC learners.

6 QUESTIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

One of the possible problems with the unreliability of research on the issue of academic success among current and former ESL students is the plethora of terms that are used to describe these students. Some are more specific, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, which include both culture and language among the challenges students must overcome to accomplish the achievements that come more easily to native language and culture students. Szu-Yin Chu (2011) quotes research stating that 40% of public school students fit into this category, but then goes on to say that schools are not prepared to deal with students with other mother tongues. The latter is not documented and patently untrue, as American educators have been struggling with these issues for over 50 years, and although the progress may not meet the goals, it is unfair to say that no attempt is being made to accommodate these students, whether it be through tutoring, ESL or other special arrangements.

Rather than changing the schools, Chu might suggest changing the home culture in these situations, but no research was presented on this effect.
on students. Why are there still home cultures that cannot reconcile themselves with the goals of American education? Why does the outreach to the homes fail to convince the parents that they can support their children to succeed? Chu quotes another piece of disturbing research in Gay (2002) that the longer the students stay in school, the greater the discrepancy between their performance and that of white and middle-class students, eventually resulting in drastic dropout rates. These statistics simply do not make sense, unless there are some other underlying factors that are not even being assessed or monitored.

7 CULTURE VS. SKILLS?

As can be seen, some researchers focus entirely on the cultural issues while others examine the specific skills that ESL students might need to master in order to succeed academically. Certainly, being able to read effectively is important for content courses, as Richards noted in his case studies. Gail August compiled the results of research on academic success and noted that a recent California study among faculty showed that 83% of instructors feel that ‘poor analytic reading skills contributed to students’ lack of success in their courses’ (August 2011, 14). Furthermore, she notes that the speed of word reading is related to working memory, so that students who lack fluency in reading spend too much time trying to figure out the words in the text and not enough time being able to link the words to the ideas presented. August examined the ways in which spelling fits into reading comprehension and found that students need to understand 90-95% of the words in a text in order to comprehend it. This sort of correlation has been documented for over 50 years (August 2011, 15), she notes, and yet little attention is paid to this simple fact during academic course instruction.

These statistics are interesting to note in light of Gable Richards’ Italian exchange student who did not trouble himself to look up words in the dictionary, and managed to get through his reading looking for cognates in his native language. Still, what can be done to help ESL Readers? In fact, August laments, little research has been done on teaching spelling to this cohort. Thus, she carried out a spelling test study to determine the correlation between spelling knowledge and reading performance. The results showed that there was a connection between spelling knowledge
and specific texts, but this could not be generalized to vocabulary in general (August 2011). One can conclude from this research that it is important, when teaching course content to include spelling in the learning of new concepts, terms, and vocabulary. How likely content instructors are to undertake such teachings is not explored, but considering that many content instructors have had no formal education in pedagogy, it is difficult to imagine this sort of teaching moving up their agenda. More likely, more college-level reading courses should be required of ESL readers until they achieve a level of competence that will allow them to succeed in their chosen academic career.

8 SELF ESTEEM

On another end of the spectrum from specific ESL learner issues like spelling and reading is the matter of self-esteem. Some researchers believe that lower self-esteem is at the root of poor academic performance for English language learners from other cultures. Xi Shi and Sam Steen (2012) developed a model called Achieving Success Everyday (ASE) that can be administered to students to promote self-esteem and subsequent academic achievement. Key to their cohort, again, is the fact that, in the US, since 1980, the number of elementary to high school students who speak another language at home has doubled. Following from there, these numbers are likely to continue to rise at the community college level as well. Shi and Steen too note that there are numerous terms used to describe these students, including the term bilingual.

Shi and Steen quote substantial research that underscores the need for self-esteem in academic success, and they propose that their form of group interventions with students will ensure a rise in that self-esteem as it will help students to learn to display appropriate classroom behaviors and learn problem-solving skills. Their model is ‘semi-structured yet the protocol is flexible enough for group leaders to make adjustments to what might emerge during their group sessions” (Shi & Steen 2012, 64). Although the students in their study were middle school students of Hispanic origin with no more than five years in the United States, they suggest that their model could be successful with other cohorts. Although some students did show an improved GPA, there was
not sufficient improvement in overall academic performance to guarantee that the self-esteem sessions had in fact improved their academic work. By the time these students reach community colleges or the first year of four-year colleges and universities, it is no surprise then that they continue to do poorly, unless they are in the highest of the three categories of students that I have observed: an integrated second-language learner. ESL students who fit the profile most desired by community college educators move on from the ESL courses to academic studies. These integrated second-language learners will be required to take at least one and sometimes two composition courses, in academic writing, argument, occupational or technical writing.

In an academic writing course assignment, a sample student describes his experiences as follows:

I never thought that coming to this country would be so hard for me. Coming to a different school and having to work was very hard for me. Working every day and on the weekends was not a fun activity to do but I started to like my job. I never imagined that I was going to end up liking my job. When I learned everything about working on the farm and why it was so important for us I get so interested on helping grow organic vegetables. . . . When I first started working and having money I was thinking on not going to school any more but my parents did not like my idea. They told me to stay in school because they wanted me to have an education. . . . I am happy with the things I have done . . . because not all the people is always happy working on the farms.

Jose is an example of a student who does have family support for his studies; he is moving on to become an integrated second language learner. However, as mentioned earlier, not all former ESL students have that support. He had some difficulties finding topics for writing so he was allowed to investigate a soccer player for his research paper and produced this statement: ‘According to Ferereiro, Sebastian Perez, "Messi poised to earn almost $45 million this year in salary and endorsements." (2.06.2012:6).’ Although the format is not quite standard, it is obvious here that the student is beginning to grasp the format of academic writing, quoting sources and using citations. For this assignment, the student was assessed on brainstorming, parts of the essay, sources, use of the draft, use of a peer review, and grammar. This is a huge accomplishment for a student who wrote in his final self-assessment:
It was very hard for me when I had to write an assignment and I had to use commas and all of that. I never thought I was going to learn all the things I learned about punctuation. . . . I am very happy that I learned all of that in this class. I think that all I learned is going to help me in the future and that’s why I’m really happy.

An instructor is happy to hear such words. This student’s self-awareness indicates that the combination of family support and guided, intensive writing development projects can help students attain success.

While Jose could succeed in the academic writing course, he would have difficulty with the more challenging technical writing course. Technical writing students must produce research reports and such workplace documents as memos, letters, and meeting notes. In a 10-week course, there are regular, weekly assignments of 1-3 pages, quizzes on course content in technical writing, a final project with research, resources, references, and a professional portfolio of letters, memos and a resume. For most students learning formats for workplace writing is entirely new to them; they are challenged to master them and are not convinced that they are important. Ethical issues in global communication are also considered and this too is news to them. Furthermore, the research for this project may include their first encounter with abstracts and with writing their own. Here is a sample, if imperfect, abstract from a former ESL student now studying academic English:

Sample student
Instructor: Marlene Broemer
Writing-227
14 August 2013

Abstract
This proposal will revolve around Software Engineering Education. As technology advances, people with the essential skills to operate them are required. Software Engineering is still fairly brand new to everyone and there’s still a lot to find out. People educate themselves through rigorous classes in order to master the technology. A lot of trial and error goes on in this industry and that goes the same for the education that is needed to prepare people for this kind of career. The current education that is needed to become a Software Engineer is still imperfect and I propose that it needs to be adjusted.

These students are assessed on the following criteria: Content (3 points); Construction (paragraphs, transitions) (5); Mechanics (grammar and punctuation (5), and Format (MLA name, indented paragraphs) (3) for a
total of 16 points for an A. The emphasis in this course is on producing structured, 3-5 sentence paragraphs, but accomplishing this along with the other requirements is a challenge for ESL/academic students who rarely achieve an A on these assignments.

Finally, technical writing students must develop documents that will assist them in a job search, such as this letter from an ESL/academic student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment requirement</th>
<th>Student's version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salutation with colon</td>
<td>Dear Ms. Jackson:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject line</td>
<td>RE: Summer Employment at Your Ecofriendly Café.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and skills</td>
<td>My name is Xty Xavier and I am interested in pursuing employment with Edenway Coffee. Courses I have taken that apply to this position are: Public Speaking, Statistics, Microeconomics, Intro to Business, Intro to Communication, Human/Nature (a class highlighting the effect of human agriculture on nature), Culinary Arts, Event Planning, three 200 level Psychology courses, and Technical Report Writing. Through these courses I have learned a sense of professionalism that I believe is rare in someone my age. However, I have a vibrant personality that coordinates to the image of your café.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience and recognition of its applicability to company profile</td>
<td>My experience includes working in my school bistro preparing smoothies, coffee drinks, and baked goods. Luckily, I am an eager learner. The mission of Edenway is commendable, and I really respect the route you guys have chosen to take. I have always been conscientious of the environment and humanitarian efforts in my community. I support your cause, and I will continue to purchase Edenway Coffee to empower the cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing and polite tone</td>
<td>If you believe that I am a good fit for this café, I would love to schedule an interview at your convenience, so you may get to know me better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1:** Sample job application from ESL student

In this assignment, students are assessed on strict format for business letters, mechanics, as well as the proper tone for the development of a job appeal. Writing about work history in a professional manner is a challenge for all students—not just ESL students—but the latter most need to be capable of producing acceptable documents that will ensure them a position in the workplace. Consistently, this course assignment receives the most votes of approval and satisfaction from all students as
they can see ways that the skills they have learned will help them in their future.

As can be seen, none of these assignments involves attention to cultural issues although their importance has been suggested by recent research. These students were identified as ESL students due to the instructor's questions on a student registration sheet at the beginning of the course that ask for information about mother tongue and learning and writing experience. If students do not self-identify as ESL or former ESL students, there would be no way of telling their language origins or devising a helpful program. One element that has been suggested by the research to help students that has been incorporated into these assignments and courses is the use of a writing center or tutor or both.

9 CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the researchers mentioned echo a common theme—more instructor support. Arguably, correct diagnosis of ESL, ELL, CDL and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students is paramount to building a successful academic program, and Xu and Drame’s (2008) suggestions about a three-tier intervention approach that could avoid misdiagnoses of ESL students into special education programs should be heeded.

Secondly, the research by DeCapua and Marshall (2010) and Szu-Yin Chu (2011) emphasizes the importance of considering culture as a factor in inhibiting learning because of different learning styles and aims. DeCapua and Marshall’s delineation of the differences between High Culture and Low Culture learning environments points to some areas that could lead to changes by instructors. Even so, Xu and Drame pointed out that of the 41% of teachers who have ESL students in their content classrooms, only 12% of teachers had received eight hours or more of cultural training that might help them, partly due, no doubt to lack of funding (2008, 311).

Finally, August’s (2011) report on the effects of good spelling on reading comprehension should not be discounted despite its simplicity. Similarly, setting up an ASE model, as suggested by Shi and Steen (2012), could be
developed in a low-cost way, and the results of peer support might be forthcoming, even as mentioned by Richards (2011) in his case studies of the academic work of two ESL students that improved due to peer support and tutoring.

Of course, instructors wish for more time with their students, but students must be willing to take that extra time too, and that was the contributing factor for the success of the sample student, Jose, who gladly came to every office hour meeting he was offered and went to the writing center afterward to get more assistance. By the end of the term, he could identify the areas of his writing that he had repaired and can continue to improve those areas on his own as he proceeds in his school career. His was a success story—a former ESL student continuing on an academic path. There need to be hundreds of thousands more students like Jose, not just in the United States, but in all countries that have youthful immigrant populations that are trying to succeed in a second-language workplace. Once they have completed their second-language studies, these students find themselves in content courses competing with native speakers, but they still need help in achieving their language and career goals.

10 REFERENCES


5. Teachers in Transition: Finding a Personal Philosophy of Practice

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates developments in the practice of teachers who have engaged in a series of workshops on the integration of new technologies into their work in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. It looks specifically at developments in actions and knowledge during and after a teacher education programme, and how these developments shape or reshape teachers’ specific professional practice of using technology in EAP teaching. Drawing on a theoretical framework of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), it foregrounds the role of knowledge in shaping practice, and advocates self-directed approaches to the development of knowledge and skills required of EAP teachers in the digital age. This paper was first presented at The 26th Communication Skills Workshop in Helsinki where it was salient to themes of teacher identity and language centre identities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Dudley-Evans and St. John (2009, 6) situate English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as a division within English for Specific Purposes, which is also part of the broader “acronym-rich” (Martin 2014, 2) field of English Language Teaching. Blue (1998, 41) further categorises two main broad types of EAP classroom as being EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) and ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes), which are differentiated by increased emphasis on subject-specific tasks within ESAP, compared to general skills work within EGAP.

This field of teaching has seen considerable growth in recent decades (BALEAP 2008; Hamp-Lyons 2011; Gilbert 2013), and thus there has been a demand for suitably qualified practitioners of the subject. However there is not a single formal qualification for teachers of EAP (BALEAP 2008; Alexander 2010). Indeed, many practitioners simply
make the transition from general English teaching almost by ambition, pure accident, or opportunity (Martin 2014). Yet what is undoubted is that, underlying the practice of EAP teaching, there is a highly specialized skill set, and knowledge base, not just limited to language but also awareness of other disciplines.

Traditionally the work of EAP teachers has been situated in the language centres of universities, and this is where my particular study is also located. The participants in the study are a group of EAP teachers working for a language centre preparing overseas students for progression to UK higher education institutions. Through a range of backgrounds and career paths that reflect the uniqueness of English Language teaching as a profession (Borg 2006, 4-5), these individuals were part of an equally unique project. This project was a partnership model employed by a 1960s-established university in the UK, often defined as plate-glass, as in Beloff (1970), alongside a private-sector provider of English Language and Foundation courses.

At the outset, I was a manager within this partnership and it was my responsibility to recruit and develop an EAP teaching team. Upon doing so, I realized that there was a need for some form of training programme as a consequence of many staff members being new to an EAP or UK context. I thus decided to run training workshops with direct relevance to teachers’ classroom lives, and the technological tools at their disposal, particularly the Hitachi Cambridge Smart Boards with which each classroom was equipped, and the shared learning platform of a Moodle Virtual Learning Environment. However in taking this approach I paid heed to the suggestion of Laurillard (2002), cited by Motteram (2004, 1), that “academic conversations” must take primacy over the “technologies that service” institutions, and that “academic conversations” must take primacy over the “technologies that service” institutions.

Therefore the emphasis was on the integration of these new learning technologies with traditional approaches to the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The workshops took place over a six-month period and featured the specific subjects of Introductory usage of Moodle; Pedagogic Approaches to Interactive Whiteboard Usage; Adapting traditional approaches to feedback in the electronic age; Advanced usage
of Moodle; Blogs & Wikis on Moodle; & Use of technologies as a means of capturing lectures and recording feedback.

2 BIRTH OF THE RESEARCH STUDY – METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The situation of starting out from scratch in a new language centre then presented an excellent opportunity to conduct a piece of action research. This was in line with Burns (1999, 24) who speaks of action research often being prompted by “concrete and practical” issues of “immediate concern” in the workplace, echoing Kurt Lewin's original conceptualisation of “research which will help the practitioner” (1946, 34). In this instance, alongside benefits for myself as researcher, there were advantages for the EAP practitioners at the heart of this study, which resonate with Zuber-Skerrit's (1991, 2) essential processes and outcomes of action research, which are listed as “empowerment of participants, collaboration and participation, acquisition of knowledge, and social change”. Further to this, there could be benefits to the field of EAP as a whole, and its growing research tradition, and to the lives of the teachers.

Though there were twenty participants in this training programme at the outset, nine members voluntarily opted to participate in the first stages of this research study. Over time, as the research journey took shape, this group became smaller and three cases were eventually selected in a multi-case study approach; allowing analysis to occur across and within cases (Baxter & Jack 2008, 550). Although background cases are also important, a brief biography of the three main participants or cases is provided below.

2.1 Travellers on the research expedition

(1) KELLY – Despite having taught in commercial English Language schools for five years, Kelly's first degree background was in Criminology & Sociology. After this degree, she completed a CELTA course and spent a year working in China, teaching English and organising social activities. Returning to the UK, she assumed a position as a Senior EFL and Business teacher, in which she participated actively in training sessions with other
staff. During her time there, she also completed a Master’s degree in Sociology and then moved to her present position as an EAP teacher in the language centre where her background in Sociology also meant that she was invited to teach some Humanities-related subjects on Foundation and Graduate Diploma programmes. Kelly, then, was quite unique in having been solely employed in the language teaching industry for her whole working life, even though she has always harboured ambitions to move into teaching Social Sciences, at a higher level at some future point.

(2) MATTHEW - As another CELTA-qualified EFL teacher, Matthew’s background featured a combination of language teaching, freelance work in the music industry, and children’s workshops’ facilitator. Having completed BA/MA degrees in Film Studies & Philosophy, and then a CELTA, his earliest work in English teaching was a means of supplementing freelance work in the music industry. After six years of this, he became an Assistant Director of Studies in a language school, for four years, before a two-year return to the music industry. Then, after twelve years of dipping in and out of English teaching, Matthew came to work as a General English teacher in the language centre. Seeing the opportunity to make a career of this, and move into EAP, he then undertook a DELTA course at the same time as these workshops.

(3) VICTOR - Having graduated with a BA in Politics and Modern History, Victor spent the first two and a half years of his working life as a charity fundraiser. During this time he completed a CELTA, though did not move into language teaching immediately. Eventually, he found a position as a teacher in an international language school, where he moved into EAP through a Foundation course, providing international students with access to UK universities. In this role and others, he was a self-professed advocate of using as much technology as possible in the classroom, and when he joined the language centre herein, five years into his teaching career, he expressed excitement at the prospect of working with newer, better resources.

2.2 Data Generation and Collection

Capturing a rich sense of context is crucial to the reporting of case studies, particularly in an instance where activity and knowledge in
action drive the theoretical framework. In this case, the theoretical framework was shaped by TPACK (Mishra & Koehler 2006). Therefore, keeping in mind the characteristics of a qualitative case study (Stake 1978), I opted to use three main methods of data collection, and two secondary choices. These were focus group sessions, individual interviews, and observations as the main methods, with analysis of learning materials and a field journal as a further means of accurately representing the “methodology in action” (Mercer 2004, 138). The timeframe of the data collection process, and activities surrounding it, is illustrated below.

Table 1: The study’s bounded frame of time and activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>KEY ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATA GENERATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Months 1-3</td>
<td>Needs analysis; planning of research &amp; workshops; publicising workshops; getting ethical approval &amp; consent.</td>
<td>Field notes – from analysis of questionnaires, classroom observations, &amp; discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months 4-6</td>
<td>Workshops one &amp; two – Introductory usage of Moodle/Pedagogic approaches to IWB usage.</td>
<td>Data from three focus group sessions, classroom observations, and field notes (diary records); analysis of work on Moodle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months 7-9</td>
<td>Workshops three &amp; four–Adapting traditional approaches to feedback in the digital age/ Advanced usage of Moodle.</td>
<td>Data from three focus group sessions, classroom observations, and field notes (diary records); analysis of work on Moodle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months 9-11</td>
<td>Workshops five &amp; six–Blogs &amp; wikis on Moodle/ Use of technologies as a means of capturing lectures and recording feedback</td>
<td>Data from three focus group sessions, classroom observations, and field notes (diary records); analysis of work on Moodle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months 12-14</td>
<td>Selecting cases &amp; setting up interviews, and observations.</td>
<td>Individual interviews with four participants and observations of their lessons, &amp; analysis of learning materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months 15 on</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Clarification (if needed) from participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Using Tpack as a Framework of Analysis

The past decade of teaching with technology has been characterized by the emergence of a framework for teacher knowledge and for technology integration called “technological pedagogical content knowledge (originally TPCK, now known as TPACK, or technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge” (Koehler & Mishra 2009, 60). This is a framework that “builds on Lee Shulman’s construct of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to include technology knowledge” (ibid). Where Shulman’s (1986) framework involved the interaction of two bodies of knowledge, this involves the interaction of a third, which is technology. Through the interaction of these bodies of knowledge, practically and theoretically, there is creation of the flexibility “needed to successfully integrate technology use into teaching” (2009, 60), and a description of how understanding of educational technologies and PCK interact to produce “effective teaching” (ibid, 62).

Within this model (see Figure 1), there are three main components of teachers’ knowledge: content, pedagogy, and technology. However, “equally important to the model are the interactions between and among these bodies of knowledge, represented as PCK, TCK (technological content knowledge), TPK (technological pedagogical knowledge), and TPACK.” The interaction between these bodies of knowledge is depicted in the diagram below, which has evolved from earlier representations and descriptions of the framework, most notably in Mishra and Koehler (2006), and Koehler and Mishra (2009). TPACK was thus used as a theoretical lens in the coding process, and as a means of evaluating the forms of development that occurred in terms of the teachers’ actions and knowledge.
3 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EARLY STAGES

As evidenced by their biographies, the three teachers at the heart of this study were coming to the EAP context from different directions, and with differing levels of technological knowledge, and experience of using technology in line with pedagogy and content. Victor expressed a lifelong interest in the use of technology, for example, whilst Kelly and Matthew had inhibitions that came through strongly in the opening focus group sessions. Matthew spoke of the dangers of regression to a style of teaching that was heavily reliant on either a tool such as PowerPoint or instruments that were massively integrated to the extent that if this fails the teacher will then be left isolated with “nothing left to fall back on.”

Kelly added to this with the notion that technology and English Language pedagogy do not always go well together, especially in the area of communicative language teaching, as also voiced by critics such as Thornbury (2000). She held the view that the layout of the classroom could inhibit the natural communication that she aspired to as a language teacher. Victor, though, was not wholly uncritical but his criticisms were less of technology per se and more to do with the speed of development and the slowness of institutions to adapt to change. In the first focus
group session, he stated, "it's not so much how you use the technology that's important. It's having the way of teaching to go with it." This then suggests that right from the outset Victor was aware of the inter-linkage of components within TPACK, and the need to have pedagogy rather than technology shape the lessons, so as not "to simply use technology for technology's sake." Despite this, he felt that sometimes it was difficult to get to grips with new technologies such as the Virtual Learning Environment and very little could be done to relieve the tension of being "alone" in the classroom.

However, as the workshops progressed, there were changes in both actions and attitudes. By the time of the second focus group session, for example, there was a greater sense of partnership with the students. This particularly came about through more interactive usage of the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment. There was also an increase in references to dialogue in the workplace occurring through the workshops, and outside of the workshops, and the focus group sessions. In the broader activity system of the workplace, the teachers had begun to explore the usage of a greater range of tools that might benefit their teaching, such as a programme called Camtasia, which can be used in video or audio form to record lectures and provide feedback. Though we had studied electronic feedback in the workshops we had not looked at this particular tool, suggesting that pedagogic strategy was shaping choices in the classroom rather than individual tools. However, much of this development remained theoretical rather than practical in the early stages.

At this stage of the study, it appeared that the main developments were coming in the form of knowledge, aspiration, and collaboration rather than action. However, that does not mean that the developments are not significant. Shulman (1986) places teacher knowledge at the heart of teacher actions, and there was a sense of new technological knowledge beginning to shape their practice in the EAP classroom. This was apparent too in observations where I could see clear examples of attempts to integrate the different tools being studied in the training workshops, such as ensuring that Moodle and the interactive whiteboards were being used in lessons. Victor though expressed concerns that the VLE was limited in its affordances and slightly outdated, even usurped by this ever-changing age of mobile
technologies. His aspiration was to have the classroom better reflect the realities of the outside world, which was a view shared by Matthew.

4 MID-STAGE OF THE RESEARCH JOURNEY AND A SHIFT IN FOCUS

One of the dominant themes in the early stages was the teachers' sense that there was a certain expectation to teach in a particular manner in the EAP classroom and perhaps, in some senses, leave a lot of prior knowledge at the classroom door, as spoken of in Alexander et al. (2008). These authors, writing in the context of moving from General English to EAP, talk of how some teachers feel compelled to leave many of Communicative Language Teaching’s most useful skills and knowledge behind when they move into a more formal academic context. However, from the outset, both Matthew and Kelly seemed to draw on communicative strategies in their EAP teaching. In Kelly’s case this was seen as a natural fall-back option to aid communication. Over time, she would reduce the tendency to do this, but Matthew maintained a consistent emphasis on the communicative strategies of traditional language teaching.

Victor’s focus was less on finding a balance between EAP teaching and communicative activities, and more on the integration of newer technologies into his lessons. He was not so keen on Moodle, despite this being the language centre’s Virtual Learning platform, and aspired to introducing the usage of more mobile technologies into his lessons. He had alluded to this in the first focus group session and was now actively pursuing that interest by encouraging the language centre to purchase a set of iPads for students, which would be specifically used on an International Diploma Programme in Business Studies. This meant that he was using Moodle “a lot less this term” and that his interest had “tapered off in certain respects” (FG2). In terms of TPACK, Victor was moving towards a closer integration of content, pedagogy, and technology. Though the iPads were to be a vehicle for existing content, their usage would, in the long run, necessitate changes to pedagogy as well. However, this was still at an embryonic stage, and his main focus was on the integration of the existing course, which could be deemed as traditional, with a new form of technology.
Matthew too had developed an interest in the use of iPads, and was trying to integrate these to a greater extent into his own teaching. Of significance here is the fact that iPads were not explored in any great detail in the formal training workshops. He described technology as “the great equaliser” but stated that “it’s competing with existing networking potential” - giving the example of Moodle compared to Facebook. In the second focus group session he suggested that it would be great if the students used Moodle “in the same way as they used Facebook to interact ... rather than going onto Facebook and other social networking sites to interact in their own language”. There was also a need to motivate and interest students to see the benefits of “school” technologies in order to encourage usage. His way of doing this was to follow Victor’s lead and eventually to incorporate the iPads into his lessons to a greater extent. This appetite for exploration was summed up by his statement that - “when you hear about something, you think well, what’s that, I want to get my hands on that, that sounds like I could use that in the classroom”.

Interestingly, Kelly’s experience and practice was very different at this stage. Having learned how to use the technology, she chose to devote greater focus to the content aspect of her lessons, the ‘c’ in TPACK. Although Victor did this to some extent as well, whereas Matthew did not, Kelly’s work took on a combination of lexico-grammatical focus (Jordan 1997, Martin 2014), and an engagement with discoursal frameworks of target subjects or disciplines (Dudley-Evans & St John, 2009, 43). Kelly’s practice then, after the workshops, became almost paradoxical in that by letting technology slip into the background of her teaching, and elevating content, she was moving closer towards a truer sense of TPACK.

This sense of absorbing and positioning technological knowledge was captured in her description of the “resurfacing” of technological usage which of course has to be shaped by knowledge of an artefact in the first place. Discussing Camtasia, she explains that “I suppose what’s interesting is that as we’re coming to the end of term now it’s resurfacing, the idea of using it again is resurfacing” as a result of tasks such as marking being “out of the way.” This suggests that if a technological and pedagogical knowledge base is there, then it is possible that when everyday constraints are lessened, this knowledge can resurface and be drawn
upon afresh. This echoes Wilson & Berne (1999, 194) in their suggestion of teacher learning not being “bound and delivered but rather activated.”

5 END OF THE JOURNEY AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On the whole, all three teachers experienced different forms of development over the course of the study. There was certainly no doubt that they all had a stronger sense of embedding technology into their practice, as evidenced by the range of resources that they used, and the ways in which they used them. The latter was particularly evident in Victor’s work with iPads, and also Matthew’s to a lesser extent, where the instruments might have changed but the underlying pedagogy had not. Certainly, there was a higher incidence of using Moodle, in all three cases, and for both Victor and Matthew, a further blend with social media. Matthew spoke of creating podcasts, with students, and facilitating interactions with news websites and forums. Victor established a Facebook page for his students, in conjunction with his iPad project. Kelly, on the other hand, exploited the affordances of Moodle alone to foster more purposeful engagement with students. Furthermore, the technologies she explored over the course of her developmental journey could be described as more educational than social, in examining tools such as Camtasia and Teacher’s Pet.

Victor’s story was very much about resources and reshaping the classroom to meet the needs of present-day students, whilst Matthew’s was one of finding comfort with being an ELT practitioner thrown in at “the deep end” of an EAP teaching situation (McCarter & Jakes 2009, cited in Martin 2014, 3). Kelly’s journey, on the other hand, was one of seeking out comfort with the technology and the content, so as to retain a “human element” not just in her teaching, but in the physical space of the classroom itself. At the outset of the study there were tensions with the technology but by the end it had faded into the background. Through this happening, the teachers were then able to concentrate on the other key areas of their practice, such as pedagogy and content. This is significant in light of the theoretical framework since TPACK is not simply about using more technology, but rather about understanding how to synch and situate its various components.
Of these, some of the most interesting developments related to content knowledge. Although the literature suggests that content knowledge in language teaching can be problematic (Freeman 2002), all three cases presented successful examples of delivering course content through a combination of pedagogy and technology. There were though differences in the nature of that content, which had much to do with the teachers’ perceptions of EAP and their role as an EAP teacher. Whilst Victor’s emphasis was on discipline-specific work, Kelly’s lessons had more of an experiential, skills-based approach, and Matthew’s concentration was on language practice and production. Consequently, these beliefs about EAP influenced actions in the classroom. Kelly, seeking students’ movement towards autonomy, appeared to want to take away the crutch of technology at critical times, such as the research stage of the academic writing process. Matthew’s practice, on the other hand, was characteristic of the generic English Language classroom with less emphasis on disciplinary needs. Victor was highly conscious of disciplinary needs, but centred upon the technology, and the iPad as the vehicle for delivery of class content.

Significantly too, in terms of what this study can contribute to the field of EAP teacher education, a large part of this development appears to have been “self-directed” (Manning & Payne 1993, 369), following the impetus of the initial workshops. Largely, the three teachers have been the main actors in their own transitions. Yet, the workshops have also played an important part. They did this by facilitating “a cognitive space” (Mann 2005, 108) in which they developed awareness of themselves as language teachers operating in a new, digitalised EAP environment. From this, it can be argued that self-regulation lifts teachers beyond “putting out fires” (Manning & Payne 1993, 363); as was happening in some of the instances highlighted in FG1 and FG2. Technology’s presence in the classroom, for example, was inhibiting Kelly’s delivery of lessons in the interactive way she aspired to. Similarly, at the outset, Matthew and Victor identified a widening gap in the usage of technology’s potential(s) in school and social spaces.

The fact that Matthew and Victor collaborated on ways of addressing the school and social issue is also significant. For each of the three teachers, collaboration was a crucial theme, and they emphasised the importance of interaction with colleagues, whether informally in a staff room or in
more formal training contexts. Through doing so they were able to get to grips with the technologies in their own particular ways. In Kelly’s case, for instance, it is interesting that having gained better understanding of TPACK, she then feels more comfortable in going back to what Clandinin (1985) deemed as her own experiential history which has been shaped by earlier ELT experiences. I would argue that she achieved this by personalizing the technology, not just physically but also mentally and psychologically. This echoes Warschauer’s (1996, 3) reference to the computer, or CALL, serving as a medium for teachers’ “pedagogical philosophies.”

6 CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the whole then it is that drive towards personalized pedagogical philosophy which should become an essential part of EAP teacher education in the future. In this study, the three teachers’ personal philosophies are evidenced in actions and dialogue, particularly through interview questions relating to their practice, and their understanding of what EAP should be. The three teachers in this study have thus all experienced some form of development in their professional practice, with one of the main ones being a movement towards more self-directed development (Gibbons & Norman, 1987; Brockett & Hiemstra 1991; Mann 2005).

However, there are limitations to this if the onus for development lies solely for the individual without a reference point through which to focus and reconstruct knowledge, as in Manning & Payne (1993). There is therefore a need for a concrete system of development, such as Shulman’s (1986) call for a periodic table of teacher knowledge. If this could be worked out in liaison with the BALEAP Competency Framework (2008), then there could be a way of implementing clear guidelines on producing those technical skills and professional capabilities required of effective teachers. Though there is no recipe for effective teaching (McGrath et al. 2011, 5), there is a need to harmonise the lessons from instances of good practice, and address areas that require further clarity and development.
Therefore, beneficial as it may be to develop a teaching philosophy, there has to be a further reference point through which this personal philosophy can translate into effective practice in the EAP classroom. From this study, it seems evident that teachers want and need professional guidance, especially in the early stages of acquiring new knowledge. They want to be provided with the knowledge, so that they can then explore, direct, and develop this for themselves. Thus, it may not so much be a case of creating an established periodic table of teacher knowledge, but rather creating a more tailored and personalised periodic table of self-development that incorporates the knowledge and skills required of teaching.

7 REFERENCES


Paul Breen


6. “How do you rate?” Collaboratively Developing Oral Interviews in English Exemption Tests at the University of Helsinki

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ABSTRACT

Exemption testing constitutes a small but significant element of teachers’ workloads at the University of Helsinki Language Centre. Offering exemption from compulsory courses responds to student needs as students increasingly acquire the required English level outside language classrooms, both informally and non-formally (Karjalainen & Laulajainen 2011). With this in mind, a portfolio testing system was introduced in 2010-2011 in several faculties and we conducted an exemption testing project in order to examine and develop our current practices. This article focuses on our work on the assessment of oral skills, which is almost exclusively based on interview-style tests.

This work included teachers participating in a workshop with an accompanying pre-workshop task. The aims were to share assessment practices and procedures and to work toward greater standardisation in both rating and testing focus. The task consisted of a reflection on experience of interviewing and oral assessment and / or assessment of an exemption test interview. In the workshop, groups of teachers were asked to rate student performance in an exemption test and to make explicit the processes used to reach their decision. They also used CEFR oral assessment grids to express their ratings and discussed the grids’ usefulness. Each group produced a poster visualizing their ratings and processes.

In the article, we present the groups’ findings and examine the workshop in the context of our exemption testing project. The group rating task revealed a high degree of consensus on CEFR levels, despite some variation in assessment focuses. We also discuss the benefits of this workshop activity and identify future directions for the development of oral testing at our Language Centre. In offering an example of a bottom-up approach to the development of assessment procedure, the article suggests ways in which testers working on a small scale in an institutional context can respond to existing theory in developing reliability in oral tests.
1 INTRODUCTION

Language testing involves making judgements about a candidate’s language skills. In criterion-referenced testing, these judgements should be based on transparent criteria, clear to both tester and test-taker. From its beginnings as a tool to measure immigrants’ language skills, the CEFR has become one of the most widely used standards by which to assess language skills and discuss assessment (Fulcher 2010). In English-language exemption tests at the University of Helsinki Language Centre (LC), the level for granting exemption is officially CEFR level C1. However, during interviews with English teachers at the language centre as part of a project on these exemption tests, the level required was also expressed somewhat differently. Some teachers, for example, defined the level as academic C1, emphasising the candidate’s being able to communicate effectively within the discourse community of their study field. Others stated that in exemption testing they consider a candidate’s skills in relation to the courses which successful candidates are exempted from, courses which are also tied to the CEFR. Still others said that they used their intuition or gut feeling to make their judgement, albeit an intuition honed by experience of teaching and testing.

In this article, we examine the issues raised by the teachers’ responses in regard to the oral interview section of our exemption test. We describe group work done by the English unit to explore our common understanding of the standard required for granting exemption and its relationship the CEFR. The group work involved a workshop and accompanying pre-workshop task, in which teachers were asked to evaluate a candidate’s performance in a recorded interview and then discuss this with peers: verbalising their reasons for exempting the candidate or not, justifying those reasons, and negotiating a common understanding with a group of peers.

The background section of the article gives a brief overview of English-language exemption testing at the LC, focusing particularly on the oral interview part of the exam. Following this, we outline the testing project which the group work presented here forms a part of. Then we discuss the workshop and pre-workshop task - the rationale, the procedure, the results, and a discussion of those results. Finally, the article concludes with future directions for critically examining our standards in
exemption tests and how we apply them, as well as suggestions for other aspects of the oral interview which could be investigated.

2 BACKGROUND: EXEMPTION TESTS

English-language exemption tests at the University of Helsinki allow students to fulfil the foreign-language requirement in their degrees (Government Decree on University Degrees 2004). Those granted exemption receive three to five ECTS points and are exempt from taking one or two courses, depending on their faculty. This system allows for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning and is an important element in the LC’s policy of recognising and accrediting prior learning (Karjalainen & Laulajainen 2011.) Students who apply for exemption typically include those with English as a native language, those who have studied extensively through English, such as on an exchange programme, and those who have developed strong English language skills in their professional or personal lives. The test is not compulsory and students with strong English skills may, and do, take courses to develop their skills further.

2.1 Portfolio test

For most students, the English language exemption test consists of a portfolio system. Currently, eight of the university’s eleven faculties use this test, with a further faculty to join in autumn 2014. The test involves submitting a portfolio comprised of a study profile and an essay, which is then read by the examiner(s), the teacher(s) responsible for testing in the candidate’s faculty. If the portfolio is considered to be C1, or close to C1, the candidate is invited to an interview. This takes typically 20-25 minutes and it involves a discussion of the portfolio and an academic article from the candidate’s field, chosen by the examiner(s).

2.2 Oral interview

The portfolio - including an essay and study profile - submitted forms the basis for the much of the interaction in the oral interview. The study profile is typically used to open the interview and begin the discussion on a more personal, less abstract level. The interview then moves on to a
discussion of the essay and the article. The discussion of the essay involves the student summarising, clarifying, elaborating on, and contextualising the text they have written and, as such, asks for a wide variety of complex language functions, which should give the assessor access to a sample of language on which they can make their decision. The article discussion asks candidates to engage with an academic text from their field, ideally responding to it in relation to their existing knowledge. Depending on the candidate’s academic background, the discussion may involve a detailed discussion of the particulars of the text or a broader discussion of the larger issues.

In the discussion of the essay and article, the student is asked to demonstrate an ability to use the vocabulary of their field. This does not refer to specific terms, but an ability to engage with the subjects they have written and read about in an appropriate style. Thus, the exemption test is generally recommended to students who have completed several years of study in their field. This also increases the likelihood of the students having read academic texts and attended lectures in English in their field.

Listening and reading are not directly assessed in the interview, or in the exemption test system as a whole, but are inferred from ability to use sources in their essay, discuss the set article, and interact with the examiner in the interview. The focus is on productive skills as these are by and large considered more challenging for UH students, particularly in academic settings. Productive skills are generally also given more attention in LC English courses which fulfil the degree requirement, English Academic and Professional Skills (EAPS).

3 GROUP DEVELOPMENT WORK AS PART OF TESTING PROJECT

The group work which this article focuses on was part of a larger project on exemption testing, which took place between 2011 and 2013 at the LC. The aim of the project was to critically examine exemption-testing practices and suggest directions for further development. As part of the project, all English teachers at the LC were interviewed to gain knowledge of the breadth of experience within our unit and also to discover the opinions and feelings of teachers in relation to testing. This
helped to identify critical issues in the testing system, which led to workshops to discuss them further as a group. These interviews and workshops are discussed in more detail in Amendolara et al. (2013).

3.1 Rationale for the group work

At the English unit, we have used the CEFR descriptors from the *Manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR* (Council of Europe 2009) as descriptors for examining in exemption tests. Although their use as performance level descriptors in a specific test is problematic (see for example Fulcher 2010, 246), as university language centre teachers, we operate in an institutional context and need to be able to communicate the meaning of our test to students, university faculties, and beyond. This necessitates a being able to discuss our test in terms of the CEFR, which functions as a metalanguage for discussing language proficiency in many contexts. In the workshop, the aim was to work towards investigating our current test and its relationship with the CEFR, particularly in relation to the oral interview, avoiding the superficial alignment suggested by Figueras et al. (2005) and striving for “greater professionalism and increased transparency” (Little 2006, 187) resulting from a meaningful linking process.

The *Manual* (Council of Europe 2009, 9) suggests “five inter-related sets of procedures” in order to forge a connection between a test and the CEFR: familiarisation, specification, standardisation training/benchmarking, standard setting, and validation. Although these procedures have influenced the workshop, it should be seen in the context of the testing project and an ongoing unit-wide discussion on exemption testing, and not a faithful reproduction of the procedures in sequential order. In addition to the *Manual*, we also consulted other models and methods for the workshop, such as those outlined by McNamara (2000), Cizek and Bunch (2007), Fulcher (2010), and Kantarcioğlu and Papageorgiou (2011).

The *Manual*, and indeed much of the literature, takes a somewhat quantitative (Papageorgiou 2014, 21), top-down position in relation to these procedures, describing “session coordinators and trainees” (Council of Europe 2009, 40) and focusing mainly on large-scale, standardised testing. Our situation, however, demands a bottom up,
consensus-building approach. In order to develop a common understanding of the level required for our exemption test and then to relate this level to CEFR, the "right answer" (Council of Europe 2009, 40) which the manual refers to must be generated from within the English Unit, rather than being pre-determined elsewhere. The participants of the workshop thus provide the answers and the consensus on the correct interpretation of the candidate’s performance emerges from the discussions. Also, with small numbers of test takers per year - roughly a hundred - it is difficult to develop useful statistical data, particularly given the heterogeneous nature of the interviews and the faculties from which the candidates come. Thus, a method where the workshop participants’ self-articulated marking criteria can be compared with the CEFR descriptors allows for the validity of their use as performance level descriptors to be examined more clearly.

3.2 Pre-workshop task

Before the workshop on the oral interviews, English teachers at the LC were asked to complete a pre-workshop task. The task had two parts, which the teachers could choose between. The first part consisted of three open questions on experiences of exemption testing interviews. The second part was a task which asked teachers to listen to a recording of an exemption test interview and write a short reflection on what they would pay attention to in evaluating the candidate. The rationale for the first task was to orient frequent examiners to the issues to be raised in the workshop and also deepen the information gained from the earlier interviews with staff on testing. The second task provided an opportunity for teachers to become more familiar with a typical interview and, similarly, orient themselves for the workshop.

Six teachers who frequently examine in the portfolio system responded to the first task. They all described using the CEFR as the main guideline for assessing students, although three also considered the usefulness of the course and one felt that they used a subjective interpretation of the CEFR. As such, the answers correlate to the interview data obtained at the beginning of our testing project.
3.3 Workshop

The workshop involved 12 teachers listening to an audio recording of an exemption test OI and discussing it in groups. The examiners were two teachers, neither of whom participated in the group work. The teachers worked in groups of four, which were chosen to include frequent testers within the portfolio system and teachers who had tested less or not at all in this mode. Care was also taken to include teachers with experience of teaching and testing in different faculties, so that there would be a diversity in conceptions of language standards or at least the potential for different perceptions of what constituted a successful performance.

After initial listening, the groups discussed their responses to the candidate’s performance in the interview. They also outlined the reasons for their responses and stated whether they would grant an exemption. The groups created posters to display which features of the candidate’s performance influenced their decisions.

The groups received CEFR oral evaluation grids (Council of Europe 2009) after listening to and discussing the interview and related their own evaluations to the CEFR grids, paying particular attention to the B2 and C1 descriptors, which are relevant to our cut-off point. The grids were distributed during the group work, rather than at the beginning, in order not to overly influence the teachers’ initial responses and instinctive categories. The aim of this was to identify any features that were being used to evaluate the student which were not referred to in the CEFR grid.

Following the group work, the three groups met together to discuss their results. Reformulated groups discussed the posters they had prepared, focusing on the similarities and differences in their responses to the interview, the categories used to evaluate the candidate, and the relationship of the CEFR descriptors to their discussion.

3.4 Results and discussion of the workshop

The posters resulting from the group discussions showed a high level of agreement in terms of granting exemption. The candidate would not have been granted exemption by any group, with only one of the twelve teachers stating that they would have granted an exemption. One group
did point out that in a face-to-face situation they may have granted the exemption and that it was easier to fail the student when listening to a recording in a workshop situation. Another group stated that they felt the candidate was close to the level required and did display that level on occasions but that it was not sustained for long enough to grant an exemption.

The groups also generally agreed on the criteria, with two of them explicitly using the CEFR categorisation before receiving the grid. The other group used the categories grammar and vocabulary, in which both range and accuracy were commented on, in place of the CEFR grid’s range and accuracy. They also included a category entitled communicativeness, which roughly corresponds to the CEFR categories interaction and coherence, in that the group mentioned the candidate’s ‘comprehensibility’ and her ability to structure and organise the discussion through the use of clarifying questions.

The CEFR descriptors at B2 were generally considered more appropriate descriptors for the candidate’s performance than those at C1. Appendix 1 shows a comparison between the teachers’ comments and the CEFR descriptors, and there is generally a correspondence between them. The comments tended to focus on the candidate’s inability to produce language at the C1 level, in that the features mentioned in the descriptors were not present in the candidate’s performance. The focus was on range and fluency, though accuracy and, to a lesser extent, coherence were also referred to. Only one group highlighted specific grammatical issues as negative comments and as such this does not correspond directly to the descriptors, which focus on what an individual user can do.

Positive comments tended to focus on interaction. All groups viewed this aspect as a positive feature in the candidate’s performance and their comments correspond somewhat with the C1 descriptor; only one group, however, suggested that the candidate was on the C1/B2 borderline in this aspect. One group also positively commented on range, but this comment was qualified and corresponds more clearly with the B2 descriptor.

Although the teachers’ comments and the CEFR descriptors corresponded well, there were some areas where the links were not so
clear. The descriptors lack focus on the accuracy of vocabulary. For our test, the importance of academic and field-specific competencies - vocabulary, discourse, analysis - was highlighted and the descriptors correspond to this only in the range section. This is one possible area for development, in that the descriptors could be modified here to more clearly reflect the focus of the examiners. The accuracy descriptors, which focus exclusively on grammatical accuracy, seemed less important in this situation and perhaps this suggests that a strong B2 - “Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding” - is sufficient for our test purposes.

Finally the coherence section places a focus on “cohesive devices”, “organisational patterns”, and ‘connectors’. This seems overly detailed and focuses on particular features in a way that the other criteria do not. This is also less clear for UH students, probably less familiar with language assessment terminology, who are encouraged to read the descriptors and self-evaluate before applying.

Other factors explicitly referred to by the groups as having an influence on their evaluation were whether the student would benefit from the course (two groups), the knowledge and experience of the candidate (one group), the knowledge and experience of the teacher tester (one group). The first of these, whether the student would benefit from the course, appears less subjective and purely intuitive after the workshop and pre-workshop task. The courses are directly tied to the CEFR in that their starting level is B2 and they work toward the C1 level. As the candidate’s performance was also judged to be B2 and lacking sufficient features of the C1 descriptors, it suggests the student would indeed benefit from the course. The knowledge and experience of the candidate, in their academic or professional field, clearly does have an effect on the outcome of the test, but the link between this and the CEFR descriptors should be transparent, in that a candidate’s knowledge and experience contributes to or is the reason for their range, accuracy, fluency, interactional ability or coherence. In the case of the teacher’s tester’s knowledge and experience it would again be important to relate this clearly to knowledge and experience of the testing situation, the teaching situation which candidates are applying for exemption from, and their relationship to the CEFR descriptors at B2 and C1.
Overall, the C1 descriptors matched more closely to our groups’ ratings of the candidate. Also, the actual result of the oral interview matched with the groups’ rating: the candidate was not granted exemption. This indicates a welcome degree of consensus between the group work and the real testing situation. However, we cannot draw too many conclusions from one sample interview and one workshop on assessment. Ideally, in order to achieve greater reliability and validity, this workshop would form a model for ongoing examination of our testing system. Using borderline candidates’ interviews for similar workshops would seem to offer a useful way of furthering our common understanding of the standard and the relevance of the CEFR descriptors.

We should also note other areas of the dissonance between the teachers’ descriptions and the CEFR and investigate further whether C1 is necessary or appropriate for all criteria. In this workshop, the C1 descriptors for range and fluency appear to be relevant, but the B2 description for accuracy seemed to be acceptable. Certain aspects of the descriptors were not commented on, and this begs the question, could the descriptors be edited and adapted further for our test purposes.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Shohamy (2000) argues that to develop language testing, we must make a conceptual move from testing to assessment. This is reflected in our unit’s development of the portfolio exemption testing system, moving away from listening comprehensions, set writing tasks, and cloze tests to a system which prioritises work produced by the candidates on their own terms, in their own fields. This change, however, also implies that we examine more than the canonical literature on language testing when looking for a theoretical framework with which to examine and develop our testing methods.

Theories of communities of practice (see for example Wenger 1998) offer an alternative approach to viewing our work in this workshop and in the testing project in general. His definition of communities of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact [emphasis added] regularly” (Wenger 2006) describes our unit’s situation as testers in
small-scale context. In this group work, we have interacted by articulating our internal assessment criteria and comparing them to the official descriptors. Price (2005), writing on communities of practice in assessment, argues that a process such as this offers an opportunity to develop shared understandings of assessment standards and ultimately work toward a more consistent and fairer application of those standards.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my co-researcher, Sandro Amendolara, and all the members of the English unit at the University of Helsinki Language Centre for their effort and commitment in the workshop discussed in this paper. Many thanks also go to the Language Centre for supporting and facilitating our work on testing development.

6 REFERENCES


**Appendix**

The table below compares the teachers’ comments from the workshop and the corresponding phrases from the CEFR descriptors (Council of Europe, 2009). The text highlighted in yellow indicates the areas of the descriptors which aligned most closely to the teacher generated comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ comments</th>
<th>CEFR equivalents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Some) unclear speech</td>
<td>Range, C1: Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range, B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coherence, C1: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coherence B2: Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some “jumpiness” in a long contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of flow</td>
<td>Fluency, C1: Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Inappropriate chunking | Fluency, C1: Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.  
Fluency B2: Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.  
Coherence, C1: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.  
Coherence, B2: Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some “jumpiness” in a long contribution. |
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lacking academic terminology</td>
<td>Range, C1: to express him/ herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking academic discourse</td>
<td>Range, C1: to express him/ herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Verbal acrobatics (to express desired meaning) | Range, C1: a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.  
Range, B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. |
| Excessive use of filler – things, whatever, etc. | Range, C1: a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.  
Range, B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. |
| Excessive errors | Accuracy, C1: Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.  
Accuracy, B2: Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes. |
| Overly long pre-modified noun phrases | Range, C1: a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style |
### Qualified positive comments

| Ability to discuss own work but lacking academic analysis | Range, C1: a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.  

Range, B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. |

### Positive Comments

| Some ability to use academic terminology | Range, C1: a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.  

Range, B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. |

| Asks clarifying questions | Interaction, C1: Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.  

Interaction, B2: Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc. |
7. EFL or ELF? Teachers’ Perceptions of ELT in Hungary

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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a tendency to reconceptualise English used and taught in international contexts, which reflects both the influence of the EU’s plurilingualism policy (A rewarding challenge 2008) and the appearance of the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) concept (Jenkins 2006) in line with, or, in certain contexts, replacing EFL/ESL concepts. The significance of this change lies in the challenge ELF poses to native speaker norms in English teaching and communication and proposing instead the norm of the competent non-native speaker, who possesses a set of skills enabling her to negotiate meaning successfully in international and often professional contexts (Emmerson 2006). While this new approach could provide solutions for several problems that are difficult to handle in today’s foreign language classrooms, Illés (2013) points out that the ELT community, normally enthusiastic about new ideas, now have reservations about ELF and often regard it as a reduced, broken, non-standard form of English, which has only a limited role.

The aim of this paper is to discuss how this new trend influences international and Hungarian ELT on the basis of recent research and an interview study with Hungarian English teachers. The issues examined will include the motivations of learning English, the variety of English taught and how this decision is made, and finally the perceptions of ELF and its influence on practices and expectations in ELT.

1 INTRODUCTION

The last decade has brought some new tendencies in the aims and perspectives of foreign language teaching including ELT in Europe. These new considerations include promoting plurilingualism (A rewarding challenge 2008) as an alternative to Global English, “an umbrella term covering all varieties of English worldwide” (Jenkins 2006, 159) as well as recognising English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as a language variety in its own right, owned and shaped by the international community of non-
native speakers of English (Jenkins 2006). The plurilingualism policy and the ELF concept project alternative images of language competence that can make foreign language speakers effective in international communication, which in turn influences the aims and norms of ELT as well (Illés 2013).

These new tendencies in foreign language teaching in general and ELT in particular may encourage the Hungarian English teaching profession to reconsider their current objectives and standards. Recent research on Hungarians’ foreign language competence (Eurobarometer 2012) faced us with the fact that despite the rising number of lessons, more and better trained teachers, a principled national FLT curriculum and a growing number of young people speaking a second language (Einhorn 2012), the number of Hungarians speaking English (20%) is still below the EU average (38%). There has been no increase in this value since 2005, and even those Hungarians who speak a foreign language seem to be dissatisfied with their L2 competence (82%) (Eurobarometer 2006).

This study aims to explore the implications of ELF research on ELT, as well as present a survey of Hungarian English teachers’ reflections on their current aims and standards in ELT in Hungary.

2 CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF ELT

2.1 Controversial attitude to Global English

Although ranking only third with its 375 million native speakers, English is the world’s most widely spoken language with possibly more than a billion non-native speakers spread on all continents (Wikipedia). Pulling down national and cultural barriers, it is the language of global science, business, tourism, art, education and media, developing its unique varieties in international online chatrooms, video conferences, sports competitions and university classrooms. While Global English seems to offer a convenient alternative for international communication, there have traditionally been doubts about its overall benefits. Experts point out that English might present a linguistic and cultural threat to other languages and cultures (Kontra 1997; Phillipson 1999), promoting, for instance, ethnocentric ideals of valued knowledge (Kubota 1999) and
language teaching aims and methods that are disadvantageous for certain foreign language learners. According to Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999), for instance, expectations to develop an individual voice in writing and peer review papers might be problematic for students from collectivistic educational cultures, which focus on passing on knowledge (represented by teachers) instead of reconstructing it. Petric (2004), on the other hand, points out that treating plagiarism as an academic sin instead of a developmental issue disadvantages students from cultures where works, ideas belonging to the literary or religious canon represent collective knowledge and are thus often quoted without acknowledgement.

The above lines of criticism reflect the concern that while Global English provides a medium of communication to connect people all over the world, it is accompanied by underlying cultural and intellectual values as well as linguistic expectations that might, at the same time, discriminate non-native speakers of English in certain language use contexts. Concerning the linguistic expectations, Seidlhofer (2004, 213) points out that now there is “an inverse relationship between perceived significance and relevance of English in the world at large and linguistic descriptions focusing on the core native-speaker countries”. However, compared to the native speaker model as the norm in ELT and international communication, non-native speakers are inevitably seen as defective communicators. One way of resolving this problem, according to Seidlhofer (2004), is reconceptualising Global English as English as a Lingua Franca.

### 2.2 English as a Lingua Franca

In recent years speakers of English as a foreign language have by far outnumbered native speakers: according to Crystal (2003), now there are four times as many non-native speakers as native speakers. As a result, the nature of English language communication in international contexts has been changing: it increasingly requires high-level intercultural sensitivity and advanced negotiation skills rather than native-like language competence (Seidlhofer 2004). Thus many experts (cf. Illés 2013; Jenkins 2006, 2009; Kontráné Hegybíró & Csizér 2011) now question the exclusive role of native speaker standards in ELT and emphasise that learners of English should be prepared for real language
use. This is most likely to take place among non-native speakers in international contexts, which, according to Widdowson (1997), are dominatedly professional. This claim, however, does not seem to be supported by Eurobarometer 2012 data. What this survey suggests is that most people use their foreign language(s) mainly for personal purposes. While the fields of personal communication have also increased substantially since 2005, the areas of professional language use seem to be underrepresented and also stagnating.

The above statistics tend to reflect the fact that non-native speakers use English in a variety of contexts in which they do not always need the full repertoire of comprehension and production skills or native-like phonetic, semantic or grammatical control of the language to function effectively. In line with this, Emmerson (2006) claims that Kachru's three-circle model (1992) describing speakers of English according to the country of origin should be revised. According to Kachru, the inner circle countries, where English is spoken as the primary language, are the norm-providing countries determining the acceptable standards and development of the language. The countries of the outer circle, where English has spread through colonial expansion, are norm-developing, shaping their own standards still based on the norms of the inner circle countries. Finally, the norm-dependent countries, where English is not an official language and learners have limited contact with native speakers, depend entirely on the standards provided by the inner circle and have no role in shaping the language. Emmerson (2006) points out that this classification is no longer appropriate for describing communicative effectiveness in international communication, and he proposes a threefold classification of native and non-native speakers based on intelligibility, rather than the country of origin. In this framework fully intelligible non-native speakers have the same norm-providing function as educated native speakers speaking British or American English without a strong accent. In contrast, speakers of the inner and outer circles who speak a strong local accent and are unable to code switch into fully intelligible international English are not more effective in international communication than expanding circle speakers with a limited command of the language.

To take this idea further, some experts suggest that through the contribution of the international community of non-native speakers, a
new variety of English termed English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has evolved. ELF is a tool for communication chosen by people with a different cultural and linguistic background (Jenkins 2006), and “the ELF context is an ever-changing, dynamic process created by the active involvement of the participants” (Illés 2013, 505). As such, ELF is necessarily characterised with unique phonological, lexicogrammatical and pragmatic features which reflect the speakers’ L1 background, striving for cooperation and negotiating meaning, as well as an intensive use of compensatory strategies, e.g., circumlocution (Jenkins 2006).

The ELF-based approach to ELT calls for a revision of some old beliefs as well. Jenkins (2006), for instance, questions the relevance of the interlanguage (IL) continuum if the end point is not actually native-like competence in the target language, and calls for changing attitudes to IL errors and fossilization. She also urges that non-native speakers and international contexts of communication should be more intensively represented in ELT materials. In line with this, “the misconception of monolinguism” in ELT, that English is best taught without the use of and reference to other languages (Kontra 1997; Phillipson 1992) is also being revisited, recently by Budai (2013) in Hungary. Others explore the problems of ownership and identification: while Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) question the role of integrative motivation (inspired by the love of the foreign language and culture) in learning World Englishes, David Crystal (2010) in a series of youtube interviews talks about the transformative power of non-native speakers and the role of the internet in this process.

Although the ELF approach could offer guidelines for a more reality oriented ELT and for solving numerous problems that are difficult to handle within the current framework of ELT, the English teaching profession seems to have reservations about this new idea. On the one hand, teaching materials still promote the ideal of successful communication with native speakers (Jenkins 2006), which serves business interest pointing far beyond the interests of language learners (Maley 2009). On the other hand, teachers seem to consider ELF as a kind of pidgin, an incorrect, broken form of the language (Illés 2012) – even if this is what they themselves actually speak (Illés, Akcan & Feyér 2013). This might make it difficult to form a confident teacher and L2 user ego, and reflects a lack of conviction that ELF is a fully acceptable linguistic
variety capable of increasing the socioeconomic status of its speakers (Jenkins 2005).

2.3 Teachers’ opinions about ELF: International perspectives

The research examining ELT teachers’ attitudes to ELF tends to support these gloomy perspectives. The majority of English teachers more easily and instinctively identify with native norms, believing these varieties are understandable for a wider circle of speakers independent of the context of language use (cf. Jenkins 2005; Loder Büchel 2013; Tomak & Kocabas 2013; Uygund 2013). In line with this, they can only define understandability and appropriacy on the basis of native norms and are reluctant to accept a concept of linguistic correctness differing from native English norms. This belief is also supported by outside pressures: teachers feel they are not in the position to decide what English to teach, and following the native norms is the easier way as this is what available course materials and exams represent (Maley 2009; Tomak & Kocabas 2013; Uygun 2013).

However, research results also suggest that the more information teachers have about ELF, the more positive their attitude is, so now there is an increasing emphasis on developing trainee teachers’ ELF awareness in teacher training (Pedrazzini & Nava 2010). Indeed, there is a growing number of non-native ELT teachers for whom L1 roots are important and who are happy to identify with the colourful international community of ELF speakers, striving for intelligibility and functionality instead of native-like language competence (Guerra 2013).

The tendencies reviewed above indicate the difficulty of a paradigm shift in international ELT: even if teachers might feel the urge to change, they tend to find it problematic to implement changes in the face of the cemented course materials, curricula, exam requirements, school conditions and the expectations of decision makers, parents and learners. In the following I shall examine how Hungarian teachers cope with this challenge by exploring their perceptions of changing English language needs in international contexts, and their attitudes to the ELF approach as a way of catering for these needs.
3 THE STUDY

3.1 Aims, participants and data

The study aims to explore the views of Hungarian English teachers about their aims and standards in ELT on the basis of the following questions:

1. Why should we learn English nowadays in Hungary? Do your students share these motivations?
2. Which English do you teach and why?
3. Do you try to prepare your students for international communication in English? If yes, how?
4. What is your attitude to using the mother tongue and other languages to support ELT and promote multilingual awareness?

The participants included 30 English teachers who had completed their MA in English teaching at Miskolc University within 3 years before the data collection, including some who were still students at the time of the study. They have varied experience in ELT in private, public, primary and secondary education: 22 teachers had been practising English teachers for 2-20 years (on average 11.6 yrs.) and 8 respondents were novice teachers. As they all lived and worked in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Hajdú or Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County at the time of the study, their responses reflect the specific educational context of this region.

The teachers and trainees volunteered to participate in a semi-structured written interview via email. They responded in English and their ideas are quoted as they had presented them. Owing to the small number of the participants and the variability inherent in the open questions of the interview, the resulting data have been subjected to qualitative content analysis.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Motivations for learning English in Hungary

Figure 1 shows the perceived reasons for learning English provided by the teachers. The numbers after the different items refer to the number of respondents who mentioned them. As all the respondents proposed several motivations, the numbers do not add up. The list is headed by
general motivations ("English infiltrates all fields of our life" (30), "it is the gateway to the world" (24)), work- and study-related motivations following in the mid-range.

Only few respondents listed personal development (6), widening relationships (2) and learning simply for enjoyment (2).

While discussing the motivations for learning English, several teachers also reflected on the influence English might have on national identity. Six respondents expressed concern about the overwhelming dominance of English threatening L1 language and culture, and three argued explicitly against the idea of losing the national identity. Four teachers said that we need a world language and it should be English “if want to be in the circulation of the world ...” and because “without English one might seem uneducated in international relations”.

The respondents seem much less optimistic when asked to what extent their students share these motivations. Twelve teachers complained
about a general lack of interest/motivation in learning English, which they attributed to an exclusive focus on exams at schools and social inequality in our polarising society:

Most of our students come from lower class families, they are not the most talented and hard-working of the area. Only few of them have already been abroad. They don’t consider travelling abroad or speaking to a native speaker of English important in their life.

Faced with such difficulties, the teachers worked out their own solutions including focusing attention on long-term/real-life aims and benefits, teaching cultural content, organising competitions and theatre visits, asking students to report on their own travelling experience and organising trips to neighbouring countries to see how others learn and speak English as a foreign language.

3.2.2 English in the classroom: choice of language and cultural content

A major motivating factor can definitely be the variety of English that teachers choose to introduce in the classroom. Only five teachers said the teachers’ knowledge determines what English is taught; the opinion most dominantly represented is that the course book determines this choice (11), which, actually, tends to be British English (8). Ten teachers insisted that it is important to familiarise students with different varieties of English, and although eight respondents believed students have no preferences, four teachers said they started to teach American English on student demand. Ten teachers reflected on ELF: seven said that it has no place in the ELT classroom and only three assumed that it can be a useful tool.

These opinions lead to some thought-provoking conclusions. While many teachers did not feel they actually “own” one specific variety of English that they represent in the lessons (as the course book and student demands determine it), they still seem to insist on native speaker norms both for teachers (“An ideal teacher speaks the language as a native speaker”) and learners:

The stress of learning English is not only to obtain a confident usage of the language in everyday situations but to acquire a broad sense of how native speakers are thinking and what is their cultural and historical heritage also.
Interestingly, although only three teachers claimed that the ELF idea can bring useful changes in ELT, there were significantly more (10) who said that in the foreign language classroom students should be prepared to handle variety either to cope with exams better or to get used to real-life speech:

I ask my students to watch films with the original sound. The classroom listening materials never show speakers with strong accent. Learners are used to beautifully articulated English.

They tended to emphasise, though, that creating this variety is the teachers’ choice and responsibility as most course books are based on British English and materials representing linguistic variety are scarcely available.

One of the three teachers who supported the ELF idea emphasised that exposing students to variety actually helps them develop their own variety of English. Others added that focusing on ELF might encourage teachers to shift their exclusive focus from accuracy to fluency, and that, with the internet around, students are increasingly exposed to non-standard forms of English, which has to be addressed.

Despite supporting variety and questioning native speaker norms, there was an abundance of negative opinions about exchanging EFL norms for ELF standards. Apparently, course books do not support this idea either (“fortunately this ELF doesn’t appear in our course books”), and as “students devote time and money, they want ‘real’ English”. Some teachers (5) expressed grave concerns that ELF will lead to the deterioration of English. One of them pointed out that, working as a language examiner, she had been witnessing lowering standards and making allowances for accuracy for the sake of fluency for some time, which also encourages learners to be superficial in general. Such resistance to change and insistence on native norms leaves little way for bringing linguistic and contextual variety in the classroom.

3.2.3 Preparing learners of English for international communication

While one of the teachers who disapproved of the ELF idea wrote indignantly about a Comenius exchange where her otherwise quite proficient students spoke “horrible English” with the visiting students
(but still understood each other), twelve teachers agreed with the idea that they would like to prepare their students for international communication. Multicultural education seems important, and ELT is a way of promoting the equality of languages and cultures:

We should never forget to remind our students that no culture or language is more valuable than the other. One great opportunity to do so in our school is through accepting members of AIESEC on the internship programme as teacher assistants. They are usually not from English-speaking countries. We have had volunteers from Brazil, Italy and Greece.

It seems that even though there is a will to use ELT as a vehicle for multicultural education, it is difficult to find a way. Teachers complain about the lack of good local course materials partly because of the lack of promotion (“Hungarian authors don’t promote their language books very successfully”), but there are some good local examples, as the following quote illustrates:

It was very interesting to see in a text book of a Hungarian writer [...] that the characters were of the nations surrounding Hungary and just one British and one half American. This also showed respect to these smaller nations and their languages. I really enjoyed working with a book written by a Hungarian writer for some years.

Besides new course materials many teachers recognise the need to develop new communicative strategies to build a dialogue and to learn to negotiate. However, Hungary being a rather closed, monolingual society, multicultural education runs into difficulties, as it is illustrated by the following reflection:

If I look at my position in connection with EFL teaching I would say that language teaching at the heart of Europe is very different from those used in other parts of the world mostly for cultural reasons. While our learners mainly come from our country, we share the same mother tongue, the same culture; other teachers in London or Sidney have to teach people of different nationalities, with different culture, religion and attitude towards language learning and its target.
3.3.4 Using the mother tongue and other languages to support ELT and promote multilingual awareness

The difficulty to adopt a multicultural perspective rings back in the responses to the question about the use of other languages to support ELT and multilingual awareness. While the question sought to reveal if any other foreign languages were involved in linguistic or cultural comparison, here the responses focused almost exclusively on the use of the L1 with only one reference to another language, highlighting the importance of translation:

*I am happy if we translate new words into Hungarian and do not just take over English words. Not all languages do this. In Romanian they do not have a word for ‘smartphone’ as we have ‘okostelefon’ in Hungarian. If classroom work raises questions like these, I often point out the beauty of our mother tongue.*

The teachers were divided on this issue, twelve of them claiming that “*L1 should be avoided to maximise L2 input*”, while sixteen respondents listed various reasons why L1 can support ELT. The teacher of a foreign language should be proficient in both L1 and L2 (10), which enables him/her to “*be clearer, save time and foresee problems*”, as well as to “*create a bridge with L1 background, especially at the beginning*”. A good bilingual teacher also acts as a role model, and students can “*take advantage of the teacher’s Hungarian background, attitudes and experiences*”.

4 CONCLUSION

International communication in any mediating language including English calls for new linguistic and communicative competences. The ELF paradigm offers practical guidelines to match educational practices to these needs shifting focus from accuracy to intelligibility, and thus from native norms to competent non-native language user and mediator norms. However, it seems that ELT teachers, who could play a key role in generating this paradigm shift, have many reservations. The reasons might lie in their own EFL education and language use experiences (Jenkins 2005) as well as the dominance of course materials and curricular expectations which still reflect native norms.
The present small-scale study suggests that Hungarian teachers also see these problems. There are many institutional constraints (lack of appropriate materials and resources) that stand in the way of change, and this clearly fosters their insistence on native norms even in the face of language ownership problems. They suggest that learner motivation is also problematic. Many students are unmotivated because of social disadvantage, lack of access to foreign media or travelling/working opportunities. On the other hand, the dominance of instrumental motivations (passing exams, getting admission to higher education) discourages long-term commitment to foreign language learning and poses too high, accuracy-related standards for judging language competences, leading to dissatisfaction and a lack of self-confidence.

Despite these problems, change seems to be on the way. Many English teachers interviewed in this study see the solutions in the form of bringing real life English into the classroom through the media, internet, various cultural programmes, personal experiences, relationships with other institutions where English is learnt as a FL and shifting norms towards the skills of a competent non-native speaker. However, it can also be concluded from this study that teachers would need more accurate information about the changing language needs of international communication and the role of ELF in ELT. Teacher training should clarify that ELF offers a new approach to ELT rather than a “new English” to be taught. The key to this new approach is sensitising teachers to linguistic variety and equipping them with strategies that help them cope with it. It is therefore important to provide teachers opportunities and forums to discuss these issues: to clarify their own beliefs and attitudes and reflect on their changing roles in ELT. It is through these reflections that they can adopt a confident ELF teacher role and set realistic objectives for themselves and their students as well.

5 REFERENCES


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