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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of our new ICC-Languages journal which focuses on summaries of the presentations at our annual ICC-Languages conference held in Berlin on May 3rd to 5th. We haven't got all the summaries yet but we will add the others as soon as we receive them and notify you when we do.

ICC Languages now has two academic journals. TLC (Training Language and Culture) comes out four times a year and features longer research papers. You can access TLC journal, now in its third year of publication on www.icc-languages.eu/TLCjournal or www.rudn.tlcjournal.org.

The ICC journal will be published twice a year, allowing space for shorter articles featuring teaching practice and ideas. Our July edition will feature summaries of presentations at our annual conferences and complements the slide packs used in the presentations that you can see in Conference Presentations under Conferences/ Berlin 2019 on our website. Visit <https://icc-languages.eu/conferences/2019-berlin/>

As always, the success of ICC Journal and TLC depends on you. View these journals as your chance to spread your ideas and research and that of your colleagues' and your students.

Our articles cover all aspects of language and linguistics, intercultural studies, language and cultural training, the use of technology in language and cultural training and developments in testing and assessment.

Let me know if there is anything you would like to publish in ICC-Journal or TLC. ICC-Languages is here to help.

Let me wish you a great summer and enjoy your summer reading!

Barry Tomalin

Editor ICC-Journal

Joint Managing Editor, TLC

Multilingual testing and assessment

Prof. Bessie Dendrinis, ECSPM President

In opening my keynote address, I spoke briefly about the ‘multilingual turn’ in education, induced by today’s globalised world of information technology, which offers more opportunities than ever before for communication and interaction between people across the world, increased rate of information acquisition and exchange across national, linguistic and cultural borders and intensified mobility and migration (for the affluent and people in distress).

This ‘turn’ is especially pronounced in the EU context, where multilingualism is promoted as ‘a powerful symbol of Europe’s aspiration to be united in diversity’ and as a basic factor for ‘mobility, employability and growth’, the right of all pupils to learn more than two foreign languages in school is an agreed upon policy and the provision of support to multilingual classrooms is viewed as a priority. Of course, the ‘turn’ is still largely a goal rather than a reality. The European Commission has been making recommendations to Member States supporting multilingual education but European societies are still largely bound to their monolingual ideologies. Moreover, European schools are still attached to their single language policies and their pedagogic approaches continue to be largely based on the linguistic purism creed, connected to the “one nation, one language” construct and to theories of linguistic-cultural homogenisation. Of course, while this is true for the majority of European educational institutions, we are beginning to witness a gradual change, as there are a few interesting examples of immersion, bi- or multilingual schools, as well as institutions with multilingual whole-school policies. We are also beginning to see integrated curricula for languages and attempts to make use of multilingual pedagogies that are gradually emerging.

One aspect of (language) education that remains exclusively monolingual in most places is testing and assessment. In fact, this was the focal point of my talk. Relevant surveys offer data showing that classroom assessment activities and test tasks, as well as school language examinations and high-stakes (language proficiency) testing are exclusively monolingual. They are all designed to measure the competences and skills that learners have developed in one language at a time; to evaluate what monolinguals can/cannot do. The examples of bilingual tools and instruments emerging in local contexts responding to specific contextual needs are scarce. The reasons for this state of affairs are several, including that bi- or multilingual assessment and testing are more

challenging than bi- and multilingual teaching, given that the demands of the former for psychometric accuracy, validity and reliability of measurement are enormous. Furthermore, there are no education policies or curricular requirements favouring multilingual testing and assessment, plus there is a serious insufficiency of evidence-based research to support their positive backwash effect. Most importantly, (language) teachers not only still believe in the separation of languages in the educational system, but they are also ignorant as to how to assess language skills or content-knowledge using languages in combination with one another. Part of the reason for this is the fact that, up until now, language testing and assessment have been modelled on the exam batteries and instruments designed by the international conglomerates, which consistently downplay the politically powerful role of testing and conceal the symbolic and economic profit of international language proficiency testing which is, unavoidably, monolingual.

With globalisation, which has been brought about and has caused a growing internationalisation of production and marketing, we have witnessed the relentless rise of multinationals. And though the challenges to the new world 'orthodoxy' are limited, and most of these remain theoretical, there is an increasing concern about the inefficacy of internationalised methods, products and means of assessment especially in the sphere of education. International methodologies, coursebooks and tests are seriously questioned. Attention is turning to glocal¹ or local teaching/learning materials, assessment programmes and proficiency testing, which recognise the importance of including local content, norms and values into teaching materials and tests. Where foreign languages are concerned, there is an additional advantage to (g)local testing and assessment instruments: they are better suited to the use of more than one language.² Given recent attentiveness to bi- and multilingual education, it is crucial to consider bi- and multilingual testing and assessment tools, because of their washback effect on teaching and learning. As a matter of fact, testing and assessment methods, tools and instruments have considerable control over (re)defining knowledge. As such it goes without saying that changes in language teaching and learning require changes in language testing and assessment. We cannot achieve desired goals by teaching through multilingual pedagogies but testing/assessing through monolingual practices.

¹ A new term invented to describe the combination of global and local.

² For a detailed discussion of the advantages of local over international testing see: Dendrinos, Bessie. 2013. Social meanings in global-glocal language proficiency exams. In C. Tsagari, *et al.* (eds.) *Language Testing and Assessment around the Globe: Achievements and Experiences*. Language Testing and Evaluation Series. Peter Lang, pp. 47-67

Next my talk centred on the research projects that are beginning to surface around the world -- projects involving the use or some form of experimentation of bi-and multilingual instruments designed to fulfil a socially informed educational purpose, or perhaps to justify a socially, politically and ideologically based theoretical assumption. In examining these projects, which contain useful ideas about how to develop valid multilingual testing and assessment tools, and how these may impact language (literacy) education, I classified them in the following four categories, in terms of the social or educational purpose each project is to meet: 1) Fairer testing and assessment in multilingual environments; 2) Providing proof of bi- or multilingual competence; 3) Assessing multilingual competence to support minority languages; 4) Assessment for plurilingual competence. While I explained which types of projects and instruments each category includes,³ the next part of my talk concentrated on the fourth category but first I thought it was important to define the term *plurilingual*.

According to the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) “Plurilingual and pluricultural competences are not ... the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (p.168). Plurilingualism, as the term has come to mean today, involves learners’ ability to communicate using their entire linguistic repertoire, creating meanings using all of their semiotic resources (not separately but in combination with one another, as in the case of cross-linguistic mediation). It also involves switching (or translanguaging) from one language or dialect to another, from one discourse or genre to another; expressing oneself in one language and understand the other (as in inter-comprehension events); call upon the knowledge of several languages to make sense of a text (oral or written); recognise and use words from a common international store; mediating between individuals and texts according to the task at hand; experimenting with alternative forms of expression in different languages and language varieties and exploiting all available semiotic modes to create contextually appropriate meanings.

The next term I concentrated on was one of the major components of plurilingualism, i.e., linguistic mediation – one of the major communicative activities, according to the CEFR Companion, along with reception, production and interaction. This is why levelled descriptors

³ For referenced information about the projects in each of these categories and further discussion on the issue of multilingual testing and assessment see the position paper which can be accessed from the ECSPM website at: <http://ecspm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MultiTest.pdf>.

have been developed and published in the *CEFR Companion* (2018)⁴, according to which in mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct and convey meaning in the same language (intra-linguistic mediation) or a different language (cross-linguistic) mediation. Actually, it refers to linguistic, social, and cultural processes by which people create conditions for communication and cooperation or defuse delicate situations and tensions that may arise. It involves cognitive and emotional intelligence, as well as empathy. The levelled descriptors for mediation in the *CEFR Companion* are presented in three groups: (a) Mediating a text, (b) Mediating concepts, (c) Mediating communication. Descriptions of mediation strategies are also included.

The last part of my two-hour talk concentrated on a language proficiency testing system that includes oral and written cross-linguistic mediation tasks. This is the multilingual examination suite for Greek learners of English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Turkish, on the 6 level scale of the Council of Europe, known by the Greek acronym KPG.⁵ The mediation test tasks of this examination suite require learners to relay information, for a specific communicative purpose, from a source text in one language (Greek) in another oral or written text in the target language. However, this examination suite is not multilingual simply because it involves cross-lingual mediation but also because it has been developed on the basis of (a) common proficiency scaling that is aligned to the 6 level scale of the Council of Europe, (b) illustrative descriptors calibrated and aligned to the CEFR, with additional accompanying criterial features across languages and (c) a single (semiotic) theory of language. Furthermore, it operates within a multilingual framework as it is based on a generic (portable across languages) methodological framework, suitable for describing language performance across proficiency levels. Finally, across languages, the exams test common knowledge, competences and strategies; abide by common evaluation criteria and use a common test-task typology.

By presenting the audience with an extensive inventory of cross-linguistic mediation test tasks paradigmatically,⁶ I explained what strategies, awareness, literacies, competences and skills successful KPG mediation performance involves.⁷

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>

⁵ https://rcel2.enl.uoa.gr/kpg/en_index.htm

⁶ The test tasks are included in the PPT presentation which has been uploaded on the ICC website.

⁷ All these are also listed in the PPT presentation which has been uploaded on the ICC website.

Before concluding my presentation by referring to the KPG mediation-related research I thanked the KPG Test Task Repository and the KPG English Corpus, and informed the audience that work in this area has generated numerous publications,⁸ as well as major research endeavours, such as (a) the analysis of the hybrid formations on the basis of learner data, (b) the empirical investigation of learners' task-dependent mediation strategies at different levels of competence and (c) the calibration of mediation test tasks permitting inclusion of levelled mediation descriptors in the national FL curriculum (IFLC).

As a conclusion to this keynote, I pointed out that multilingualism per se is a *mediation system* in itself, sustaining, mobilising and reorganising language user identities, relationships and possibilities for action and the relative values of languages. Multilingualism can thus have repercussions in terms of what resources and possibilities individuals and groups bring to agency and participation.

⁸ See, for example, Karavas, E. & Mitsikopoulou, B. 2018. *Developments in Glocal Language Testing: The Case of the Greek National Foreign Language Exam System*. Peter Lang.

Incorporating cultural awareness and sensitivity into language teaching

Michael Carrier

This conference session consisted of an introductory talk followed by a panel discussion with ICC experts.

The introductory overview looked at how we analyse and teach the kind of intercultural awareness that our learners need in order to be global citizens, looking at intercultural theory and practice and activities for incorporating intercultural awareness into language teaching and learning.

We are living in a globalised world and we talk constantly about the need for globalised language tools, and point to English as a global lingua franca, or Spanish and Mandarin or Arabic as world languages that globalised people need at their fingertips.

But a lingua franca (whether English or others) does not necessarily improve global communication if cultural misunderstandings impede open and clear communication and positive relationship building. In his BBC Reith Lecture Jeffrey Sachs, former Director of the UN Millennium Project, claims:

"Our generation's greatest challenge... is learning to live in a crowded and interconnected world that is creating unprecedented pressures on human society". BBC Reith Lectures, 2007

Learning or teaching a language always entails some aspects, even if unspoken, of cultural awareness and understanding of cultural beliefs, assumptions, knowledge.

In providing language education, then, we need to ensure that the development of the language proficiency that is a pre-requisite of effective communication with speakers of other languages, is matched by a development of the cultural competence that underpins the real-world use of that language.

Effective and successful communication across borders is not just about language proficiency, but also cultural proficiency - knowledge and competence in the cultural aspects of communication, and attitude to dealing with aspects of difference and diversity.

The introduction explained the difference between achievement culture (Big C culture) and behavioural culture (little C culture) and defined the meaning of and attitudes to intercultural awareness.

It outlined some of the theoretical frameworks from writers such as Hofstede, Trompenaars, Erin Meyer, and Michael Byram, in order to consider to what extent these are relevant or appropriate for the language classroom, or advisable to be included in the training of language teachers.

The talk included extracts from the British Council's report on 'Culture at Work' demonstrating what kind of intercultural knowledge and awareness was considered necessary by employers in assessing and selecting their employees. In a multicultural globalised workplace, a well-developed set of intercultural competences seems to be both needed and also highly-prized by employers in most countries. Interestingly, an outlier was China, where a third of employers felt these skills were not important.

This suggests then that language teaching that equips learners for the globalised workplace should also address these communication needs as well as the purely linguistic needs normally included in curricula.

The introduction illustrated how this could be done by giving examples of classroom activities that might address and develop these competences, such as projects investigating critical incidents, or projects exploring adjacent comparative cultures.

It concluded by addressing the issue of teacher training and teacher development, looking at the discrete set of skills and competences that we could expect teachers to incorporate into their initial training or continuing professional development (CPD). Examples were given from one of the few existing specialised courses, the BCTC (Business Cultural Trainers Certificate) that provides a concise CPD introduction to incorporating business culture into language training.

To round off the intercultural competence introduction in a more linguistic way, we looked at an example of how simple language can be a barrier to communication, because what is said is not what is really meant. The famous 'Anglo-Dutch translation guide' is used in business circles to make learners aware that phrases such as 'I hear you' or 'That's very interesting' often carry a much more negative intention than learners may realise. Subsequent to the introduction, the panel was asked to discuss the theme, 'Can we improve cultural integration and harmony by

drawing upon intercultural theory models, and incorporating intercultural skills into the classroom?’

The panel addressed a number of further questions relating to this issue, including:

- How should we define intercultural content for migrant learners?
- Should teachers incorporate intercultural content into their language lessons?
- How should this content be integrated with language learning?
- What topics do you feel are appropriate/inappropriate for the language classroom?
- How should we help teachers develop their intercultural competences?

The session closed with questions from the audience to the panel.

Zur Entwicklung Symbolischer Kompetenz Sensibilisierung von Lehrerinnen für die Bedürfnisse von Fremdsprachenlernern in Multilingualen/ Multikulturellen Milieus

Evelyn Vovou & Dafni Wiedenmayer

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Der Fremdsprachenunterricht, beeinflusst sowohl vom rasanten technologischen sowie geopolitischen Wandel als auch von der poststrukturalistischen Wende in den Sozialwissenschaften (Tesch 2018: 55), die den Fokus auf soziale Identitäten legte, muss sich diversen sprachlichen und kulturellen Umfeldern anpassen. Demzufolge sollten Sprachlehrer in der Lage sein, Sprache - egal ob L1, L2, L3 usw. - bzw. die sprachlichen/ kulturellen Bedürfnisse der Lernenden in neuen Kontexten zu überdenken und durch diesen Wandel zu unterrichten. In der Praxis bedeutet dies, dass Sprachkompetenzen, inbegriffen der interkulturellen Kompetenz, neu definiert werden sollen. Sprecher bzw. Lerner in multikulturellen Umfeldern sollen nicht nur sprachlich kompetent sein, d.h. den Kode der Ziellandes effektiv verbrauchen, sich nicht nur in die Kultur des Ziellandes integrieren, sondern auch komplexe Sinnesgehalte, die sich aus dem realen und virtuellen Kontakt zwischen multilingualen/ -kulturellen Sprechern ergeben, zu verhandeln und neu einzurahmen. Dies deutet auf die Schwächen der kommunikativen sowie der interkulturellen Kompetenz hin, die sich besonders im letzten Jahrzehnt aufgrund der erwähnten weltweiten Veränderungen auf sozialer Ebene gezeigt haben.

Die kommunikative Kompetenz setzte voraus, dass Fremdsprachenlerner „eine sprachliche Form (ihre linguistischen Kompetenzen) verwenden, die anhand des linguistischen Systems (Wortschatz, Grammatik, Semantik, Phonologie) jeder Sprache und anhand der bestimmten sozialen Situation (soziale Beziehungen, Höflichkeitsformen, Register) richtig ausgewählt ist“ (Wiedenmayer 2007: 2). Um in sozialen Situationen im zielsprachigen Umfeld effektiv bzw. kommunikativ handeln zu können, sollten Fremdsprachenlerner denselben linguistischen Kode, dieselben kognitiven und normativen Interpretationsfeldern, und dieselben sozialen Affordanzen (Valenti/ Gold 2010) bzw. dasselbe Weltwissen (gemäß der Terminologie des kommunikativen Ansatzes) wie Muttersprachler besitzen. Das kommunikative Handeln zwischen Nicht-Muttersprachler und Muttersprachler war also als ein adaptiver Prozess zu verstehen: ein Nicht-

Muttersprachler bzw. Fremdsprachenlerner sollte sich der sprachlichen und kulturellen Sphäre der Muttersprachler anpassen. Für den Fremdsprachenunterricht bedeutet dies, dass Lerner zwischen korrekten und inkorrekten, angemessenen und unangemessenen Wegen des Sprachgebrauchs unterscheiden sollten (Kramersch, 2015). Dasselbe gilt für interkulturelle Kompetenz in Bezug sowohl auf Sprachgebrauch als auch auf das Lehren und Lernen von Fremdsprachen: Um interkulturell kompetent zu sein, sollte sich ein Nicht-Muttersprachler bzw. Fremdsprachenlerner den kulturellen Normen des Ziellandes anpassen. Der interkulturelle Ansatz basierte sich auf die „[...] ethnolinguistische Annahme, dass der Sprachgebrauch und die ethnische oder kulturelle kollektive Identität in einem linearen, one-on-one Verhältnis zueinander stehen“⁹ (Blommaert/ Leppänen/ Spotti 2012: 3). In multilingualen/-kulturellen Gesellschaften sind aber gemeinsame Erfahrungsräume, die „dem Handeln eine Richtung geben“ (Müller-Michaelis 2006: 5) auf keinen Fall der Standard.

Um die oben beschriebenen Schwächen zu mildern, führte Kramersch (2011) eine symbolische Dimension zur interkulturellen Kompetenz ein und definierte sie - ursprünglich als symbolische Kompetenz (Kramersch 2006; Kramersch/Whiteside 2008) - wie folgt: „Symbolische Kompetenz ist die Fähigkeit nicht nur die Sprache des Anderen anzunähern oder sich diese anzueignen, sondern auch den genauen Kontext, in dem sich die Sprache gelernt und benutzt wird, neu zu prägen“¹⁰ sowie „die Fähigkeit zwischen unterschiedlichen linguistischen Kodes sowie zwischen deren vielfältigen räumlichen und temporalen Resonanzen zu wechseln“¹¹ (Kramersch/Whiteside 2008: 664). Symbolische Kompetenz verkörpert also eine Orientierung an der Identität der Sprecher, die in ihren diskursiven Praktiken aufzeichnen lässt, und zwar auf eine reflexive Weise: Sprecher in multikulturellen Milieus sollen sowohl über die eigene als auch auf die fremde raumzeitliche Realität reflektieren und somit neue diskursive Kontexte schaffen.

Seitdem das Konzept der symbolischen Kompetenz eingeführt worden ist (Kramersch/Whiteside 2008, Kramersch 2011), hat es Einklang in die Fremdsprachendidaktik gefunden (z.B. Kearney 2012,

⁹ „[...] ethnolinguistic assumption [...] that aligns language use and ethnic or cultural group identity in a linear and one-on-one relationship“ (Blommaert/ Leppänen/ Spotti 2012: 3)

¹⁰ „Symbolic competence is the ability not only to approximate or appropriate for oneself someone else's language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used“ (Kramersch/Whiteside 2008: 664).

¹¹ „the ability to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes“ (Kramersch/Whiteside 2008: 664).

Luks 2013, Back 2016b, Etienne/ Vanbaelen 2017). Die Mehrheit der Studien fokussieren auf konkrete Didaktisierungsvorschläge für den Fremdsprachenunterricht, indem dabei auf die Sensibilisierung von Fremdsprachenlehrern in Bezug auf das Konstrukt der symbolischen Kompetenz und dessen Nützlichkeit für Fremdsprachenlerner in multikulturellen pädagogischen sowie sozialen Umfeldern abgezielt wurde. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde versucht, Lehrern des Deutschen als Fremdsprache (DaF) anhand literarischer Stimuli (i) Kernbegriffe, die mit symbolischer Kompetenz eng verbunden sind, zu erläutern, (ii) und diese mithilfe von kommunikativen Aktivitäten zu didaktisieren. Diese Kernbegriffe lassen sich von den unterschiedlichen Definitionen symbolischer Kompetenz (Kramsch 2006, 2011; Kramsch/ Whiteside 2008) entweder implizit oder explizit ableiten und können wie folgt zusammengefasst werden: „[...] symbolisch kompetente Fremdsprachenlerner sollten in der Lage sein, über diskursive Praktiken zu reflektieren, und sie neu einzurahmen, über Genre und dessen Zusammenhang zu Diskurs, über die verbalen, kulturellen und/ oder sozialen Spannungen, die ein schriftlicher, mündlicher oder visueller Stimulus den Lernern generieren könnte, sowie über die kognitive und semantische Komplexität eines Stimulus“¹² (Vovou 2019). Anhand konkreter Beispiele wurden Deutschlehrer darauf hingewiesen, wie man als Lehrer mit textuellen, visuellen usw. authentischen Materialien umgehen könnte und welche Inhalte bzw. Konzepte man aus den Materialien entnehmen sollte, damit die Lerner ihre symbolische Kompetenz entwickeln können.

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¹² „[...] in order to be symbolically competent language learners should be able to reflect on discursive practices and reframe them, on genre and its connection to discourse, on the verbal, cultural and/ or social tensions that a written, oral or visual stimulus can generate in the learners themselves as well as on the cognitive and semantic complexity of a stimulus“ (Vovou 2019).

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Assessment competence as an important teachers' competence

Nancy Kontomitrou

In the recent scientific studies on teachers' education practices are discussed concerning the development and improvement of teachers' competences. To those competences belong, according to Hallet (2006: 36 cited in Schar/Legutke 2012: 58), extensive pedagogical and teaching competences, communication competences and lesson-related competences. One of the last mentioned is the assessment competence. This article discusses the importance of this competence in foreign language teaching.

The development of the assessment competence is characterised by being able to assess not only the competences of learners, but also the lesson planning, the lesson process and the lesson outcomes as a result of lesson assessment and can certainly contribute to the efficiency of foreign language teaching. This competence also implies the ability to give clear and comprehensible feedback to learners concerning the goals which have been reached and to encourage them to continue to learn (see Schar/Legutke 2012: 60). In order to achieve a satisfactory level of the assessment competence theoretical scientific knowledge is needed, such as experience in using assessment methods, observations of the lesson process, exchange of experiences with other teachers, self-evaluation of teachers and analysis of the role of assessment in curricula.

Applying assessment methods after having improved the assessment competence can lead to achieving different significant goals, for instance acknowledging whether specific learning goals have been reached and diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of students.

To the aforementioned assessment methods we can add alternative assessment methods, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment and portfolios (see Tsagari 2011: 4) and using language tests as instruments for assessing the learners' competences.

Concerning the competence of applying alternative assessment methods teachers should develop specific competences before, during and after applying those assessment methods.

Before applying alternative assessment methods in foreign language teaching teachers should be able to identify different characteristics of the specific learning group, to determine the learning goal to be assessed and to distinguish between global and detailed goals. They should also be

able to distinguish between different alternative assessment methods, to anticipate which of those is appropriate for the specific learning group and learning goal and to identify whether learners are familiar with alternative evaluation methods. Furthermore, they should have developed the competence to make decisions concerning the use of different alternative assessment methods by different types of learners and to develop material and rating scales for alternative assessment.

In order to be able to apply those alternative assessment methods teachers should be able to collect information on whether the material used in order to assess the learners' competences can be used by them appropriately and whether learners have difficulties in using the material for alternative assessment. Moreover, teachers should be able to use material developed by themselves for observing the process of alternative assessment in such a way that it is considered useful.

After applying alternative assessment methods teachers should be able to identify and justify the alternative methods used with a specific group in order to assess if a specific learning goal has been achieved and has improved the lesson process. Teachers should also have developed the competence to decide how students who had difficulties with the alternative assessment can be encouraged and to decide what kind of changes should be made concerning the material for alternative assessment. Finally, teachers should also evaluate themselves and their own teaching behaviour by applying alternative assessment methods.

Developing assessment competence is not limited to alternative assessment methods. Teachers should also develop the competence to assess the learners' competences in the foreign language by using language tests. In this dimension of assessment teachers should have developed competences before, during and after applying tests in classroom.

Before applying a test, teachers should have the competence to develop it and they should be aware of the quality characteristics of tests which requires scientific knowledge in developing tests. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996: 17-18) a test should fulfil the following quality criteria of 'reliability', 'construct validity', 'authenticity', 'interactiveness', 'impact' and 'practicality' in order to be 'useful'. Teachers should have the scientific knowledge to be able to develop useful tests and to consider other factors which play a significant role when developing a test. They should be able to identify the students' profile, to determine the testing goal, the learners' competences which they aim to assess, to make decisions on the typology of the

activity types and of the text types the test will include, such as on the duration of the test, to develop appropriate items, to weight the marks for the test and to develop rating scales in order to assess and interpret the results of the candidates performance at the test (see Δενδρινού 2013: 196-198). Additionally, teachers should develop the competence to decide whether to develop different test questions and different items for different types of learners.

Teachers should be able to present the test to the learners in a natural way, so that test related stress can be reduced, such as applying evaluation material for their teaching behaviour when applying the test.

Concerning the teachers' competences after applying a test, they should be able to make necessary corrections and to interpret the results according to the specifications for the test (Δενδρινού 2013: 197-198), such as to inform the learners about their performance in the test. Eventually, they should be able to determine the grade of difficulty of the test questions and whether the test fulfils the quality criteria for the usefulness of the test and to make decisions for changes in applying tests in the future.

The development and improvement of the assessment competence should be considered as a very important part of the teaching process and should be included in teachers' education and further training. In this way, positive results can be achieved which can be a determinant for the improvement of the teaching process in foreign language teaching.

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Study Quality Model and Guidelines for Teachers

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In this article I would like to first, introduce the model created in the process of Nordplus Horizontal project NPHZ-2017/10151 called Study Quality in Terms of Multiculturalism in the Baltic Countries, and second, point out some guidelines to help teachers overcome the problems in the classroom. Nordplus Horizontal project involved 10 partners from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian higher and professional educational institutions to collect data about the issues of multiculturalism and find solutions to help teachers.

As a result of the project, the study quality assurance model from the perspective of a teacher was created (see appendix). Here the study quality assurance model is described as a process. The four stages of the process are as follows: preparation; implementation; assessment; and process feedback and reflection. When a teacher together with students has passed all the four stages, the whole process is improved and the next better quality course can start. As you can see, there are some items in the model marked in red. These are the topics that should be taken special care of in a multicultural classroom. The other product created in the course of the project was the guidelines for teachers. The aim of this article is to point out the problems the post-secondary level multicultural students in the Baltic countries are facing and what the guidelines are to help teachers in their work. Citations in Italics are taken directly from the case studies without undergoing any language checks.

Learners

Students complain that teachers do not take into consideration their background and cultural differences: Not all the teachers are adapting multicultural students' needs.

In order to get closer to the students a teacher should first learn students' names with correct pronunciation; if possible, observe students in settings outside the classroom and study their basic cultural differences. Larry Fish says, "Teachers in multicultural classrooms must be open to their students and put forth the effort needed to get to know their students inside and outside of

class. If a teacher is hesitant about being open, the class will reciprocate and the students will become estranged from one another and the teacher..." (2002).

Learning Process

An emotionally positive classroom climate is a good start for the learning process.

Students say that some students do not want to talk or work with each other sometimes. Students from countries that still are in military conflict sometimes do not want to talk or work with each other.

Here the teacher becomes a promoter of cooperative learning and positive peer interaction to develop the capacity to empathise with another person from a different culture. The best way to handle culture clash is to be open, knowledgeable, and not be afraid to talk about the cultural differences in class no matter what discipline the teacher is teaching (Fish 2002).

You must be open to what the students are doing and find out why they do it, which in its turn forms communication that leads to a learning and creative classroom. Furthermore, an accomplished teacher should be able to create projects for a group of students from different backgrounds that will require students to work together. The effect is even bigger if you teach the concept of race as a social, not biological construct; and model tolerance and respect.

Students expect to be treated fairly: The most important is that I want my efforts to be appreciated.

Teachers should include all students despite the fact that their language or prior knowledge might hinder them from giving a correct answer. You can always ask students to share their experience and that leads to learning context and content where teachers can allow the students the additional choice of learning context by choosing the support resources on the Internet in their mother tongue; providing a variety of resources for different students that they comfortable with; adjusting teaching materials by giving examples from all over the world, etc.

Instructional processes

The students' level of English may be lower than expected. When students arrive in the country, we see that there may be a problem with language, because they have a weak knowledge of

English. In some cases, students who speak/write little language, use Google Translate in their homework, which means that in a few of these cases the result is nonsense.

It is always advisable to have some additional language brush-up courses but for a teacher it is also possible to provide texts at reading levels and bookmarked Internet sites at different levels of complexity. For a start, at the beginning of the course you can let students speak a little of the language they are comfortable with. Sharing breaks down cultural barriers and can be fun. In oral presentations let students make mistakes as long as they are understood. A teacher should also give some tips how to use IT tools for translation, presentations and other aspects.

Students may not be used to different methods and tasks. Moreover, teachers use different methods, but the trainees have never experienced methods like analysis, group work or individual work with literature.

Nobody doubts that the implementation of new methods is essential nowadays. On the other hand, they should be made comfortable for the students and help them learn. In order to understand students better, a teacher should get regular feedback and have some informal conversations with their students in order to support them. In some cases, it is a good idea to let students choose assignments they like best.

Plagiarism and academic writing

Students often don't understand what is expected. They also don't know how to write and include references in their papers. Students (sometimes even their parents) don't understand the problem of intentional/unintentional plagiarism in academic studies.

Different cultures understand the notion plagiarism differently. Therefore, a teacher should first define plagiarism for students to be aware of the issue and have the right attitude towards it. Another helpful tool is to have institutional guidelines where academic writing rules are described in detail. If a lecturer additionally teaches citation, attribution and other tools for academic writing and presentation, it should work.

Students' classroom behaviour

Students' classroom behaviour varies. The main problems are being on time, behaviour in the class like walking around when lecturer is speaking, using smart phones/laptops when they should be listening and sitting in the classroom with winter jackets and hats on.

I think all of the teachers have experienced the magic role of classroom rules. In order to make the rules and have students follow them, it is advisable to include students in determining them.

Michael Linsin has written several practical handbooks on class management to make students feel happy and motivated in their classroom. He says, "Your classroom rules are the first line of defence against misbehaviour. They should never be left to chance." (Linsin, 2015)

Assessment

Students tend to bargain for higher score. Some students tended to bargain for higher score, but they received a score they deserved according to the study course requirements.

It is obvious that teachers determine initial learning outcomes in the preparation process. After the course being taught it is time to assess the achieved learning outcomes, i.e. knowledge, competencies and skills gained; and the detailed assessment criteria.

As Paul Black and Dylan William (Black, William 2015) state, "the choice between feedback given as marks, and feedback given only as comments, can make a profound difference to the way in which students view themselves as learners: confidence and independence in learning is best developed by the second choice, i.e. by feedback that gives advice for improvement, and avoids judgment. Learners must believe that success is due to internal factors that they can change, not due to factors outside their control, such as innate ability or being liked by the teacher."

Furthermore, teachers should give feedback on all assignments, give ongoing, relevant feedback and advise students how to improve their knowledge by further working with the feedback.

In conclusion, these are just a few guidelines that teachers could follow while facing the problems in a multicultural classroom. As there are so many components that make every classroom different I would suggest being open, flexible and creative. Make yourself and your students feel comfortable in this tiny classroom community. To finish the article and to become a better teacher, I have chosen an unspoken request from students (Desautels 2015).

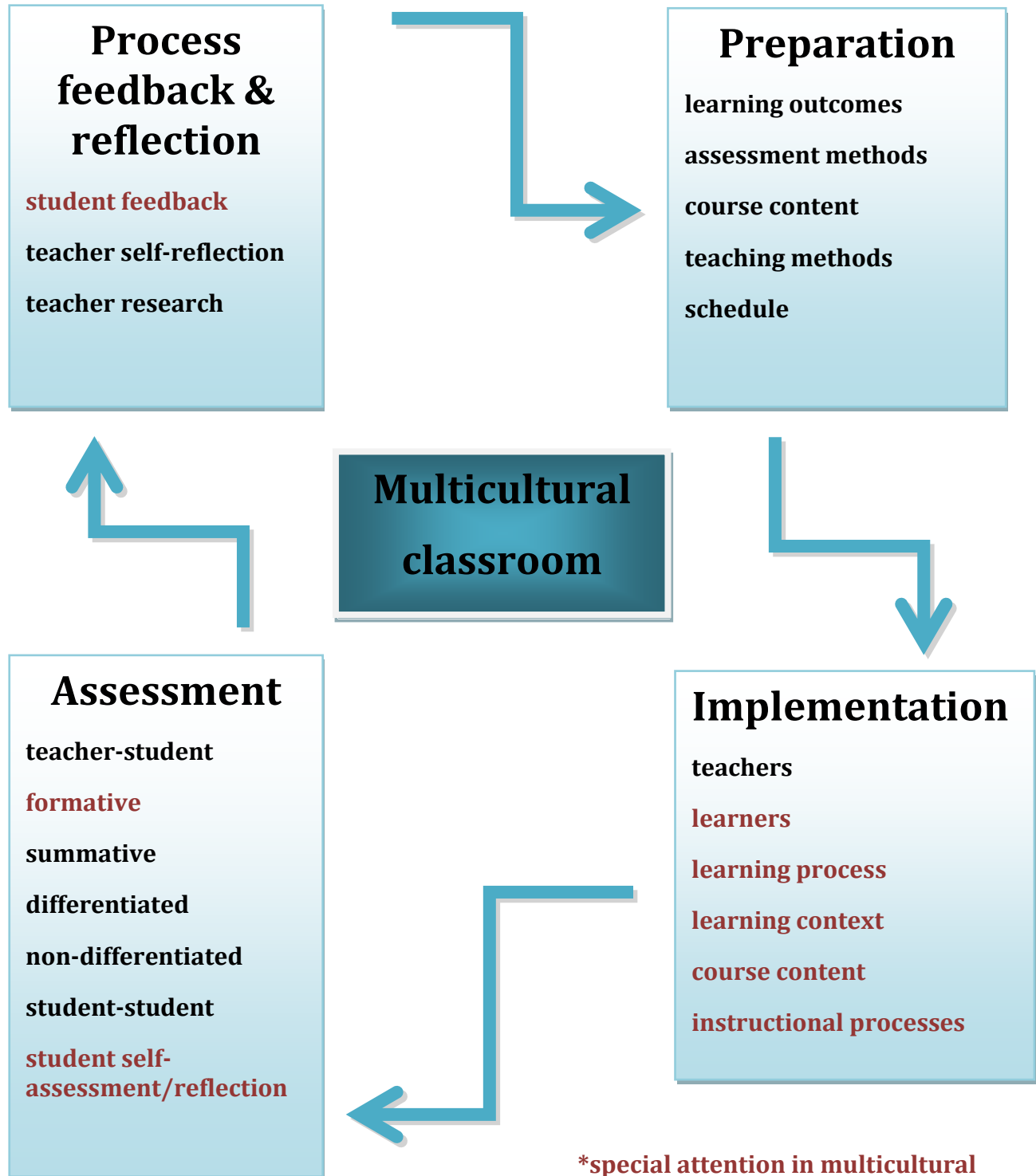
Ask me how I am. Ask me what I need. Ask me my thoughts and feelings. Ask me what my opinions are, even if my response is ridiculous because I don't want to stand out in front of my peers! Ask me in private -- always in private. Ask me to teach you anything about my world, my culture, music I love, my beliefs, and my story. I may not say a word, and it may take the entire school year for me to respond to your questions, but I hear you. I hear your interest and your compassionate concern for what I like, what I need, and what plans I would like to create.

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Appendix

Study Quality Assurance Model from the Perspective of a Teacher



Redesigning language learning and teaching through virtual exchange

Monika Hrebackova

Higher education has been fundamentally shifting as a result of technological development, demographic changes and globalisation as well as due to the way we interpret and present knowledge. Traditional curricula have therefore been less effective and educators admit the need for a change. The basic requirements new generations have to meet include transferable skills that enable them to continuously adapt. We describe transversal skills as those versatile skills that we can apply and make use of in a number of different roles in the workplace. The list is wide and includes several categories such as interpersonal skills, technological skills and organisational skills (Cambridge University Skills Portal 2016). In language education, there is a strong potential for providing pathways for students to acquire some of these skills needed for various professional positions and the global workplace as shown in Figure one.

Information, Media and Technology Skills	Learning and Innovation Skills	Life and Career Skills
Information literacy	Critical thinking	Flexibility and adaptability
Media literacy	Collaboration	Organisational skills
Digital literacy	Communication	Social and intercultural competence
	Creativity	Leadership
		and responsibility

Figure one: Twenty-first century transversal skills framework

Source: author

Various approaches are integrated in teaching and learning to develop these skills; one of which is the multidisciplinary approach involving different types of work and knowledge, e.g. collaboration on a common task in multinational teams combining several areas of study and

integrating data, tools and theories from several disciplines. In other words, teaching a foreign language becomes the linchpin in a multidisciplinary learning system to consolidate other complementary transversal skills.

Taking the multidisciplinary approach to better prepare graduates for modern workplaces, MIAS School of Business at the Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU) has redesigned and innovated some foreign language courses by implementing virtual exchange practice as 'the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their foreign language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work' (O Dowd 2011).

Thus students cooperate with their mates from a foreign partner university using English as a lingua franca in a variety of in-class as well as out-of-class task-based activities. In the intercultural dialogue they face multiple challenges such as communication barriers, different levels of politeness, respect, tolerance and working styles, tightened up with cultural stereotypes and local biases. However, going beyond the apparent visible cultural values, they reveal different perspectives that affect synergies of culturally mixed virtual teams. With the assistance of the teacher they discuss them and try to deal with them.

To illustrate further, three virtual exchange task categories have been primarily used according to the level of difficulty/complexity in information exchange tasks, comparison and analysis tasks, and finally, collaborative tasks. An informative task provides online virtual partners with information, e.g. about personal profiles of their counterparts (communicative, listening, social, cultural). Students think and learn about themselves, their values and corresponding cultural values and dimensions related to family, friendship, religion, education, gender, authority, space, time and other factors. Unlike the personal cultural profile, which is highly individual and shared online mostly asynchronously and in writing, oral communication is practised through holding an online meeting. In addition to spoken interaction, this requires some collaboration and organisational skills such as setting up a chair and following rules (e.g. who is going to speak and for how long). Comparative and analytical tasks are seen to be more demanding as they go a step further and include comparisons (creating and exchanging knowledge quizzes; carrying out an opinion poll) and analyses (e.g. of the opinion poll results). These tasks have a significant cultural and linguistic focus. Collaborative tasks are the most challenging and complex, yet they are also often the most enjoyable and fulfilling. They aim at producing a joint outcome based on co-

authoring (storyboard) and co-production (shooting a video), and always require a great deal of planning, coordinating and negotiating to reach agreement and finalise the multi-media product.

In virtual exchange activities students not only practise their communication and listening skills and the application of appropriate language use while engaging ICT skills by using tools to work in Web 2.0 (Zoom for online meetings and Google Classroom for sharing). They discover new, potentially unfamiliar situations and are compelled to look back, review them, or view them from a different perspective. Moreover, focusing on the process as well as the outcome enables them to keep better control, engage more and maintain a detached view. They are encouraged to decide and act autonomously within the well-defined framework while planning, organising and presenting individual steps which, in synthesis, always lead to a completion of an online exchange task. The flow of the implementation process is demonstrated in Fig 2.

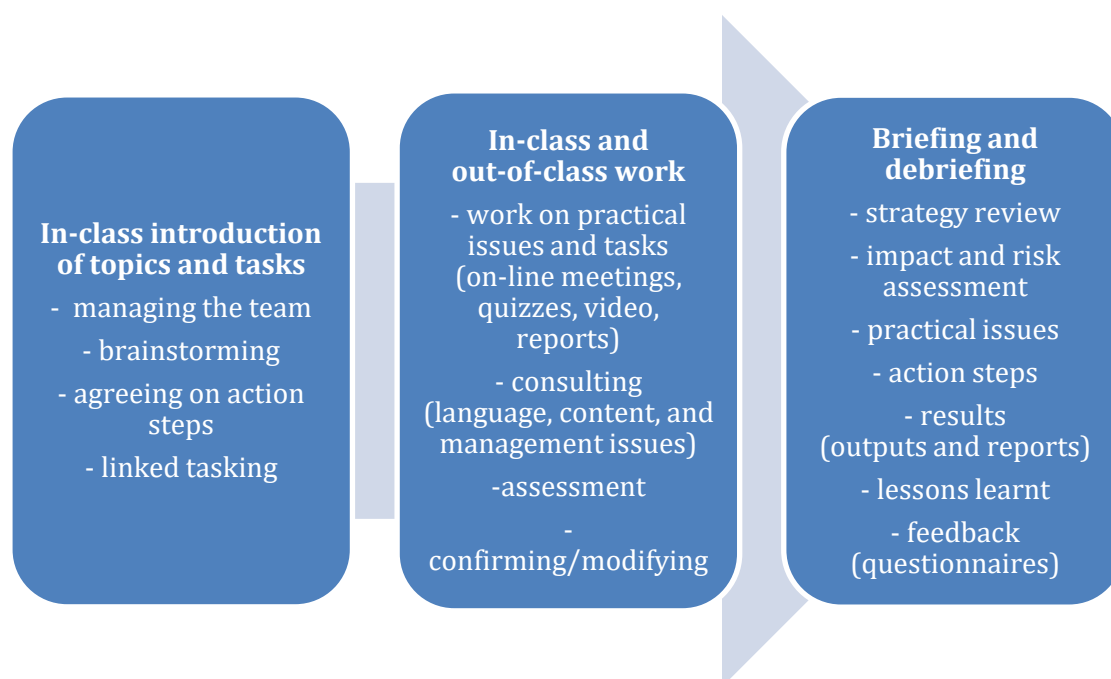


Figure 2: The flow of the implementation process

Source: author

In conclusion, foreign language study that is designed within a multidisciplinary approach developed through virtual exchange enables students to explore real-life work understanding, knowledge and exposure. Additionally, communicating online across cultures in a foreign language is a notable transversal skill that is sought after for current industry needs.

Furthermore, through collaborative projects with other subjects, students better understand the utility of language education beyond classroom walls. Finally, virtual exchanges promote a wide variety of technological skills. Therefore, despite the challenges they may pose, they are highly motivational and should be more systematically implemented in language teaching.

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Teaching across cultures: highlights from a study of academic mobility in higher education

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Introduction

The global mobility of the professoriate has become an important trend in the global academic system (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley 2009). It is therefore important to study the effects of contexts and attitudes on teaching activities abroad and the implications of these specificities at individual and institutional level in order to understand and facilitate the process for stakeholders.

Purpose of the study, method and data

The intention of the study was to understand the nature of the academic mobility experience of Bulgarian scholars who taught at educational institutions in the United States under the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program. The study looked closely at the contextual factors and the personal characteristics that influenced the Bulgarian scholars' teaching experience abroad. Special focus was placed on the effect of the scholars' culturally conditioned assumptions and orientations on their actions and reactions in their teaching activities.

The study used the approach to grounded theory advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The tenets of the grounded theory method are: simultaneous data collection and analysis; constant comparison of the data in order to develop concepts and categories; gradual abstraction of the data from the descriptive level to higher order theoretical categories; the use of theoretical sampling as opposed to purposive sampling; writing of theoretical memos; and saturation of the data, which requires the researcher to stay in the field until no new evidence emerges (Rennie 1998). Data in this study comprised twenty-one interviews.

Findings and discussion

The contextual features that played a role in how the Bulgarian scholars experienced their transnational teaching mobility were the preferences for the teaching and learning approach, the

teaching and learning goals, understanding the roles of teacher and student and the assumptions about the nature of faculty-student interaction. The Bulgarian scholars discerned marked differences between their home and host institutions regarding these aspects in the educational process. While Bulgarian culture displays a preference for a teacher-dominated and controlled learning process, the United States culture exhibits a preference for student autonomy, initiative, critical thinking, assertiveness, and favours egalitarianism and informality in interaction. The scholars who had not had prior exposure to and/or theoretical knowledge of the typical features of their host educational context, reported feelings of bewilderment, confusion and distress, and were at a loss as to how to appropriately handle situations in their teaching activities. Conversely, when prior awareness of the specificity of the context was combined with willingness and a sustained effort to adapt their pedagogical approach and behaviour to students' expectations, teaching in the United States was an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

Analysis of the effects of culture in this study highlights the understanding that one's approach and interpretation of an intercultural situation is affected by the ideas and behaviours one has internalised in one's own socialisation experience. The Bulgarian scholars' experience in the United States academic context elucidated differences in perceptions of hierarchy, attitudes to egalitarianism, proactivity and assertiveness, rules. The ethnocentric perspective of the scholars, that is, their inability to identify culturally-conditioned differences, recognise underlying contextual influences, fully accept alternative ethical frameworks and their manifestation in intercultural interaction, caused bewilderment and psychological discomfort on many occasions. The scholars' insufficient intercultural competence led to a number of instances where their inaccurate interpretation of intentions produced feelings and reactions which made their functioning in the multicultural host context a challenge.

The findings underscore the necessity of approaching one's international teaching mobility with the awareness that teaching practices and social interaction behaviours are not universal and should not be directly transferred from one academic context to another. It is in the students' best interest that academics be aware of how the socio-cultural background of students manifests itself in learning style preferences and behaviour and demonstrate culturally aware teaching by adjusting their pedagogical approach and interaction manner accordingly. It is also very important that scholars be conscious of and reflect on how their own cultural perspective determines their attitudes, actions and reactions, in order to avoid inadequate assumptions and

behaviours and thus minimise potential psychological discomfort and unintentional blunders. Scholars should bear in mind that linguistic competence alone is insufficient for successful interaction in a multicultural educational context and should take steps to acquire and demonstrate intercultural communicative competence, which goes beyond linguistic skills to include sociolinguistic, discourse and interaction skills (Byram 1997).

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Intercultural teaching practices in Italian L2 for refugees and language policy

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This contribution takes into account the doctoral research work I am carrying out as a PhD candidate in Linguistics and Teaching of Italian at the University for Foreigners of Siena. The research can be framed within the study of language education policies, with particular focus on the category of adult immigrant learners. In Italy the reception system for refugees and asylum seekers is broken down into three levels: first aid, first reception and second reception. The first two levels provide basic assistance inside respectively, the so-called hotspots and First Reception Centres where refugees go through the identification phase, when the procedures start to define their legal status and to examine their asylum application, in addition to providing them with medical treatment and a first orientation to the services necessary for life in the host country. The main objective of the third level is to let the integration process begin between the new arrivals and the local community. It is managed by local authorities (municipalities, provinces, regions) that join the SPRAR network (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) and according to a management logic of "micro-territorial" reception that relies on "the idea that when hosted by small communities, asylum seekers and refugees are more likely to integrate, and the danger of their social and spatial segregation, typical of larger metropolitan areas, is better prevented." (Campesi, 2018: 498) Among the services provided by the SPRAR organizations there are also the Italian as L2 courses, held at the CPIA (Provincial Centres for Adult Education), where mainly teachers in possession of a state qualification work, or volunteer teachers selected directly by the project managing staff. The teaching of Italian to refugees can be realised, therefore, in two contexts: the "formal professional" of the CPIA and the "non-professional" one of the courses within the SPRAR projects (Pugliese, Minus, 2012: 343). For the latter, however, the lack of a framework that establishes standards of suitability would raise the risk that a teacher who does not have specific skills in second language teaching could reproduce a vision of language and of teaching itself excessively focused on metalinguistic explanation and following the model of Italian as L1 teaching, thus losing sight of the real objective of language training for refugees, that is the acquisition of intercultural communication skills in order to

facilitate their integration into the host society. As a result, "language teaching becomes more than simply teachers enacting or implementing in a functional way decisions taken by curriculum authorities or education ministries," (Lo Bianco, 2010: 156). On the contrary, the planning (and action) of teaching can influence the integration process of the beneficiaries.

The selected model for the collection and analysis of the data presented here is that of Lo Bianco (2010), which, summarising it in the LPP formula: $A3 \times P4 \times G6$, recognises, in the language planning policy, three levels of authorisation (A3), four levels of participation (P4) and six types of objectives (G6), in fact expanding the agency of linguistic policy to all social interactions, and not limiting it, as proposed by previous models of Fishmanian inspiration, to the role of academic experts and of administrations. In particular, of the three forms of LP activity identified by Lo Bianco (2010: 157), that is public texts, public discourse and performance, the latter is analysed with the aim of recognising the type of linguistic policy present in the planning and in the implementation of internal Italian L2 courses for SPRAR projects. The syllabus design, the teacher-learner interaction, the choice and management of places and times of access to the courses, the ethnographic and ethnolinguistic composition of the class, are just some of the categories of data which can be observed to define the language policy model implemented by each SPRAR entity.

The research methodology designed and currently in use includes the collection of mainly qualitative data through the use of different tools such as a questionnaire for teachers divided into two sections (personal- professional profile and teaching practices; ideologies and beliefs around plurilingualism and the condition of refugees), an interview with project staff in charge of training activities design aimed at knowing how they manage the project, a group interview with the beneficiaries in order to gather information on the level of satisfaction with the Italian as L2 course and the correspondence of its contents to their learning needs, the observation and video recording of some lessons in order to detect teaching practices potentially significant for their reflection on language policy.

So far, data has been collected in two reception projects, one in Asti, in Piedmont, and one in Borgo San Lorenzo, in the province of Florence, in Tuscany. From an early analysis it was already possible to detect significant differences in the language policy of each of the two centres which, for reasons of space, cannot be discussed here. Broadly speaking, the language policy of one of

the two centres seems to be inspired by a strong focus on monolingualism translated into assimilationist practices that are characterised, *inter alia*, by scant attention to the linguistic repertoire of the beneficiaries. The other centre tends, instead, towards a greater openness to plurilingualism with the presence of performative actions directed at the development of intercultural skills.

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Getting reading right:

Critical awareness in handling international media

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Introduction

In the first issue of Training Language and Culture, the ICC /RUDN University academic journal, we used a quotation from Dr Samuel Johnson, author of the '*A Dictionary of the English Language*', published in 1755, saying, '*Language is the dress of thought*'. Were he alive today he might have said, '*Language is the mask of thought*,' such are the uses to which language is put today. Mark Thompson, a former Director General of the BBC wrote in '*Enough Said*' (Vintage 2016),

"A healthy public language knits public and political leaders together and precisely because it succeeds in drawing ordinary citizens into the debate." However, he continued, "When public language loses its power to explain and engage, it threatens the broader bond between people and politicians."

Dangers in public language use

Thompson identified three dangers in the use of public language, the prevalence of spin, the pressure of the 24 hour news cycle and the increasing danger of 'fake news' and the manipulation of big data, telling people what they want to hear rather than what they need to know.

Thompson identified four types of public communication; Hierarchical: official documents, Mass media: Broadcast and print 'Legacy' media, Social media: Facebook, linked in, Whatsapp, Instagram and Social networks: 'Citizen journalism', Vlogs, Blogs etc. All these have become channels for disseminating news and opinion.

Another key factor is the increasing emphasis on pathos at the expense of logos and ethos, to use Aristotle's definition of rhetoric. Thompson argued that the danger in our public and political language is that we are neglecting logos (appealing to reason) and moving to pathos (appealing to emotion or moral values) and increasing auxesis (exaggeration) leading to "fake news" and

“post truth”. Both terms, frequently used by President Donald Trump, describe the new environment we are living in. ‘Post Truth’ is defined by British broadcaster, Evan Davis, in his book on the subject as, “an expression of frustration and anguish from a liberal class discombobulated by the political disruptions of 2016.” (Little Brown, 2017).

Recognising post truth and fake news

How do we recognise post truth and fake news in our public speech? Davis identifies three features. One is parataxis, the tricolon. This involves the making of statements in sequence, which have a cumulative effect suggesting a conclusion that none of the individual sentences justify. President George W Bush’s speech after 9/11 was taken to suggest that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the 9/11 attack on New York’s twin towers although none of the individual sentences say so. “We knew Saddam Hussein’s record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using, weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently.”

Another common feature is the ‘near truth’. A famous example of this is the advertisement on a BREXIT campaign bus in 2016, saying “We send the EU £350 million a week. Let’s fund our NHS instead.” The statement was only partly true as the actual payment after rebates on tariffs and other concessions meant it was much less. When experts pointed out the error the BREXIT campaign responded with, ‘Don’t trust the experts.’

A third feature is the use of neologisms. Newly coined words and phrases or the addition of a positive sounding word can make something more attractive but is it true? ‘*The new normal*’, ‘*just war*’ and ‘*smartphone*’ are all examples.

What can language educators do?

Most important, what can we as language educators do about it? The answer is to use our classes in developing reading skills to raise critical awareness among our students. Choose short authentic texts from articles, headlines, social media, blogs, tweets and even cartoon captions. After the comprehension teaching is complete ask students to work together to identify words and phrases intended to persuade them to a point of view. Get them to distinguish between facts and opinions (often disguised as facts) and to read between the lines.

Teachers can choose short authentic texts which may display bias.

First, study the text for message comprehension and language. Then analyse the text for words and phrases which express opinion or may show bias. Help students identify words and phrases which display attitude and encourage them to reflect on what they have learned.

And finally, one more idea. This time it's writing. Sir Harold Evans is a former editor of the Sunday Times and then President of Random House publishers in the US. In his book 'Do I Make Myself Clear?' (Back Bay Books 2017) he identifies some of the key things teachers and students should look out for, for example, unspecific language, overuse of the passive voice, failure to use concrete terms and too many abstract nouns, emotive adjectives, adverbs and repetition. He advises avoiding pleonasms (redundant words) as in 'free, gratis and for nothing' = 'free' and what he calls 'flesh eaters', for example, 'at this point in time' instead of 'Now'. He gives lots of examples and shows how he edits them. And here is the writing idea. When you have been through a text with your students, get them to edit it and then rewrite it, avoiding any suspicion of 'fake truth' or 'post truth' statements. How's that for creative writing practice!

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