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TEACHING LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Edited by
Andreea NECHIFOR
Cristina DIMULESCU

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Editors' Note. Teaching Language for Specific Purposes in the Digital Era

Andreea NECHIFOR[1], Cristina DIMULESCU[2]

Accommodating more and more technical elements from the digital world we live in, language has always been tributary to the linguistic principle of dynamism. Thus, lately, it has generously opened its approach to the combination between the new and modern blend of language teaching methodology and computing, digital tools being invited to play an important role especially in learning new languages. Joint teams of linguists and IT specialists have gathered in numerous international projects to create useful software programmes and applications to ease people's demand regarding a quick and safe approach to acquiring languages other than their native ones. Consequently, designing professional tools for such an endeavour has become a desiderate nowadays, especially in what minor languages are concerned, as well as specific fields of interest, thus catering for the needs of different specialists, working in targeted domains, whose linguistic needs demand focused attention.

In this way, this special issue of BUT hosts a panoply of papers addressing this ardent and vivid topic which combines ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), as a result of the dedicated exploration of different specialised fields through the lenses of foreign language teaching either as:

- the direct research on the topic, part of an international Erasmus+ project, as it is the case of *Language Guidance Tool for Improving Language Knowledge / LanGuide*, whose outputs are rendered in the first 6 articles of the issue

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- the first-hand experience in class of different professors mastering teaching for specialised areas by means of computer assisted means, as it is the case of the last 7 papers included in the second part of this special issue.

The contributions were written in English, German or French, abide by the rules of blind peer-review policy observed by BUT and represent valuable and up-to-date insights on the subject, meeting the requirements of the thematic issue under publication.

LANGUAGE STUDIES

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Accommodating English for Specific Purposes to Computer Assisted Language Learning

Cristina DIMULESCU[1], Andreea NECHIFOR[2]

Based on a descriptive approach regarding the content of the LanGuide project, but in perfect accordance with the literature review on CALL, the present article researches into the technicalities of developing a mobile application for foreign language learning and assessing, in four different specialised fields (academic, mobility, administrative and IT) offered for six different languages (English, Romanian, Slovene, Italian, Croatian and Spanish) at 3 different levels of knowledge (beginner, intermediate and advanced) and for 3 different learning personae (student, teacher and administrative staff member). Placing the users in the appropriate contexts by the task environment created for each exercise and including cultural elements from each of the foreign languages targeted, LanGuide manages to distinguish itself among other language learning mobile applications, by not only harmonizing ESP to CALL, but also by combining the pedagogy of the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language to that of the digital era.

Keywords: *digital era, mobile applications, ESP, CALL, language learning, computer science*

1. Introduction

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (henceforth CALL) is a constantly evolving field, "an emerging field that studies how technology is used as one (of many) tool(s) for language learning" (Chun 2011, 663). Taking this into account, Beatty (2010, 7) states that "a definition of CALL that accommodates its changing nature is *any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language*" (italics in the original).

Broadly interpreted, such a definition encompasses the use of any kind of software that includes linguistic features, e.g. word processing tools or emailing applications that correct spelling and may even make suggestions concerning word

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use (Beatty 2010, 9). Referred to as the "e-factor" of learning, in which "e" stands for electronic, the Moodle platform was perceived by Nechifor and Purcaru (2013) as the best facilitator of imparting educational content to distance learning students who were thus included, for this reason, on the list of beneficiaries of the digital era of teaching. Approached in the same terms of positives and negatives, both a MOOC approach to learning and a blended one were minutely analysed by the same authors (Nechifor and Purcaru 2014; Nechifor 2015) in order to bring together learning and computers. With big dropout rates due to, broadly, inappropriate individual micromanagement, but very successful in terms of opening the access to massive education, the MOOCs represent a great embodiment of self-paced learning and very structured teaching mediated by electronic platforms, such as: edX, Coursera, Udemy, Udacity, etc, while blended learning integrates two teaching styles, a traditional one and a modern one, based on technology which enabled, in the case described by Nechifor (2015) a very interesting intercultural exchange on writing skills between students from Romania and Japan. Thus, CALL can be approached from very diverse perspectives and is, according to the latest developments of technology, under continuous change, mobile applications being the latest interest of the combined teams of linguists and IT specialists.

However, Garrett (2009, 719) is cautions against applying the label "CALL" to the mere use of such software or to the online search for authentic learning materials and is of the opinion that CALL means to integrate technology completely into the language learning process. The main purpose of this integration is to "improve the learning capacity of those who are being taught a language through computerized means" (Cameron 1999, in Gruba 2004, 623). In other words, CALL aims at meeting the needs of people who learn or teach languages by creating computer-based educational environments (Kohn 1995, 5). In order to fulfil this purpose, CALL has become a multidisciplinary field which relies on several other disciplines (Beatty 2010, 11), e.g. linguistics, psychology, education sciences, and, of course, computer science (Chun 2011, 663).

For this reason, it can be said that CALL is a multifaceted construct. Its main components are pedagogy, theory, and technology. Ideally, these three components are balanced and none of them becomes dominant at the expense of the other two (Garrett 2009, 720). Within these broad components, CALL specialists need to address aspects like instruction modes and material design, as well as issues related to technology or pedagogical theories in general (Beatty 2010, 8). Additionally, infrastructural factors need to be taken into consideration, too (Garrett 2009, 720). This bundle of components is in constant evolution (Beatty 2010, 8), being influenced by the development of technology and the dominant theoretical trends. The following part of the paper offers a glimpse into this evolution.

2. Literature review

In the second half of the 20th century, researchers and language teachers began to develop tools that allowed language learners to learn on their own. Their endeavours became easier in the 1970s and 1980s, when computers started to become available to more and more people. In the 1990s, the growing popularity of the internet made it possible for learners not only to learn on their own, but to easily form communities and work together with other learners (Gruba 2004, 625-626).

This historical evolution is paralleled by the evolution of the theoretical perspectives on CALL. In the 1970s and 1980s, structural CALL was the dominant trend, being influenced by the behaviourist theory of learning. In behaviourist CALL, computers were used mainly for drills and the focus was on accuracy. In the 1980s and 1990s, CALL came under the influence of the communicative language teaching theory. Communicative CALL exercises were designed to help students learn how to communicate fluently. After the 1990s, the focus shifted to the study of authentic discourse. This approach is named integrative CALL. It emphasizes meaningful, authentic discourse in the context of collaborative learning, and it encourages learner agency. CALL tools enable interactions with other learners (Gruba 2004, 626-629).

Therefore, it can be said that CALL has progressed from simpler tools, which mainly facilitated the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, or offered the possibility to manipulate texts and practice dialogues, to more sophisticated multimedia instruments that make it possible for learners to communicate in a realistic way with other learners (Kohn 1995, 5). However, this progress cannot be considered completely linear: even recently created CALL tools may be just a visually updated version of a material type that was already used decades ago (Beatty 2010, 12).

As the previous paragraphs have already suggested, the main stages in the development of CALL have been influenced to various degrees by different theories of L2 learning. Chun (2011, 666) highlights four of the most important: the psycholinguistic theory, the interactionist view, the sociocultural theory, and the ecological approach. Psycholinguistic approaches look at CALL from the perspective of the cognitive phenomena that are involved in such a learning process, e.g. the individual's memory or attention, or the influence of material presentation on the person's cognitive load (Chun 2011, 666).

Interactionist approaches, on the other hand, zoom out from the level of individual learners and examine interactions between several students, trying to figure out how they negotiate meaning, how they react to one another's utterances and how they benefit from the dynamics of their interactions. In a

similar way, the sociocultural theory focuses on how learners construct their identity in the framework of their interactions and how they improve their intercultural competence while learning a new language (Chun 2011, 669-674).

Finally, ecological approaches adopt an even broader perspective and look at "how learners interact with and influence their environment" (Chun 2011, 676), technology being considered an element of this environment that provides students with learning opportunities.

The role of such interpersonal relationships and learner-environment interactions seems to be so significant that some scholars even describe CALL as being a complex adaptive system, i.e. a set of interdependent variables like learners, educators, policy makers, learning materials or institutions, which interact and constantly change during their interactions (Schulze 2017, 302). It can be said therefore that "CALL is made possible through an interdependent relationship among computers, students, and instructors" (Gruba 2004, 630). Each of these participants plays its own part in the learning process.

Computers, for example, serve the purpose of creating learning opportunities both in classroom settings and beyond them (Chapelle 2008, 586). This, in turn, influences the role played by learners themselves: because the computer is there for them even outside the classroom, they are expected to learn in a more autonomous way than they would in a classical language learning setting. Learners have the power to configure their own learning, even if this kind of autonomy is often limited by the nature of certain CALL tools which only allow students to perform a series of pre-established, repetitive actions (Beatty 2010, 11-12).

In order to foster true learner autonomy, CALL materials need to be relevant and target the specific language difficulties that the learner is struggling with. Furthermore, they should improve the student's general learning style (Chapelle 2008, 588). Under these circumstances, the role of language teachers has transformed: their activity in the lesson has become less prominent and they have become only a kind of mediators between learners and technology. Furthermore, instructors need to become acquainted with new technologies in order to cope with the growing popularity of CALL (Gruba 2004, 636-637). This is a challenge for teacher education as well (Chapelle 2008, 586), which is expected to prepare future teachers for integrating technology into their lessons.

The aspects discussed above – theoretical approaches, participants' roles – go beyond mere theory and have a tangible impact on the type of CALL materials that learners actually engage with. Garrett (2009, 722-723) describes a few relevant examples and explains that behaviourist CALL, for instance, relied mostly on tutorials, i.e. grammar drills, dictation, pronunciation exercises, but more complex, skill-centred activities were also possible. Another type of CALL tool

requires learners to interact with authentic materials, that is, with discourse that was not created for learners but for native speakers, by native speakers. Apart from teaching linguistic items, these materials improve learners' metacognitive strategies as well.

A third type of CALL tool, which may be called communication-oriented CALL, also emphasizes authentic language, e.g. in the context of social networks (Garrett 2009, 723). As Schulze (2017, 303) states, this kind of computer-mediated communication, unlike tutorials, allows learners to "interact with other learners, instructors, and L1 speakers *via* digital artifacts" (italics in the original).

But even if such sophisticated tools are not available to a teacher, he or she can integrate CALL into the lessons by using the CDs, DVDs, digital textbooks and other kinds of software that most publishers add to their textbooks (Bush 2008, 447), as well as direct links to repositories hosted on the internet as databases for different textbooks, manuals, students' books, under the form of audio/video support. Apart from these resources, teachers and learners can avail of such simple but useful CALL tools as digital flashcards, which have "a vast potential to empower effective learning at all ages and levels" (Obermeier 2020, 26).

Nowadays, the rapid evolution of mobile phones and other devices such as televisions or gaming platforms creates new possibilities for CALL to reach its users even more easily (Beatty 2010, 39-40).

To sum up, CALL has many sides: one can look at it from several perspectives, ranging from scientific, theory-driven approaches to practical, hands-on views concerned with the specific CALL tools that learners can use. Given this fact, it comes as no surprise that CALL has ignited the interest of researchers from various fields. The following subsection briefly discusses this research activity.

2.1. CALL research

Specialists interested in language teaching and learning have employed various types of research designs in order to investigate CALL. Most research in this field is descriptive: studies adopt either quantitative or qualitative approaches to CALL, trying to understand its mechanisms and the way the participants involved in the language learning process work with it. These studies have provided researchers with valuable findings, e.g. the importance of developing not only specific language skills, but also learners' general learning strategies and motivation, or their ability to use discourse in order to communicate online (Chapelle 2008, 590). Moreover, this also offered a good basis for observation regarding the way in which different applications can be developed in order to ease the user's approach, from interface,

user friendliness to types of exercises, their dynamics within these applications, as well as the contribution they bring to the language improvement of a user.

Consequently, although such descriptive studies are of great value, some researchers want to go a step further: besides describing how CALL works, they aim at assessing how useful or effective this kind of language learning is. This can be achieved by means of evaluative research design. Many of these studies take an experimental or quasi-experimental approach in order to obtain data concerning the quality of CALL. Evaluative research usually compares learning outcomes in CALL settings with learning results in traditional settings. This means that it is the pedagogical component of CALL that is actually assessed, and not so much the technological one (Chapelle 2008, 590-591).

Apart from descriptive and evaluative research, there have been a few studies that approached CALL from a critical perspective: CALL is not only described or evaluated, but placed into a larger context and examined in relationship with the beliefs and views on technology that participants in the learning process hold. Some researchers who adopt this perspective say that technology does not always have a positive impact on the learning process, since it may make learners less curious and proactive (Chapelle 2008, 592).

Though CALL provides scholars with a wide range of possible research topics, studies in this field seem to be relatively difficult to design. As Schulze (2017, 302) underlines, studies focusing on CALL either have a rigorous research design but only look at isolated, decontextualized variables, or they try to take a more holistic, ethnographic approach but their design does not fully meet all the scientific requirements. Despite such shortcomings, research has managed to reveal several aspects that contribute to a better understanding of how CALL works, where and how it can be applied, and what its benefits are. In what follows, these aspects will be discussed alongside an example of an activity that is part of the development of a CALL tool within the framework of the LanGuide project.

2.2. Applicability and benefits

When it comes to applicability, it can be said that CALL is very versatile, as it can be used successfully in various sectors of language teaching, learning and assessing. For instance, CALL tools can prove to be a useful instrument for learners and teachers of language for special or specific purposes, languages that are less commonly taught or heritage languages. CALL can also improve learners' reading comprehension and even play a part in the training of translators and interpreters (Garrett 2009, 725-729).

And this happens to be the specific case of LanGuide, Language Guidance Tool for Improving Language Knowledge, an ongoing project that is aimed at creating an open access tool designed for university students, teachers and administrative staff and whose targeted fields belong to different areas of specialisations (administrative, mobility, academic and IT), addressing the area of applied linguistics researching into specific purposes, and whose other languages besides English involved in the application developed include: Romanian, Italian, Slovene, Croatian and Spanish in fine tuning with what Garrett refers to as less commonly taught or heritage languages (infra).

2.2.1. The LanGuide project – good practices of CALL

LanGuide's main objective is to facilitate "the acquisition of LSP for different fields, difficulty levels and languages" (Kompara Lukančič and Fabijanić 2020, 42). In addition to such academic benefits, LanGuide users can also develop their intercultural understanding, thanks to the multilingual nature of the app (Kompara Lukančič and Fabijanić 2020, 44).

The LanGuide project started from the very beginning as a mixed-type Eramus+ project, gathering together two teams from two different fields: linguistic and IT, each of them multinational. The linguists' team harmonized the opinions of teachers with experience in L2 teaching, teaching L1 as a foreign language and teaching L2 for specific purposes from Romania (Transilvania University of Brasov), Slovenia (University of Primorska), Spain (University of Castilla-La Mancha) and Croatia (University of Zadar), while the IT team brought together the visions of specialists in software development from Croatia (University of Rijeka) and Sweden (Mälardalen University).

The intellectual outputs were devised in a chronological manner and were based on good communication and collaboration between the two teams, as they were primarily envisioned as taking place in joint meetings. And even if, after such common workshops, each team was set on producing their specific outputs, the next meeting would bring them together again in order for the linguistic content-production to be harmonized with the computer science engineers' perspective.

Thus, first and foremost the linguists agreed upon a common framework of exercises production for the English language, for the aforementioned fields, which was submitted to peer-reviews upon completion. Further on, the linguists carried on the creation of exercises for their own languages, according to the same framework used for English, in order to cater for the needs of as many users as possible, and at the same time to meet the target set by the project, that of

offering other languages for learning via the mobile application, for the fields considered, other than English.

As a second step, the IT team created the Content Management Platform or the digital content for the future mobile application, i.e. the place where the collection of exercises created by the linguistic team could be uploaded, according to a set of processes and technologies, in order to be appropriately managed, sorted into categories commonly agreed upon beforehand by both teams and prepared for publishing in the form of a mobile android application.

Consequently, as a third step, the linguists introduced the exercises in the CM and its repository of images and video/audio input while adjusting and adapting some of the content to the categories/types of exercises offered by the CM and envisioned for the final mobile application: drag and drop, multiple choice, and fill-in, the first two under the form of drop-down menus.

In the final phase, the IT team developed the mobile application desired, based on the exercises created by the linguists, in the form offered by the CM, and as a result of another joint meeting where the experts from both fields negotiated and decided upon technical details regarding the application: interface, enrolment, user choices in terms of language targeted for practice, language level, field of interest and personae, exercise display, exercise traceability, as well as results and scores display and feedback. All this was put on the canvas offered by Miro, the skeleton for the mobile application being designed online with the participation of everyone involved in the project, thus benefitting from both perspectives over the final product: linguists' and software specialists'.

In its final phases before official release, the application was submitted to internal and external sessions of trials, exposed to testing and subjected to the stakeholders' opinions, their feedback being officially collected in the form of anonymous answers to an online Google form questionnaire which targeted to amass information regarding both the quality of the exercises created by the linguists and on the quality and user friendliness of the application designed by the IT team. In this way, Gruba's opinion that "CALL is made possible through an interdependent relationship among computers, students, and instructors" (Gruba 2004, 630), mentioned before, is successfully abided by as, indeed, each of these participants brings their own contribution to the success of the mobile application, according to the roles described in this section.

2.2.2. The case of LanGuide - CALL analysis

The LanGuide project productions observe, on the one hand, Chun's psycholinguistic theory, as the exercises created by the linguistic team are

approached from the perspective of the cognitive phenomena that are involved in the learning process: the learner's memory and attention, as well as the importance of the cognitive load (Chun 2011, 666), as mentioned above. But also, on the other hand, they meet the criteria of Chun's sociocultural theory (Chun 2011, 669-674), as a great deal of interest was dedicated to the aspect of placing the learners in the framework of their possible interactions in the real contexts of the fields whose specialised vocabulary they want to learn and of the cultural background of the languages they want to lean.

Subsequently, Schulze's (2017) observations regarding the interdependency of the actants involved in CALL, as well as the functions of the interpersonal relationships and learner-environment interactions are also fully considered by the LanGuide specialists. They are reflected not only in the way in which the teams worked together, as described above, adhering both to the principles of current education practices and to the policies of their institutions, but also and more prominently in the way in which the exercises were built by the linguists: carefully placing the users of the application, with each task environment, in the real-life context of the academic field, of a mobility exchange, of a secretarial or administrative situation which needs to be addressed or solved in the country where the mobility takes place or even when using the internet or any other aspect in the IT field. Thus, the cultural element was professionally integrated in the background of the exercises build by the linguists thus ensuring, in the long run, a certain degree of learner autonomy that Chapelle was talking about (2008) by exposure to authentic learning cotexts imbued in the discourse of the exercises as if they were created for native speakers, by native speakers.

Still on the same path with Chapelle (2008), the student's learning style is encouraged to develop by LanGuide's CALL approach, as the freedom of choice offered by the selection any user can make in terms of exercises, based on a self-evaluation of the relative language level which anyone is free to perform before starting to use the mobile application, facilitates the creation of a personal profile: too easy – go back one level, too difficult - dare to take up the next level, low scores in reading – keep practicing this skill, high scores in grammar – focus on something else, etc.

Considering all of the above, the aspect of isolated, decontextualized variables, mentioned above as one of the main concerns with CALL, is successfully discarded by the LanGuide approach to foreign language learning, while the ethnographic component is beautifully catered for at the same time with meeting the scientific requirements of drilling and practising for language progress and continuous improvement.

2.3. Challenges

As highlighted in subsection 2.1., CALL can be seen as a system consisting of several interdependent elements, which are in constant interaction and change. Consequently, it seems natural that all these elements generate various types of challenges that CALL is faced with.

On the one hand, there are political, technical, logistical, and financial factors that may hinder CALL projects (Bush 2008, 461). On the other hand, CALL has to deal with the same major problem as traditional pedagogy: what students learn does not always satisfy their real-life communicative needs. Even if it is generally accepted that the ability to communicate is the final aim of any language learning process, learning activities do not always seem to work towards this aim (Kohn 1995, 5). This problem makes it clear that every CALL tool needs to clearly delimit the specific language problem that is to be addressed (Bush 2008, 448).

For this reason, no CALL tool can be considered universally effective. A given material can be adequate for a certain category of learners, for the study of a certain linguistic issue (Chun 2011, 663). Or as Garrett (2009, 721) puts it, the efficacy of CALL "depends overwhelmingly on how it is used – that is, what language learning activities it supports – and how well its use is integrated into the syllabus".

At the same time, the majority of CALL tools have an important limitation: they are not able to deal with unpredictable answers that learners give, e.g. sentences or longer texts. In such cases, the teacher's feedback remains necessary (Beatty 2010, 12-13). In fact, the absence of feedback coming from a teacher may become especially problematic in the case of computer-mediated communication, i.e. when learners communicate more or less informally with other learners. This kind of setting may lead to the reinforcement of errors, since learners may not recognize one another's errors, or may leave them uncorrected even if they recognize them (Bush 2008, 452-453). In the case of such materials that are based on the integrative approach to CALL, assessment of learning outcomes may be difficult as well (Gruba 2004, 642).

Another possible pitfall that CALL specialists need to avoid is the inappropriate use of technology. When a new CALL tool is developed, its creators may run the risk of considering technology more important than the pedagogical component of the material. They may focus on technology for its own sake, trying to figure out the different ways it can be used, instead of concentrating primarily on the language learning problem that could be solved using that technology (Bush 2008, 465). That is why, LanGuide gathered the two teams of specialists in common

workshops and meetings, as described in the previous section, and even if certain compromises had to be reached on both sides, the common path was found to the benefit of the final users.

Technological aspects may sometimes make the creators of CALL materials to take the easy way out, i.e. to design tasks that are easy for computers to perform and evaluate, but are not very useful for learners, which was definitely not the case of the LanGuide project, long explanations being provided on the part of the linguists to the IT team when language aspects couldn't be dropped to the detriment of the final users and equally long technical meetings being held by the IT team to make the digital approach clear to the linguists in order for user friendliness to be attained. In this way, Beatty's words (2010, 41), "a lot of CALL software is stuck in a behaviourist rut partly because offering a behaviourist mode of instruction is an easy thing for computers to do" were effectively dismissed by the LanGuide project teams, who eventually understood the final mission of a fruitful CALL approach. Along the same lines, Bush (2008, 455) argues that technology evolves rapidly, creating a certain complexity that is not always dealt with in an appropriate way in the field of CALL.

There are, however, a number of guidelines that can help the creators of CALL tools in their efforts to keep technology and pedagogy in balance: identifying the specific purpose of using technology, finding the way to integrate the material into the lesson, defining what the teacher has to do while students are interacting with the material, and delineating the benefits that students will gain from using the material (Chapelle 2008, 589).

A different kind of challenge, which seems more difficult to address, is what Buendgens-Kosten (2020, 1) calls "the monolingual bias". This refers to the fact that some learners already speak several other languages apart from the language that they want to learn, but CALL materials are often unable to activate all the linguistic resources from all languages that learners bring with themselves into the learning process. As Buendgens-Kosten (2020, 1) says, there is "a lack of CALL products and projects that realize this potential, or that support specific plurilingual skill development".

The CALL materials that do aim at plurilingualism are usually non-commercial, being funded by organizations such as the European Union (Buendgens-Kosten 2020, 10). The LanGuide project is worth mentioning in this respect too: being the result of an international collaboration and incorporating several languages, it "aims to support the European objectives of promoting interculturality, multilingualism and digital learning" (Kompara Lukančič and Fabijanić 2020, 44).

To conclude, CALL specialists have to successfully tackle certain issues in order to make sure that the final product, which will be used by language learners and teachers, meets its users' requirements in the best possible way. This effort is characteristic of every stage of CALL material development, from the preparatory stages to the final touch added to the end product.

3. Conclusions

Irrespective of the teaching and learning environment in which it is applied, CALL displays a number of general advantages. One of its most significant benefits is the possibility to instantly adjust the learning input to the specific needs of the learner (Bush 2008, 465). Furthermore, CALL tools provide learners with instant feedback on their answers. In this way, every learner is aware all the time of his or her own performance (Chapelle 2008, 586). This can be useful in monitoring and correcting his or her learning process, leading to increased autonomy. All this was entirely understood and put into practice by the creators of the LanGuide mobile application, as all these aspects are efficaciously met by it, according to the minute description in the sections above.

Besides these benefits that every learner can enjoy, CALL tools can offer additional support to certain categories of learners: "computers have the potential to help students with special needs, for example, in their use of screen readers, Braille devices, or other assistive technologies" (Gruba 2004, 632).

Some other advantages of using CALL tools have been highlighted by neuroscience. For example, Hsu (2020, 1) examined the waves produced by language learners' brains in three second-language interaction scenarios: face-to-face interaction with a real human; virtual platform-mediated interaction with a real human; interaction with an artificial intelligence chatbot. Learners' levels of attention and meditation were also measured. His findings suggest that "learning effectiveness similar to human face-to-face interaction could possibly be achieved if learners interact with social robots" (Hsu 2020, 14).

Moreover, not only do learners acquire new language in an effective way, but they also seem to benefit from CALL from a psychological point of view: they seem to overcome their fear of making mistakes and tend to be more confident when they interact with a chatbot rather than a human being (Hsu 2020, 16).

All these aspects may make one think of CALL with unconditional enthusiasm. However, Hsu (2020, 15-16) cautiously mentions that while CALL may be a great instrument for learning vocabulary, it may not be that effective when it comes to learning more complex sentences. This reminds us of an important fact:

in order to yield the above-mentioned benefits, CALL has to overcome a number of limitations or challenges, which the LanGuide project has tried to master, as specifically referred to above, its language mobile application being under continuous improvement after the evaluation process in order to bring it to its best version possible.

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Between traditional and mobile language learning

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The paper focuses first on the novelties accessible to foreign language learning adults by MALL and mobile language learning, thus drawing a brief overview of the research into novel affordances they offer and implications for a new language learning methodology. Secondly, we explore attitudes of adult learners (tertiary students, academic and administrative staff) to studying or improving language skills in various languages immersed in the ICT, in particular the options proposed by the language learning mobile apps. In order to gather adult learners' views, a quantitative research, based on an e-questionnaire, was carried out among 1028 participants from 6 EU countries within the international LanGuide project. The results of this research lead to re-evaluation of some teaching approaches and suggest recommendations for teaching practitioners and materials developers.

Keywords: *eLearning, teaching approaches, LanGuide project, multilingualism*.

1. Introduction

The pervasive presence of ICT (information and communication technology) in everyday life and the appeal these technologies have for our students, force teachers of foreign languages to consider how language teaching might be adapted to include the new tools into their teaching practice. The surge in the development of ICT supported language-learning devices, especially language learning apps, and a wealth of research focusing on exploration of the new affordances of eLearning indicate new options for acquisition of foreign languages as a life-long learning practice which the LanGuide project seeks to exploit and advance.

The paper reports on a survey carried out among respondents (students, academic and administrative staff) at 6 institutions of higher education in Slovenia, Romania, Croatia, Spain and Sweden. The purpose of the research was to examine the views, practices and attitudes of respondents with regard to using ICT for

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foreign language acquisition, thus helping the international partnership to establish clear goals for developing learning materials in the languages of the partnership.

Drawing on the insights provided by earlier studies this paper aims to answer the following questions: 1) How familiar are our respondents with ICT and mobile apps as self-learning tools for language acquisition? 2) What are their expected needs and motivations? 3) What methodological adaptations should be considered in eLearning syllabi and materials?

The research was carried out as part of the activities within the LanGuide project (KA2-HE/19), co-funded by the European Commission.

2. Views on traditional and mobile language learning

A number of researchers point out to a disconnect between the world of education and the mobile technology that learners interact with mostly beyond the classrooms and lecture halls (e.g. Walsh 2010; Kukulska-Hulme et al. 2015; Jie et al. 2020), while also identifying a lack of new pedagogical frameworks that could guide educational endeavours for integration of mobile learning (henceforth mLearning) into the curricula (e. g. Sharples 2006; Bernacki et al. 2020). From recent research into mobile pedagogy, it has also become clear that education in the mobile age cannot replace formal education; rather it can offer a way to extend, support and scaffold learning outside the classroom (Mutiaraningrum and Nugroh 2021).

Research evidences an important paradigm shift between the two educational systems. Namely, the primary goal of the traditional educational system was effective transmission of cannons of scholarship in a formal educational setting, while the construction of knowledge in a mobile era occurs as information processing in the interaction through and with personal and mobile technology in a range of environments (Sharples 2006).

In terms of language acquisition, the traditional, well-paced acquisition process requires persistence and stamina, since a "drip-feed approach […] often leads to frustration as learners feel they have been studying for years without making much progress" (Lightbown and Spada 2006, 186). On the other hand, mobile assisted language learning (henceforth MALL) and mLearning[4] gives students the opportunity to engage with language during lessons and between

[4] mLearning refers to affordances of language tuition supplemented by informal learning on smartphones, whereas MALL – a subfield of mLearning – covers a broad range of activities for individual practice of language skills and knowledge, including language courses and lessons, but also exploratory learning in urban settings, collaborative and competitive language tasks, reference books and similar.

lessons with personalised, self-paced and learner-centred activities (Viberg and Grönlund 2012), thus allowing a more agile, focused and needs-centred development of communicative skills in a foreign language.

Such a shift of objectives and goals calls for a thorough rethinking of teaching and learning approaches, as well as the development of effective methods and teaching materials for MALL and mLearning. Technology itself plays a role in reshaping people's preferences, perceptions, and attitudes, leading to the idea of a methodology co-constructed in a sociotechnical system (Viberg and Grönlund 2012) and drawing on lessons learned from practices developed within distance learning and computer assisted language learning (henceforth CALL), while adjusting to the new demands such as flexibility, portability and spontaneity (Mutiaraningrum and Nugroh 2021).

Narrowing the view to the main objective of the LanGuide project, namely, to the design of a mobile app for language acquisition, it needs to be observed that "there are apps for all aspects of language learning, but very little consideration has been given to the pedagogical premises that underpin the design of mobile apps" (Brick and Cervi-Wilson 2015, 24). These apps provide a multifaceted capability that offers time and space flexibility and adaptability that facilitate the changeable environment favoured by a variety of self-learners from students to professionals (Ibacache 2019), but the convenience of virtual learning and "the ubiquity of mLearning options affect the manner in which one learns as language learning intertwines with users' daily life activity and work" (Kukulska-Hulme 2012, 10). Enhancing motivation of self-regulated learners still seems to require a well-organized design, relevant content and clear scope (Broadbent 2017), as well as a learner and knowledge centred approach. Successful mLearning of a foreign language should build on the skills and knowledge of students, enabling them to reason from their own experience, while providing a structured syllabus of validated knowledge, taught efficiently and with inventive use of concepts and methods (Sharples, Taylor and Vavoula 2005; Elbabour and Head 2020).

Consequently, the new medium entails also a shift in roles and responsibilities of teachers, thus Conole and Alevizou (2010) highlight that "the boundaries between traditional roles (teacher and learner) and functions (teaching and learning) are blurring. 'Teachers' need to be learners in order to make sense of and take account of new technologies in their practices" (p. 44). Teachers and materials writers need to be aware of the specific ways in which digital devices can conveniently be used inside and outside the classroom by their end-users, as well as of the specific sites and apps they frequently access and the ways they plan to use their digital devices (Brick and Cervi-Wilson 2015).

We can conclude that mobile language learning has changed the approach to language acquisition, while a number of issues still need to be addressed and analysed in order to provide a meaningful, productive user experience on language-learning apps.

3. Research design

3.1. E-questionnaire

In order to gather data an e-questionnaire of 21 questions was developed and opened on-line for 3 weeks between April and May 2021. It received 1028 responses from 6 institutions of higher education (University of Primorska - UP, University of Rijeka – UNIRI; University of Zadar – UNZD; University of Castilla-La Mancha – UCLM; Mälardalen University – MDH; Transilvania University of Brasov – UTBV). However, the number of responses to some questions was lower for various reasons. The data collected was mainly quantitative in nature, seeking to capture respondents' use and attitudes to mLearning.

The first part of the questionnaire recorded core respondents' data, such as age, gender, institutional affiliation, status (student, administrative staff or teacher), and previous experience with learning English. The participants were also asked to assess their level of ICT skills (basic, intermediate, advanced) and the type of electronic device they use (PC, tablet, mobile phone), the ease of accessing the Internet, as well as how, when and where they mostly use their devices.

The main goal of the questionnaire was, however, to gain an understanding whether the participants had used mobile apps for foreign language acquisition and the type and frequency of linguistic information they had looked for on the Internet.

In the last part of the survey, respondents had to agree or disagree with a series of statements (five-point Likert scale) regarding their use of new technologies in language acquisition and assess the likelihood of their engaging in language learning via mobile apps sometime in the future.

The following sections analyse some relevant issues gleaned from the survey.

3.2. Participants

Our respondents classified as students, administrative staff and teachers from the LanGuide project partner institutions. A total of 1028 respondents completed the whole questionnaire: 174 at UP (16.92%) 154 at UNIRI (14.98%), 230 at UNZD

(22.37%), 150 at UCLM (14.59%), 41 at MDH (3.98%) and 279 at UTBV (27.14%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents by institutions and categories

Institution	**What do you participate as?**			
	Student	Administrative staff	Teacher	**Total**
	n	n	n	n
UP	105	34	35	**174**
UNIRI	101	11	42	**154**
UNZD	155	30	45	**230**
UCLM	95	14	41	**150**
MDH	22	5	14	**41**
UTBV	207	15	57	**279**
Total	**685**	**109**	**234**	**1028**

Of the respondents, 67.5% identified as female, 30.7% as male and 1.8% preferred not to answer this question. The majority reported being students (66.6%), followed by university teachers (22.8%) and administrative staff (10.6%). The average age of student respondents was 23.3 years, teachers 44.8 years and administrative staff 41.9 years.

Most respondents (69.2%) had studied English in formal courses for more than 10 years, while the 21.1% of students averaged 6-9 years of learning English. Only 8.6% of respondents had studied English just 1-5 years, while 1.1% never studied it before.

With regard to their level of digital competence, 58.4% considered themselves to have a good level of digital skills, evaluating them at an intermediate level. 32.5% respondents placed themselves at an advanced level and 9.1% at a basic level.

Due to space limitations, this paper compares only the answers gathered from the different types of respondents and not in terms of other variables, while examining only the salient findings of this research.

4. Results and discussion

Overall, the e-questionnaire results indicate great ease in connecting to the Internet at all the environments surveyed, as confirmed by 91.4 % of respondents, who also reported frequent use of smartphones or other devices either for texting

or chatting (88%), social networking (75.1%), or to search for information (57.1%) and advice for language use (30.6%).

The latter point was further explored in a question regarding the frequency of use of electronic devices to study or improve their English language skills. The answers suggest that the PC/laptop and smartphone are the preferred tools with all groups. However, it is mainly students who use their PCs (35.2%) or smartphones (39.7%) daily to enhance their English. The administrative staff, who prefer to use their PC, mostly engage in language learning activities only a few times a month (33%), while roughly a quarter (26.6%) of the respondents from this group devise some time to English daily. Similarly, the teacher respondents prefer the PC (33.8%) to the smartphone (24.4%) for their daily improvement of English language knowledge. Roughly a fifth of them (21.8%) dedicate some time to English only a few times a week, while a third (31.6%) never use electronic devices for such studies.

From these data, we can draw the conclusion that more than half of the respondents in all groups feel the need to engage with improvement of English regularly, but the PC seems to be the device of choice with academic and administrative staff, whereas students slightly prefer to use their smartphone. Among the most frequently used language learning apps for English were listed Duolingo, Beelinguapp, Busuu and Memrise.

Further information surfaced from responses to the question "What kind of language information do you normally search for on the smartphone or tablet?" Namely, a number of language enhancing facilities seem to be regularly exploited, but were not considered among the language learning tools by the respondents. Thus, an overall 72.6% of respondents (students: 75.2%; teachers: 69.2%, administration: 63.3%) declared that they regularly used their smartphones to check up the meaning of English words. Translation tools, such as Google Translate or Speak&Translate, qualified as another frequently used mobile app by the respondents (72.6% overall; students: 75.6%; teachers: 66.7%, administration: 66.1%). The respondents refer less frequently to the mobile apps in order to verify grammar (overall mean 43.9%) or pronunciation (overall mean 36.6%) or sample language exercises (overall mean 13.7%). Only 8.5% of respondents stated that they never used their smartphones to search for language information (Table 2).

Table 2. Searching for language information on smartphones or tables

	What do you participate as?							
	Student		Administrative staff		Teacher		**Total**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	**%**
Vocabulary meaning	515	75.2%	69	63.3%	162	69.2%	746	**72.6%**
Grammar	325	47.4%	44	40.4%	82	35.0%	451	**43.9%**

	What do you participate as?							
	Student		Administrative staff		Teacher		**Total**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	**%**
Translation	518	75.6%	72	66.1%	156	66.7%	746	**72.6%**
Pronunciation	281	41.0%	20	18.3%	65	27.8%	366	**35.6%**
Exercises for language improvement	104	15.2%	19	17.4%	18	7.7%	141	**13.7%**
Other	3	0.4%	1	.9%	3	1.3%	7	**0.7%**
I don`t use my smartphone/tablet to search for language information	33	4.8%	17	15.6%	37	15.8%	87	**8.5%**

On a five-point Likert scale it was verified to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with various statements regarding the usefulness and convenience of using electronic devices to learn or improve their language skills (Table 3). All three categories of participants mostly agreed with the statement “I’m comfortable using technology and mobile devices for language learning” (students - mean value: 4.4; administrative staff - mean value: 4.2; teachers - mean value: 4.2). The two other important statements for students were: “Teachers should encourage students to use mobile apps for language learning” (mean value: 4.0) and “Using a mobile app to learn English improves my language skills” (mean value: 3.9). The statement with a lower mean value for all 3 categories was: “I think that my time spent learning languages on an electronic device is more effective than conventional courses” (students - mean value: 3.0; administrative staff - mean value: 2.9; teachers - mean value: 2.9).

Table 3. Statements about the usefulness and convenience of using electronic devices for language learning

	What do you participate as?					
	Student (n=685)		Administrative staff (n=109)		Teacher (n=234)	
	Mean value	SD	Mean value	SD	Mean value	SD
Using a mobile app to learn English improves my language skills.	3.9	1.0	3.9	1.0	3.6	1.1
I think that my time spent learning languages on an electronic device is more effective than conventional courses.	3.0	1.2	2.9	1.2	2.9	1.1

	What do you participate as?					
	Student (n=685)		Administrative staff (n=109)		Teacher (n=234)	
	Mean value	SD	Mean value	SD	Mean value	SD
Getting online information about language is better than looking through books.	3.6	1.1	3.5	1.2	3.6	1.2
I'm comfortable using technology and mobile devices for language learning.	4.4	0.9	4.2	0.9	4.2	0.9
I would like to use more online resources and apps to learn English.	3.8	1.2	4.0	1.1	3.7	1.1
Teachers should encourage students to use mobile apps for language learning.	4.0	1.0	3.9	1.1	4.0	0.9

The participants were also asked if they considered the ease and accessibility of mobile learning a motivating factor for language learning. The most frequent replies were "Yes, probably" (48.3%) and "Yes, definitely" (32.9%). These results were further confirmed by the answers to the question "Do you plan to learn a new language using mobile app in the future?", to which 33.6% of respondents replied "Yes, probably" and 26.8% "Yes, definitely". These respondents were asked a follow-up question: "Which language do you plan to study?". The vast majority of respondents (92.9%) opted for one of the European languages (mainly Spanish, German, French and Italian - in order of hits), while 16.9% considered also learning an Asian language (Chinese, Japanese and Korean were listed). Only 2.3% of respondents did not answer this question. There are no significant differences between categories of participants and by institution. It is interesting to note that all the languages of the LanGuide partnership (Spanish, Romanian, Swedish, Croatian, Slovenian, Italian) also figured in respondents' selection.

It can be deduced that the vast majority of our respondents regularly (or even daily) engage in some sort of expansion and refinement of English in their free time or at work/study using an electronic device. While only about a third consider such an activity as language learning and even fewer (13.7%) use mobile apps to study in language courses or do language exercises in English, they strongly agree that mobile apps can enhance further development of their language skills. They, therefore, expect language teachers to encourage their further engagement with languages via mobile apps; especially in view of the fact that these resources are available everywhere and most respondents feel confident of their IT skills. Thus,

also the enthusiasm indicated by their plans to learn new languages. In order to satisfy the ambitions of our students and cater to the new learning needs, new insights should be gathered from more experimental testing of new methodologies, as planned within the future activities of the LanGuide project.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Mobile language learning has altered the approach to language acquisition and our respondents prove well aware of the options available to them. The mobility, portability, and ubiquity of mobile apps seem to motivate them to make plans for more language learning. The manner of language acquisition that provides a sense of freedom and self-management seems to suit and motivate self-learners, however, particular attention should be devoted to further investigation of learning strategies and learning styles compatible with the use of mobile technology. Such knowledge can have a crucial impact on both language instructors and learners of foreign languages, as well as help materials writers and software developers.

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Automatic generation of language exercises based on a universal methodology: An analysis of possibilities

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The aim of the paper is to examine the possibilities for automatic generation of language learning exercises and compare them to those manually compiled by language instructors. The paper first presents a universal methodology applied in manually created exercises for learning language for specific purposes, elaborated with examples in the field of academic English. Next, the automation of the procedure is explored through a series of steps which include creating the corpus, analysing each exercise type and the possibility of its automatic generation, automatically generating the exercise, and evaluating the end result. The results of the evaluation suggest that automatic generation of exercises can serve as a preliminary step of a two-stage process of exercises development in which each exercise, however, needs additional approval from the language expert.

Keywords: *language for specific purposes, universal methodology, automatic exercise generation, language learning*

1. Introduction

This paper first presents the methodology behind the creation of language learning exercises within the LanGuide language learning mobile application, currently under development as part of the EU-funded project titled LanGuide, and next explores the possibilities of automatic generation of language exercises taking the methodology as its starting point.

The LanGuide project gathers experts from the fields of linguistics, first (L1) and second (L2) language teaching, and computer science from five European countries and six universities, and aims at creating an open access language learning tool. Such a tool is specifically designed and organised as a distance

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learning tool for improving language skills of different stakeholders at the tertiary level of education (Kompara Lukančič and Fabijanić 2020, 37). In addition to covering English for specific purposes (ESP), the tool is planned to include the possibility of learning at least the basics of another five languages of the project partners, namely Croatian, Romanian, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish.

The LanGuide guidance tool generates a series of pre-prepared language exercises to a language learner while targeting a specific language skill or category. These are similar to exercises and tasks one often finds on language tests. Language lexical tests, among others, have a crucial role in the process of learning languages for specific purposes (LSP). Creating language exercises manually is extremely time-consuming and expensive. The main motivation for this work is the question of how to provide enough exercises at each of the three levels of language proficiency and various learning personas singled out within the project LanGuide, in order to ensure that learners are provided with a different set of examples whenever they use the language guidance mobile application. Existing applications for language learning, such as Duolingo, are based on a human generated list of sentences and/or texts. Therefore, the main question explored within this research is whether it is possible to use a theoretically unlimited source of real examples of language use for creating exercises.

Section 2 of this paper presents related work with details on various approaches to automatically creating language exercises. Details of the LanGuide approach to language learning using the mobile application and, more specifically, details of creating language learning exercises for it are given in the first part of Section 3. The second part of Section 3 introduces and presents the methodology applied in the process of generating exercises automatically. Evaluation of automatically created exercises is given in Section 4. The main findings and concluding remarks are briefly summarized in the last section of the paper.

2. Related work

As previously suggested, the LanGuide tool is a mobile application (or an m-learning application) that utilizes the latest developments in mobile phone and/or smartphone technology, namely larger screen size with higher resolution, stronger processing power, multimedia opportunities, and ease of access to the global network (Bateson and Daniels 2012, 137), to deliver a distance learning experience. When learning at a distance, the majority of the learning process is done outside traditional classroom environments and with the lack of immediate presence of the language teacher by employing the capabilities of different digital technologies

(Lamy 2013, 144). Furthermore, mobile-assisted learning or m-learning brings additional flexibility regarding the place, time and access opportunities of language learning (Glenn Stockwell 2013, 202; Taki and Amini 2017, 61) as well as its almost seamless integration into our daily lives (Bax 2003, 25). Taki and Amini (2017, 59) suggest that such applications may represent an effective way of language learning as they allow for a personal and learner-centred way for language learning.

However, creating language exercises manually is extremely time-consuming, demanding, and expensive. Therefore, various methodologies for creating exercises automatically have been presented throughout the last two decades. The resulting systems can be categorized by the languages they support, targeted aspects of learning (e.g. grammar-oriented, vocabulary-oriented, etc.), types of exercises implemented, external linguistic resources they use (e.g. WordNet, word lists, dictionaries), different natural language processing (NLP) methods that are implemented, etc.

The following subsections describe some of the most commonly used methods from the field of natural language processing, examples of their implementation in automatic exercise generation, and some additional resources that can be used for this purpose.

2.1. Corpora

According to Bennett (2010, 2), a corpus is “a large, principled collection of naturally occurring examples of language stored electronically”. Since corpora provide rich models of language in terms of lexical, grammatical, and morphological features, collocation patterns, semantic features, etc., they are used by various groups such as linguists, social scientists, humanities scholars, lexicographers, natural language processing experts, and so on. In the recent years, corpora have also been used in language teaching (Volodina 2008, 31-32), as they allow customization according to learners' needs or course requirements and offer the possibility of generating teaching materials and exercises automatically.

There are different types and categories of corpora. For example, a monolingual corpus contains text in only one language. It can be used for various tasks, such as checking the correct usage of a word, identifying common patterns, finding the most natural word combinations, etc. Fenogenova and Kuzmenko (2016, 22) use it in combination with the Pearson’s Academic collocation list for creating five different types of lexical exercises aimed at learning academic collocations. The authors conclude that the quality of generated exercises is heavily dependent on the corpora used for their creation. The evaluation of the generated exercises, suggested by Fenogenova and Kuzmenko (2016, 25), consists of analysing

the percentage of correct answers and maximum scores per each exercise type. Moreover, the distribution of answers in multiple choice exercises reveals which choices are too easy, which are not appropriate, and which are possibly interchangeable. Bick (2005) uses corpora in different languages for automatic exercise generation in grammar.

A parallel corpus consists of two or more monolingual corpora of different languages. The languages have to be aligned and the translations of the corresponding segments have to be matched. The most obvious application of parallel corpora is in the field of machine translation, but they can also be used for automatic generation of language exercises. For example, Zanetti, Volodina, and Graën (2020, 62) apply methods for selecting example pairs from a large parallel corpus of movie subtitles in order to generate exercises which involve unscrambling sentences. Since this type of exercise can result in multiple correct sentences, the authors suggest complementing each sentence by the equivalent sentence in another language, thus narrowing down the number of correct answers. The manual evaluation is conducted by assessing whether the sentence is appropriate for the purpose, whether it contains sensitive vocabulary, whether it is sufficiently context independent to be used for an exercise, and, finally, whether the sentence pair is a good translation.

Depending on the subject area, domain, and topics they cover, corpora can be categorized as general or specialized. While general corpora, such as the 'British National Corpus' (BNC Consortium 2007), consist of general texts, specialized corpora contain texts restricted to a specific field, domain or topic. An example of a specialized corpus is the 'Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English' (Simpson et al. 2002), which contains spoken language focusing on contemporary university speech.

Most systems for automatic generation of exercises use different types of corpora. While Fenogenova and Kuzmenko (2016, 22) use well-known existing corpora, others allow uploading user-created material such as text segments (e.g. Perez and Cuadros (2017, 49) and Malafeev (2015, 442)).

2.2. Part-of-speech tagging

Part-of-speech (POS) tagging "refers to categorizing words in a text (corpus) in correspondence with a particular part of speech, depending on the definition of the word and its context" (Pykes 2020). An example of a tagged sentence is given in (1). The corresponding lexical term and its tag are given under each token in the sentence.

(1)

It	is	a	beautiful	day	.
pronoun	Verb	Determiner	Adjective	Noun	Punctuation mark
(PRP)	(VBZ)	(DT)	(JJ)	(NN)	

A set of all POS tags forms a tagset. They differ for different languages. Tagsets can contain different levels of detail: they may contain only basic tags for the most common parts of speech (e.g. N for noun, V for verb, etc.) or they may contain tags that reveal more detail and distinguish between nouns in singular and plural, verbal conjugations, tenses, aspect, and so on.

Since the size of modern corpora is typically very large, automatic annotation of POS tags is usually performed. The automatic systems for annotating POS tags are called POS taggers. The availability of POS taggers for different languages varies. The accuracy of a tagger usually depends on the level of detail of the POS tags in a tagset. Also, taggers that annotate only the most common word types usually have high accuracy. For example, the accuracy of a well-known POS tagger for English is over 97% (Manning 2011, 1).

POS tagging can be useful in various linguistic tasks, e.g. word sense disambiguation, Named Entity Recognition (NER), sentiment analysis, question answering, etc. The application of POS tagging in automatic exercise generation is less obvious, but can be quite useful.

One of the possible applications of POS tagging in automatic exercise generation is the generation of appropriate distractors in multiple choice exercises. For example, in the work of Knoop and Wilske (2013, 41), POS tagging is used to determine appropriate distractors in fill-in-the-gap exercises with multiple possible answers. In Perez and Cuadros (2017, 49), POS tagging is used to determine the 'pedagogical target', i.e. which word category the user wants to focus on (e.g. nouns, verbs, modals, prepositions, etc.).

2.3. WordNet

"WordNet is a large lexical database of English. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are grouped into sets of cognitive synonyms (synsets), each expressing a distinct concept" (Princeton University 2010). Synsets are interlinked by means of conceptual-semantic and lexical relations. Lexical relations include synonymy (words that have similar meanings, e.g. sofa-couch), polysemy (words that have more than one meaning, e.g. mouse as an animal and mouse as a computer input

device), hyponymy/hypernymy (hypernyms are more general synsets and hyponyms are more specific, e.g. bird-robin), meronymy/holonymy (part-whole relation, e.g. table-leg), antonymy (lexical opposites, e.g. black and white), etc.

WordNet is used for numerous tasks, such as word sense disambiguation, automatic text classification, automatic text summarization, information retrieval, machine translation, etc. It can also be used in the automatic generation of language exercises. For example, Knoop and Wilske (2013, 41) use WordNet to find appropriate distractors in multiple-choice exercises. They use antonyms or false synonyms of the target word as distractors. In the work of Brown, Frishkoff, and Eskenazi (2005), WordNet is used to generate six types of vocabulary exercises, including definition, synonym, antonym, hypernym, hyponym, and cloze questions. The definition item requires a definition of the word available in WordNet. The synonym, antonym, hypernym, and hyponym items require the user to match two corresponding words in the specified lexical relation. The cloze item requires the use of the target word in a specific context, either in a complete sentence or in a phrase. The sample sentence or phrase is retrieved from WordNet.

2.4. Other linguistic resources

In addition to the natural language processing techniques and resources mentioned above, some automatic language exercise generation systems also use other linguistic resources such as various specific word lists, dictionaries, collocation lists, etc.

As mentioned above, Fenogenova and Kuzmenko (2016, 22) use two well-known corpora (the British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE) and the British National Corpus (BNC)) and the Academic Collocation List for automatic generation of collocation-based exercises.

Some systems use manually or automatically generated resources. For example, Malafeev (2015, 444-445) developed a system called ‘Exercise Maker’ for automatic generation of language exercises, which includes seven different types of exercises: word formation, error correction, open cloze, word bank, missing words, text fragments and verb forms. The author compiled a number of linguistic resources for exercise generation, including lists of the most common English word forms, a list of rules that allow realistic spelling, a list of adverbs used in the verb forms exercise, a list of verb forms, some manually written shorter lists of articles, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, etc.

3. Context, datasets and methods

3.1. Universal methodology for creating LSP learning exercises

The LanGuide tool takes as its starting point the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or CEFR) and assumes the action-oriented approach to language learning described therein. Following this approach, language learning occurs as part of learners' engagement in language activities, which involve dealing with spoken or written texts related to different themes and belonging to different domains of everyday life, in order to accomplish different tasks (Council of Europe 2001, 9). In the process, the learners employ their linguistic competences, general ones as well as communicative language competences, which are modified or reinforced with time. Such language activities in the LanGuide tool were prepared by the linguists and language teachers involved in the project and are based on the analysis of learner needs and the resulting syllabus created at the beginning of the project.

Further in line with the CEFR, the LanGuide tool caters for learners at three proficiency levels: (1) basic, (2) intermediate, and (3) advanced. The proficiency bands, however, are not as granulated as in the CEFR (where there are 6 proficiency bands altogether), as such detail was not deemed necessary taking into consideration the basic aim and target audience of the tool. Instead, the A1 and A2 levels from the CEFR were taken to make up the basic level, B1 and B2 the intermediate level, and C1 and C2 the advanced level of proficiency. At each level, there are language exercises or tasks created for productive language skills (speaking and writing), receptive language skills (listening and reading), and grammatical exercises and vocabulary items, following the CEFR's descriptors appropriate for each of the included levels.

There are three categories of target users of the LanGuide m-learning application: (1) university students, (2) university teachers, and (3) administrative staff. For each category of users, the tool is able to provide language exercises appropriate to their proficiency level and the selected language skill.

Finally, as stated in the LanGuide project plan, the tool does not support learning general English, but focuses on ESP. Thus, there are four broad areas defined to achieve this, namely (1) English for academic purposes (EAP), (2) administrative or secretarial English, (3) English for mobility purposes and (4) English for IT purposes. In this paper, the focus will remain only on the first area – EAP – and all the examples provided will pertain to it.

Given the complexity of the approach described above, the overall approach taken in the development of the LanGuide m-learning tool can be summarised as shown in Figure 1.

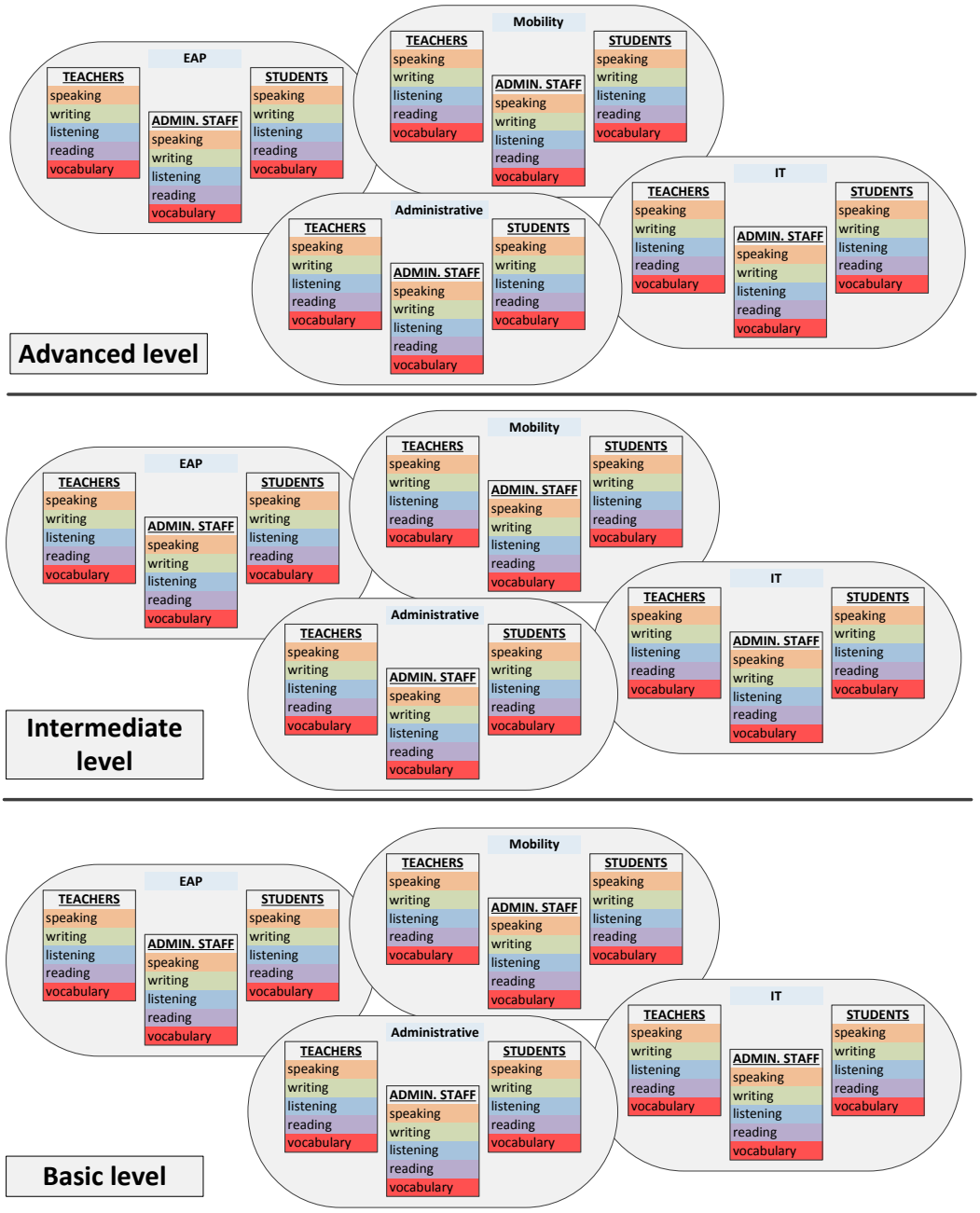

Figure 1. Overview of the LanGuide approach

3.1.1. Characteristics of exercises created within the LanGuide approach

When designing materials for the LanGuide tool following the previously described approach, a somewhat adapted version of the well-known ADDIE model was employed, complemented with the approach described by Klimova (2015, 634). The ADDIE approach is a five-stage process comprised of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation of materials, and has proven well-suited to organising the creation of online learning materials for a course, including language ones (Cuesta 2010, 183). The development of materials for the LanGuide tool includes one more stage – internal evaluation of course materials – that precedes the implementation of the materials into the tool. The sequence of stages in the development of language exercises for the LanGuide tool is given in Figure 2.

The first two stages, Analysis and Design, are preparatory stages, during which the needs of the various learners who will use the tool are analysed and determined. Additionally, during these stages it is imperative to establish instructional goals, define instructional content, and contemplate delivery options and restrictions posed by the technology (Cuesta 2010, 183-84). These are rather comprehensive procedures and may involve a variety of approaches. During this stage, material creators, in collaboration with the IT team, decided on the appropriate task types to be included into the LanGuide tool: given the context of distance learning, only those types of tasks for which there is a possibility of automatic evaluation by the tool were deemed as appropriate (namely, multiple choice, fill-in-the-gaps, and matching tasks, or their slight varieties). Prior to that, the LanGuide language team agreed on the appropriate communicative activities, learning outcomes and language content to be included.

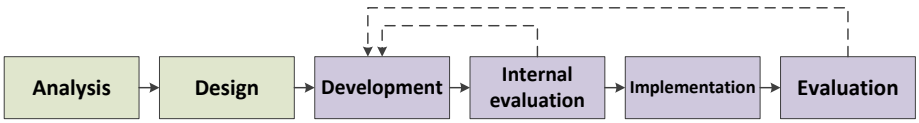

Figure 2. Stages in the development of learning materials in LanGuide

Following the preparation phase, it is necessary to start the creation of learning materials, keeping in mind and following the guidelines set in the previous two stages. During the development phase in the LanGuide approach, suitable texts were found and, if necessary, adapted to the needs of the defined approach. The selection of language learning materials, or, better yet, language texts necessary for carrying out linguistic tasks, included several criteria for doing so, following the work of Schader and Waibel (2016, 113). These, for example, included

considerations of whether materials are appropriate for the age of learners, whether they promote independent thinking in learners, how they fit the background of the defined learning context, and how easy it is to adapt them to suit the instructional needs.

Once the materials are created, the LanGuide approach to materials development requires them to undergo initial evaluation. Each exercise is thus evaluated by a selected member of the project's linguistic team (other than the creator of the material). After receiving the initial feedback on their materials, their creators redo them as suggested and prepare them for implementation. The goal of this stage is to increase the quality of the created materials even before they are introduced for use by the target learners of language.

Evaluated materials are then implemented into the LanGuide tool and available for use by the language learners. After being used for a particular period of time, the learners are able to give their evaluation and feedback on all the materials they used during learning. If the evaluation feedback is positive and does not suggest any changes, the materials remain in the tool. Otherwise, they are adapted by their creators and implemented into the tool once again.

Given the described context of materials use, as well as their type and complexity, there exists a real opportunity to automatically generate these language exercises, thus allowing for a speedier and easier creation of a large number of exercises (e.g., Perez and Cuadros 2017).

3.1.2. Exercise example

An example of the exercise created by a language expert, following the approach described above, is given in Figure 3. It is a multiple-choice activity (implemented as a drop-down menu in the application itself) in which the language learner has to choose the most appropriate option/word from the ones offered so that the text makes sense. The text was slightly adapted from the original source to suit the needs of language learning whereas all the options of a given item (blank that needs to be filled) were carefully chosen by the task creator and feature words belonging to different word classes, thus requiring the learner to think about word formation.

The task shown below is intended for the intermediate level administrators to evaluate their vocabulary skills (i.e. word formation).

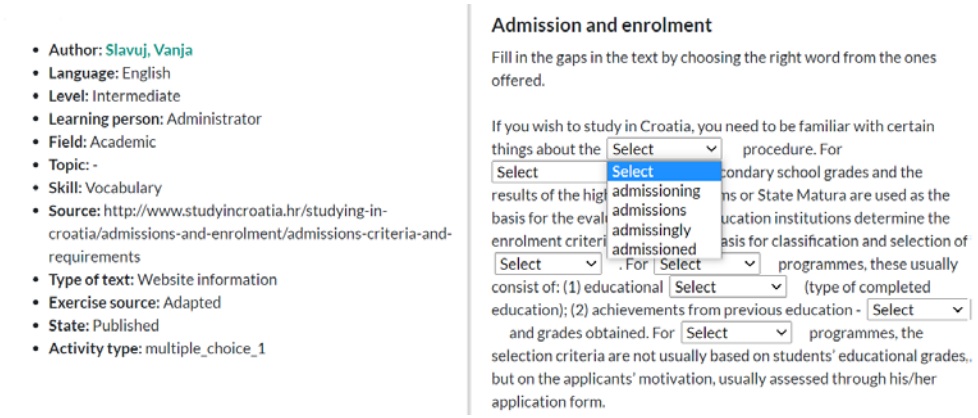

Figure 3. Example of a vocabulary exercise created using the LanGuide methodology (right) and its metadata (left)

3.2. Methodology for automatic generation of LSP learning exercises

One of the aims of this work is to make the automation procedure accessible to language teachers, non-experts in NLP, in order to involve them in the process and to affect their attitudes toward automation, which are usually negative due to poor understanding of NLP methods. Since the Content Management System of the LanGuide app currently supports three types of exercises, i.e. fill-in-the-gap, matching, and multiple choice, we will restrict our considerations to these types of items.

The experiment described herein includes grammatical, lexical, reading, and writing exercises. The tasks involving the four basic language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) are usually abundant with grammar and vocabulary components, which are often very important, if not crucial, for creating understanding. However, out of the four already mentioned basic skills, we take into account only two, namely reading and writing. Since speaking is problematic in itself regarding automatic assessment, even in the case of manually created exercises, we exclude it from this research. Additionally, in order to automatically create listening exercises, a selection of suitable spoken corpora has to be created prior to the generation of exercises. Listening, therefore, remains out of scope of this work as well.

We propose a two-phase approach to automatic generation of LSP exercises which makes use of the Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014, 7), a tool for creating and manipulating corpora, available at http://www.sketchengine.eu, or any similar tool.

The first phase implies compiling or selecting a suitable corpus. The second phase consists of three steps – in the first step of the phase a Cassandra Query Language (CQL) query is formed in order to obtain a list of appropriate sentences. In the second step, the words which satisfy the created CQL condition are scanned and their suitability for a particular proficiency level is determined. In the third and final step, the sentences which belong to the same proficiency level are grouped.

Vocabulary items across all three levels of proficiency (basic, intermediate and advanced) can be selected in different ways. For example, one could use the English Vocabulary Profile (EVP), part of the English Profile – the CEFR for English ('English Vocabulary Profile' 2021), which is offered by the Cambridge University Press free of charge, thus allowing educators, materials developers, test creators, syllabus designers and other practitioners to obtain reliable information regarding words, phrases and their meanings and to map them to a particular level of the CEFR. In this research we use similar academic vocabulary lists available at https://www.academicvocabulary.info/download.asp (Gardner and Davies 2014, 305).

In line with the methodology developed for the manual creation of exercises within the LanGuide project and with regard to the exercise types currently supported by the accompanying content manager, we build three exercises per category or skill included in the research. The only exception is the writing skill for which only fill-in-the-gap and matching tasks are considered appropriate.

3.2.1. Corpus

The task of generating language learning exercises automatically implies using a wide range of NLP methods and techniques. In order to make our methodology transferrable to languages other than English, we compile a bilingual English-Croatian mobility corpus from the selected documents that can be retrieved at https://op.europa.eu/, as there are parallel documents available also for other partner languages involved in the project. The post-alignment editor used for correcting automatically obtained sentence alignments in our approach is the InterText Editor (Vondricka 2014, 1875).

Our final corpus from which exercises are automatically generated is composed of 6 documents and contains around 174,000 words on the English side.

3.2.2. Automatically generated exercises

Using the described approach, a total of 11 language exercises are generated automatically. Examples of three different exercise types are given in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6.

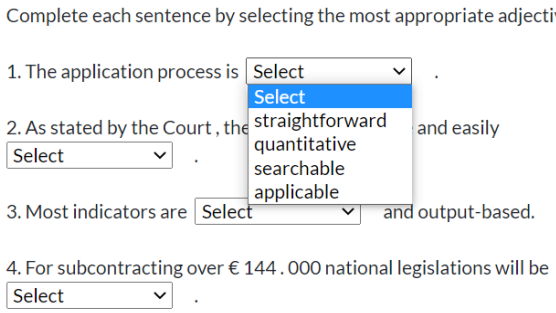

Figure 4. Example of an automatically generated exercise – multiple choice task

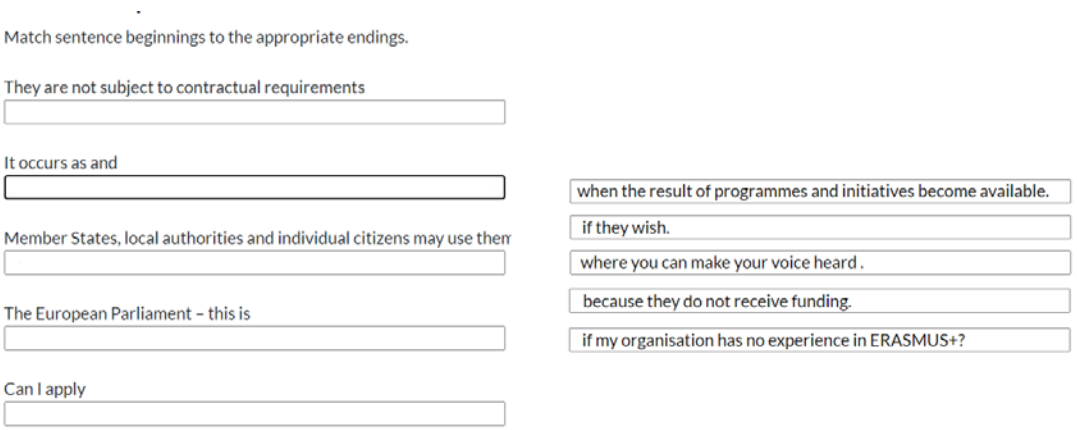

Figure 5. Example of an automatically generated exercise – matching

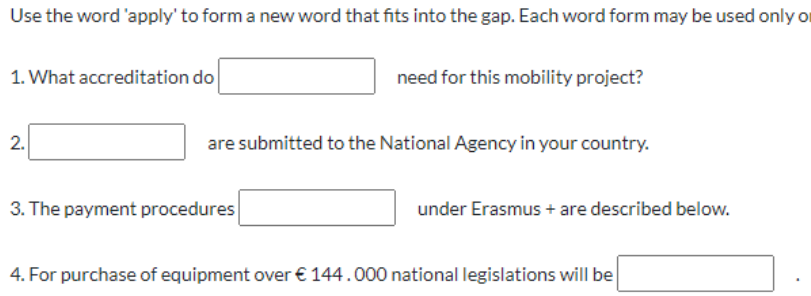

Figure 6. Example of an automatically generated exercise – cloze task

In order to build exercises with collocations (implemented as fill-in-the-gap type of activity), we first generate a word list consisting of words of a specified part of speech, then create word sketches and finally extract the desired number of items from a specified relation (such as the 'objects of' type of relation). The collocates can be extracted based on the descending score of word frequency or randomly from a defined top list. A C-test type of task (fill in the missing words letter by letter; several letters at the beginning of the word are given and the number of letters is indicated) can be generated in the same manner. Of course, one needs to make sure that there is at least one distinct collocate per each selected word. In addition, cloze tasks with rational deletion (filling in specified words from a particular word class, such as conjunctions) can be extracted from the concordance tool by specifying a suitable CQL query, e.g. as in (2):

(2) <s/> containing []{*a*,} "*X*|*Y*|*Z*" []{*b*,} within *span*,

where *X, Y,* and *Z* stand for the specified words, *a* for the minimum number of tokens before the conjunction, *b* for the minimum number of tokens after the conjunction, and *span* to the sentence length. Obtaining sentences which contain words with the same root can be done in a similar fashion, e.g. as in (3):

(3) <s/> containing [lemma="*root*.*"] within *span*

Matching exercises (implemented as drag-and-drop type of activity) are corpus-specific as they can be generated by exploiting the corpus structure and, with respect to that, specifying a suitable CQL query, e.g. as in (4):

(4) <s/> containing <s> [][tag="N.*"][word==":"] within *span*

Multiple choice tasks (e.g. sentence completion with appropriate words, word categories, or phrases) can be extracted by specifying CQL queries such as in (5):

(5) <s/> containing [tag="N.*"] within *span*

where *tag* refers to a desired part of speech, i.e. nouns in this case. Since a sentence often contains multiple words of the same part of speech, identical sentences are grouped and treated as a single instance during the selection process. Also, multiple choice items offered should not be synonymous. Therefore, an additional step of checking the top 10 thesaurus list of each word is introduced to make sure that other words which are also selected do not appear in it.

4. Evaluation of automatically generated language exercises

An experiment is conducted to examine how English teachers cope with automatically created exercises. Four sets of exercises are created as outlined in the section on methodology. To simplify the evaluation procedure, which should be neither too tedious nor too time-consuming, one example per each supported exercise type and per each supported skill type is generated. Due to a small sample of exercises, three evaluators are considered sufficient to assess the generated exercises. In addition to a quantitative evaluation of exercises, which is based on the scores obtained by evaluators when solving the exercises, a subjective evaluation is also performed. It gives evaluators the chance to express their opinion on the suitability of the exercises regarding the type and level of language proficiency, and to warn about possible ambiguity which is not necessarily reflected in the achieved quantitative scores.

Six out of eleven exercises (two exercises of each type) were assessed as suitable regarding both the type and the intended proficiency level (Table 1). The only comment on these six exercises concerns instructions of one of the fill-in-the-gap exercises which should explicitly state that each word form should be used only once in order to make it clearer for the learners and to avoid ambiguity.

Table 1. Evaluation of automatically generated exercises

Task ID	Type	Skill/Category	Proficiency level	Maximum score/Total	Average score	Remark
AC001GI	SELECT	Grammar	intermediate	5/5	5	-
AC007GB	FILL-IN	Grammar	basic	3/6	3	Difficulty
AC008GB	MATCH	Grammar	basic	5/5	5	-
AC003VI	SELECT	Vocabulary	intermediate	4/4	4	-
AC004VI	FILL-IN	Vocabulary	intermediate	4/4	3	Instructions
AC010VB	MATCH	Vocabulary	basic	6/6	5	Difficulty
AC009RI	SELECT	Reading	intermediate	5/5	5	Level
AC011RB	FILL-IN	Reading	basic	3/3	3	-
AC005RB	MATCH	Reading	basic	3/3	3	-
AC006WB	FILL-IN	Writing	basic	3/6	2.33	Difficulty
AC002WI	MATCH	Writing	intermediate	6/6	6	Level

The greatest issue was detected in the case of two exercises with collocations because they were assessed as too difficult and lacking appropriate context, which contributed to the increased difficulty of the task. One of these writing exercises was of the fill-in-the-gap type with the first letter of the base given (a C-test type of task), while the second one was listed under vocabulary and was of the matching type.

Another major issue was identified concerning the fill-in-the-gap exercise including the use of modal verbs, again as a result of multiple possible answers that fitted each gap. However, even manually created tasks on modal verbs are notoriously tricky to solve if not provided with enough context or definite indicators to guide verb selection.

Both the reading exercise of the multiple-choice type and the writing exercise of the type match, generated by exploiting the corpus structure, were assessed as too difficult for the intended level and a suggestion was made to redefine them as appropriate for the higher proficiency level.

Overall, however, the evaluation revealed that exercises of the type fill-in-the-gap are the least suitable for automatic generation, since two out of four exercises failed in the manual evaluation task. Another issue detected during the evaluation procedure is that multiple possible answers in the tasks with collocations and modal verbs made none of the exercise types suitable for automatic generation, at least not in the context-free form. Therefore, in our future work we intend to generate a set of context-dependent collocation exercises.

All in all, the evaluation reveals that adequate grammatical and lexical exercises, as well as those covering reading and writing skills, which are suitable for all the three exercise types supported can be automatically generated, the only limitations being a careful selection of the grammatical field covered and ensuring enough context for the exercises with collocations to narrow down the number of correct/possible answers.

5. Conclusion

The task of creating language exercises manually is largely a time-consuming and expensive one. Additionally, sentences and texts within tasks created in that way might be seen as lacking in authenticity, as they have been specifically intended for didactic purposes.

One such approach is taken in the creation of the language learning tool named LanGuide in which the task of creating language exercises for three language proficiency levels, three learning personas, and four language skills (plus vocabulary and grammar) was given to language teachers and other language experts. Based on the LanGuide methodology of exercise creation, outlined in this paper, it is noticeable that exercise creators, in addition to text selection and adaptation, need to consider a large number of (learner- and context-specific) variables in order to create valid language exercises, which often proves a very time-consuming endeavour. Moreover, once the exercises have been created, they

have to undergo a scrutinous evaluation of other language experts, as well as language learners, in order to make sure the exercises adhere to the set standards. In order to make the approach speedier and easier for language teachers and other non-ICT-experts, automatic procedures for generating exercises might be considered.

Within this research, a two-phase approach to automatic generation of LSP exercises is suggested. The first phase implies compiling or selecting a suitable corpus, and the second phase is concerned with querying the corpus and processing results.

The selection and creation of the parallel corpus is guided by the topics defined within the framework of the LanGuide project for the field of academic English and by the availability of the documents in all the project partners' languages to set grounds for a multilingual corpus creation. Although the research presented in this paper exploits only one side of the parallel corpus, namely that for English, by enabling learners to compare a text in one language with its translation in their mother tongue and vice versa, they can explore the target language in a guided way. Therefore, the compiled corpus can be used for expanding the supported exercise types.

The task of multilingual corpus creation could be further simplified by using a corpus of subtitles given that subtitles are available in all target languages. In that case, the alignment procedure could be completely automatic and, conditionally said, error-free, due to the association of the sentences to time codes. However, due to space and time restrictions, translation in this field is freer than in other domains, which could have a negative impact on the automatic generation of exercises.

The analysis of the compiled corpus in the preparation phase reveals that the quality of the corpus is of great importance for the diversity of the automatically created exercises. We, therefore, opt for a guided approach to corpora creation. For example, in the corpus compiled within this research, there are segments that contain both a question and its answer, or a subtitle and the respective description, which proves to be convenient for generating reading and writing exercises.

To evaluate the proposed methodology, four sets of exercises are automatically generated, i.e. one example per each supported exercise type and per each supported language skill or category. Over 70% of the created exercises are assessed positively by three evaluators. The conducted manual analysis shows that the most problematic exercise type is fill-in-the-gap, mostly due to the possibility of multiple correct answers for each gap, which could not be induced automatically. In summary, we would like to point out that the automatic generation of exercises can serve at least as the first phase of a two-step process in which each exercise thus created requires approval by the instructor or language expert.

Acknowledgement

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Corpus-based typology analysis of abbreviations in the European Commission's Mobility related documents

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In this paper, we provide a typological overview of abbreviations found in the corpus of Erasmus+ mobility documents, presented as an overview of classification and taxonomic arrangement of abbreviations. The corpus was created from the texts available on the Erasmus+ website using the in-built tools of the Sketch Engine interface and it includes a representative sample of 4 million words. The abbreviations were collected using the concordance queries which enable us to retrieve lemmas written with only capital letters (e.g. OLS for 'Online Linguistic Support') and subsequent manual filtering. The typology is based on previous works in this field (Fabijanić: 2015; Fabijanić: 2014a, 2014b; Malenica, Fabijanić: 2013; Fabijanić, Malenica: 2013), which provided a more consistent and more transparent approach to classification of abbreviations, based on different other works and approaches (Fandrych: 2008a; Fandrych: 2008b; Harley: 2006; López Rúa: 2006; Jackson, Ze Amvela: 2005; López Rúa: 2004; Plag: 2003; Plag: 2001; Stockwell, Minkova: 2001; Crystal: 1995; Algeo: 1991; Cannon: 1989). Abbreviations are classified according to two criteria: narrower and broader sense, and their differences in orthographic formation are described by the set of specific descriptors. The suggested description, classification and analysis were previously used in examining different terminologies and is used in this work to prove their applicability and sustainability.

Keywords: *abbreviation, corpus, typology, EU, mobility, documents*

1. Introduction

There has been a prominent increase in the production of abbreviations in the English language in the past several decades. This can be applied to both general language and the specialized jargons of various professions. In this paper, we

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provide a typological overview of abbreviations found in the corpus of Erasmus+ mobility documents, presented as an overview of classification and taxonomic arrangement of abbreviations. It was motivated by the exercise (learning/teaching material) preparation process for the Erasmus+ LanGuide project (KA2-HE-01/19) when the need arose to obtain a more profound understanding of formation patterns of abbreviations. The linguistic register of academic mobility abounds with abbreviations due to its bureaucratic nature, on the one hand, and the linguistic economy provided by the abbreviations, on the other hand. The corpus was created from the texts available on the Erasmus+ website (using the in-built tools of the Sketch Engine interface) and it includes a representative sample of 4 million words. The abbreviations were collected using the concordance queries which enable us to retrieve lemmas written with only capital letters (e.g. OLS for 'Online Linguistic Support') and subsequent manual filtering.

The typology of abbreviations is based on previous works in this field (Fabijanić 2014; Fabijanić 2015a and 2015b; Malenica and Fabijanić 2013; Fabijanić and Malenica 2013), which provided a more consistent and more transparent approach to the classification of abbreviations, based on different other works and approaches (Fandrych 2008a; Fandrych 2008b; Fandrych 2007; Gjuran-Coha and Bosnar-Valković 2008; Bieswanger 2007; Lehrer 2007; Harley 2006; López Rúa 2006; López Rúa 2004; Jackson and Ze Amvela 2005; Crystal 2004; Plag 2003; Stockwell and Minkova 2001; Crystal 1995; Algeo 1991; Cannon 1989). Abbreviations are classified according to two criteria: narrower and broader sense, and their differences in orthographic formation are described by the set of specific descriptors. The suggested description, classification and analysis were previously used in examining different terminologies and are used in this work to prove their applicability and sustainability. The corpus-based linguistic tools allow us to apply this descriptive apparatus on a representative sample of abbreviations, further annotate that sample and analyse its relevant word-formation features.

2. Taxonomy of abbreviations

López Rúa (2004 and 2006) divides the *abbreviations* into two groups of *complex* and *simple shortenings*, with the former divided into *clippings*, *blends* and *initialisms*, whereas the *initialisms* into *alphabetisms* and *acronyms*. *Simple shortenings* occur only in written form and encompass *proper abbreviations*. Almost all covered authors place *blends* and *clippings* into *shortenings*, with the exception of Jackson and Zé Amvela (2005, 88-89) who regard them separately from other abbreviations.

López Rúa's approach is considered to be the most appropriate way of classifying *abbreviations*, especially the groups of *acronyms* and *alphabetisms*, for three reasons. Firstly, it is important for superordinate and subordinate terms to have different terminology. Secondly, the chosen terms should fit the properties of the named category; which in case of the term *initialism* denotes that words are created from initial letters of the constituent words and phrases, and the *alphabetism* denotes that the terms are pronounced letter-by-letter. Thirdly, despite their presence in written medium only, the group of *proper abbreviations* should not be ignored or confused with other types of *abbreviations*, as was the case not only with earlier dictionary practice, but also with some contemporary works as well.

According to López Rúa, an *initialism* is "(...) the result of selecting the initial letter, or occasionally the first two letters, of the orthographic words in a phrase and combining them to form a new sequence" (López Rúa 2006, 676). The two major ways for these words to be pronounced are as a word (*prototypical acronyms*) and as a series of letter names (*prototypical alphabetisms*) (López Rúa 2006, 677). Examples of *initialisms* being pronounced in both ways can also be found, or even as a combination of the two, which are far less frequent ways of their pronunciation (Ibid.). *Clipping* is described as a "process by which a word-form of usually three or more syllables is shortened without a change in meaning or functions" (López Rúa 2006, 676). They are somewhat arbitrary regarding the part of the word that gets elided, and although they have informal connotations, there are examples of *clippings* replacing their source phrase (bus < omnibus). The morphological and phonetic properties of *blends* are a topic of numerous works (e.g. Gries 2004a and 2004b; Lehrer 2007; Crystal 2001; Fandrych 2007, 2008a and 2008b; López Rúa 2006 and 2007; Cannon 1989; Plag 2003). While there are numerous definitions of the term, López Rúa's definition was chosen for the purpose of this work, as her explanation is deemed sufficiently complex for this type of analysis. She states that that the blends are created by "(...) joining two or more word-forms through simple concatenation or overlap and then shortening at least one of them" (2006, 677).

This taxonomy is found to be the most appropriate one because it clearly distinguishes specific types of abbreviations, which means that it does not provide the same name for certain superordinate and/or subordinate terms, as it is an evident case in some authors. This in particular refers to *initialisms*, *alphabetisms* and *acronyms*, which are often used interchangeably or wrongly dubbed abbreviations or shortenings (e.g. in Plag 2003; Jackson and Zé Amvela 2005). Another argument for this usage of terms are the descriptive features of each abbreviation subcategory. The term initialism denotes an abbreviation created

through usage of initial letters, applied to both alphabetisms and acronyms. The term alphabetism denotes an abbreviation pronounced as a series of letters of the alphabet, i.e. letter-by-letter, while the term acronym, coined in 1943, has been generally accepted to denote abbreviations pronounced as whole words.

3. Methodology

In order to analyse collect the data on use of abbreviations in the mobility-related documentation, a corpus of naturalistic data had to be collected for subsequent analysis. For this purpose, we chose the English version of the Erasmus+ website (https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en). The corpus used in this paper was created via the *Create corpus* function in Sketch Engine. We used the in-built tool to retrieve the texts from the Erasmus+ website and the tool automatically compiled a corpus from it. The corpus based on the entire Erasmus+ website would be too large for our purposes (our estimate was 100-200 million words), which is why the corpus was built from a representative sample of roughly 4 million words.[3]

To retrieve the abbreviations, we used the query in (1), which provides a list of all tokens written in uppercase letters. For practical purposes, we limited the query to 10 uppercase letters, because previous research (Fabijanić and Malenica 2013; Malenica and Fabijanić 2013) shows that these kinds of abbreviations are highly unlikely to occur. The CQL query in (1) also ignores the abbreviations written in lowercase letters (e.g. laser, sonar) or abbreviations in which only the first letter is capitalized (e.g. Nato). However, since these kinds of abbreviations are typically lexicalized abbreviations[4] and generally not domain-specific, we believe that this minor concession would not present a significant obstacle for our research.

(1) [word="[[:upper:]]{2,10}"]

This query generated a list of 31,140 abbreviation tokens which were lemmatized and sorted by lemma frequency using Sketch Engine's in-built tools and downloaded in spreadsheet format for further annotation and filtering. The lemmatized and sorted list contained 286 abbreviations and was further filtered to remove the false positives. The false positives belonged to the following four groups:

[3] The entire corpus contains 4,693,669 tokens (3,877,482 words).

[4] The effects of lexicalization on use of upper- or lower-case letters in abbreviations is best visible in one of the most recent examples. When the term *COVID-19* was first introduced in February 2020, it was spelled in all upper-case letters. As the term (and unfortunately the disease itself) became more widespread, alternative forms *Covid-19* and simply *covid* became increasingly ubiquitous.

a) words which were written in uppercase letters in the text for various reasons (emphasis, parts of headings, etc.), e.g. *WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS ACTION?;*
b) abbreviations which are abbreviated only in written form but are pronounced as full words, e.g. *km* 'kilometre', *EN* 'English', *PT* 'Portugal, etc.
c) abbreviations which are not exclusive to the domain of academic mobility but other registers, e.g. *ICT* 'Information and Communication Technology', *OJ* 'Official Journal', or *ACP* 'African, Caribbean and Pacific';
d) abbreviations in other languages included in the Erasmus+ website, e.g. *CIFE* 'Centre International de Formation Européenne', *SVE* +Service Volontaire Européen', and *SEPIE* 'Servicio Español para la Internacionalización de la Educación'.

We additionally narrowed down our corpus to abbreviations whose normalized frequency was at least 1 per 1 million tokens. The final list analysed in this paper (in Appendix 1) included 122 abbreviations.

4. Results and analysis

In the first part of our analysis, we looked at the abbreviations by using the methodology presented in Fabijanić and Malenica (2013). Specifically, we looked at the creation of acronyms and alphabetisms in the broader and in the narrower sense. The narrower sense implies a symmetrical one-to-one relationship between the words in the source phrases and their initial graphemes which are used in the creation of a particular abbreviation. The broader sense entails the various deviations from the narrow pattern in terms of isomorphism between the abbreviation and its source phrase – omission of particular words of the source phrase, use of syllables in the creation of abbreviations, metathesis of graphemes, etc.

The analysis in this paper showed very little deviation from the prototypical pattern of creating abbreviations, i.e. creation of abbreviations in the narrower sense. Out of 122 abbreviations collected, 74 of them (60.66%) belong to the abbreviations in the narrow sense (2a) and 48 (39.34%) belong to the group of abbreviations in the broad sense. The majority of them (N=46) involve omission of particular words of the source phrase (2b), while only a small portion of them involve use of syllables in the creation of abbreviations (2c).

(2) a. ECAS 'European Commission Authentication System'
ECEC 'Early Childhood Education and Care'

b. DCI ‘Development **and** Cooperation Instrument’
ICDE ‘International Council **for Open and** Distance Education’

c. ISCED ‘International Standard Classification of **Ed**ucation’
EURES ‘**Eur**opean Employment Services’

After the initial part of our analysis, we wanted to test two hypotheses which were formulated based on the data in Malenica and Fabijanić 2013; Fabijanić and Malenica 2013; and Malenica 2019. The first hypothesis we wanted to investigate was whether and to what extent the length of abbreviation affects its realization as acronym (pronounced as a single word) or as an alphabetism (pronounced letter-by-letter). Specifically, we hypothesized, following the data in Malenica and Fabijanić (2013), that the longer abbreviations are more likely to be realized as acronyms than as alphabetisms due to a linguistic economy principle (elaborated in Malenica 2019), with a cut-off point between the two types at around 3 or 4 graphemes.

In order to test this hypothesis, we collected the data on the length of abbreviations and their realization as an alphabetism or acronym. To verify that a particular abbreviation is pronounced as a whole word or in a letter-by-letter manner, we looked at the video and audio materials posted online by the relevant mobility institutions (e.g. a series of webinars organized by ENQA ‘European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education’). Unfortunately, it was not possible to verify the pronunciation of all 122 abbreviations, but we believe the final total of 59 abbreviations analysed for this purpose is representative enough for our research.

In total, we found 19 acronyms with an average length of 4.58 graphemes (SD=0.77, min. = 3, max = 6) and 40 alphabetisms with an average length of 3.1 graphemes (SD=0.63, min. = 2, max = 5). These results are very much in line with the results in Malenica and Fabijanić (2013) in which a mean length of 4.49 graphemes was noted for acronyms and a mean length of 3.15 graphemes for alphabetisms. To test whether this difference in length between the two types of abbreviations is statistically significant, a binary logistic regression model was created with length of abbreviation as the predictor (independent) variable and the phonological realization (acronym or alphabetism) as a criterion (dependent) variable[5], as seen in Figure 1. The model proved to be significant ($\chi^2_{(57)} = 37.801$, $p<.001$) and a very good predictor of abbreviation type (McFadden $R^2 = 0.510$)

[5] The dataset meets the assumptions for using logistic regression listed in Clark-Carter (2018).

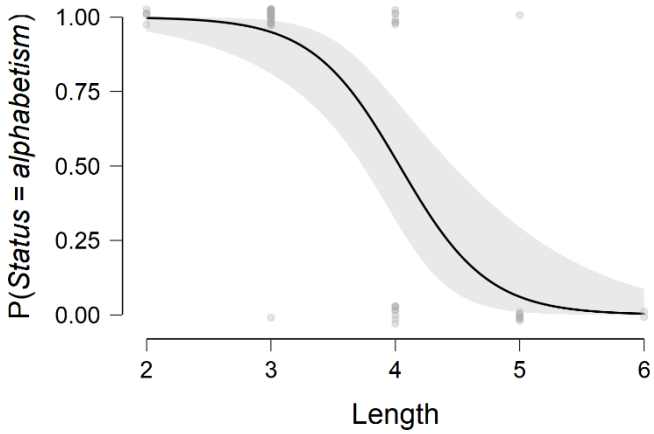

Figure 1. The binary logistic regression model with length of abbreviation as the predictor and type of abbreviation as the criterion variable

The second hypothesis we wanted to test was whether the omission of parts of the source phrases might be linked to the length of the abbreviation and their type. A chi-squared test showed a statistically significant correlation ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ = 18.344, p<.001) between abbreviation type and use of ellipsis in their creation and the correlation was shown to be strong (ϕ = 0.567). In Table 1, it is noticeable that acronyms are underrepresented in the Narrow Sense category, i.e. that a stronger preference for creation of abbreviations in the Broad Sense is more prominent among them and, conversely, that the alphabetisms are overrepresented in the Narrow Sense category. This confirms our hypothesis and shows that omission of particular elements of the source phrase (and other deviations from the general "one word one initial" principle) is more prominent with the formation of acronyms than with alphabetisms.

Table 1. Contingency table for abbreviation types and subtypes

	Narrow	Broad
Acronym	3 (10.42)	15 (7.58)
Alphabetism	30 (22.56)	9 (16.42)

This result is further corroborated by the second binary logistic regression model created with the length of abbreviation as the predictor variable and the subtype of abbreviation (with or without ellipsis) as the dichotomous criterion variable. As can be seen in Figure 2, there is more variability within this model, meaning that the difference between the two groups is not as clear-cut as it was with the first model.

However, this model also proved to be significant ($\chi^2_{(118)}$ = 31.583, p<.001, McFadden R^2 = 0.198).[6]

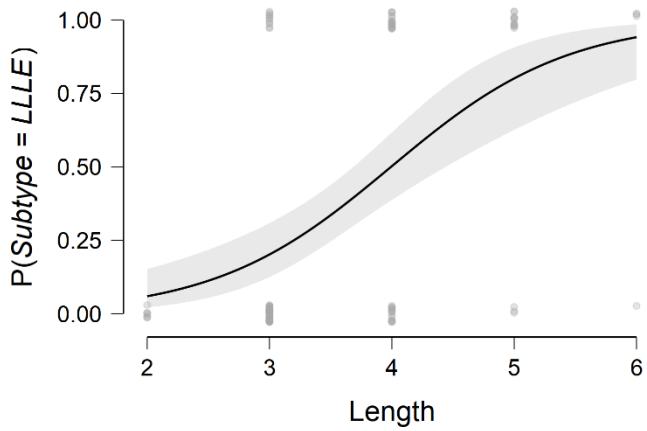

Figure 2. The binary logistic regression model with length of abbreviation as the predictor and subtype of abbreviation as the criterion variable

These results provide robust empirical confirmation that the formation of abbreviations is governed by the principles of linguistic economy. Specifically, the data indicate that when a potential new abbreviation is created, a form with over three initials (i.e. three syllables when pronounced word-by-word) is deemed uneconomical, which is why the whole-word pronunciation is more likely to be used (Figure 1.). The data collected in this paper are consistent with the data collected in previous research (cf. Malenica and Fabijanić 2013; Malenica 2019), but the reason why the cut-off point between the "more" and "less" economical forms is 3 syllables is not clear at this stage. A higher proportion of omitted source phrase elements among acronyms (Table 1) and among longer abbreviations - (Figure 2) indicates that this strategy is often followed by certain trade-offs in terms of deviations from the "prototypical" mode of creation of abbreviations. Other factors like the ease of pronunciation most probably play a role in this (cf. Malenica 2019), but these matters are beyond the scope of this paper.

[6] For the sake of maintaining the binary logistic regression model, the two abbreviations which do not involve omission of source phrase words but are classified as abbreviations in the broader sense are not included in the model.

5. Conclusion

Our aim in this paper was to provide a brief overview of the typological system used for classifying abbreviations from the field of mobility and education and analyse several factors which influence their formation. We used the corpus-based methods to collect a representative sample of abbreviations from this domain and have demonstrated the applicability of the typological system presented in earlier works (Fabijanić 2014; Fabijanić 2015a, 2015b; Malenica and Fabijanić 2013; Fabijanić and Malenica 2013) on a new corpus of abbreviations. The analysis of the corpus of about 4 million tokens revealed that the majority (60.66%) of abbreviations in the corpus are created by adhering to the "narrow" sense template, meaning every word of the source phrase is represented by a single grapheme of the abbreviation. However, a relatively large portion of the sample (39.34%) deviates from this prototype, and these deviations include omission of particular words from the source phrase or use of syllables (see section 4.). Further analysis showed that the formation of acronyms is strongly correlated with longer source phrases and, consequently, longer abbreviations (over 3 syllables), while the formation of alphabetisms is more commonly associated with shorter abbreviations (3 syllables or less). Acronyms were also shown to be more strongly associated with the omission of source phrase elements and other types of deviations from the prototypical template for forming abbreviations. We believe the data presented in this paper provide strong evidence in favour of the proposed classificatory system and further demonstrate the importance of the linguistic economy principle for the formation of abbreviations. We believe further research in the field would lead to more complex models of formation which would include factors such as ease of pronunciation or practicality of abbreviation and we hope our work will stimulate research heading in this direction.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Corpus of abbreviations

Abbre-viation	Full phrase	Normalized freq.	Sub type
AE	Adult Education	24.71	LLL
AIPY	Agency for International Programs for Youth	5.33	LLLE
APV	Advance Planning Visit	45.17	LLL
AWP	Annual Work Programme	2.13	LLL
CAWI	Computer Assisted Web Interview	6.82	LLL
CBHE	Capacity Building in Higher Education	6.18	LLLE
CEEPUS	Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies	3.83	LLLE
CEERES	Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies	1.7	LLLE
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning	6.6	LLLE
CRELL	Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning	8.52	LLLE
CSS	Central Support Service	15.98	LLL
CVET	continuing vocational education and training	3.41	LLLE
DCI	Development and Cooperation Instrument	60.72	LLLE
DEOR	Dissemination and exploitation of results	4.05	LLLE
DG	Directorate General	88.63	LLL
DGT	Directorate-General for Translation	9.59	LLLE
EAC	Education and Culture	176.83	LLLE
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency	265.68	LLLE
EASQ	European Area of Skills and Qualifications	2.34	LLLE
EC	European Commission	113.98	LLL
ECAS	European Commission Authentication System	12.57	LLL
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care	21.94	LLL
ECHE	Erasmus Charter for Higher Education	227.33	LLL
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System	103.97	LLLE
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training	152.33	LLLE
EDF	European Development Fund	67.54	LLL
EENEE	European Expert Network on Economics of Education	13.85	LLLE
EHEA	European Higher Education Area	32.17	LLL
EIF	European Investment Fund	17.47	LLL

Abbre-viation	Full phrase	Normalized freq.	Sub type
EIPA	European Institute of Public Administration	4.26	LLLE
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network	1.28	LLL
EMJMD	Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree	455.29	LLL
EMMC	Erasmus Mundus Master Courses	7.03	LLL
EMT	European Master's in Translation	10.01	LLLE
EMT	Executive Agency online Mobility Tool		LLLE
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument	53.26	LLL
ENIC	European Network of Information Centers	1.92	LLLE
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy	17.9	LLL
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	3.62	LLLE
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe	81.39	LLLE
EPRP	Erasmus+ Project Results Platform	1.07	LLL
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register	6.6	LLL
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training	73.93	LLLE
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	119.52	LLL
ESAA	Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association	1.07	LLLE
ESF	European Social Fund	8.74	LLL
ESL	early school leaving	5.54	LLL
ESN	Erasmus Student Network	2.56	LLL
ETER	European Tertiary Education Register	2.13	LLL
ETF	European Training Foundation	2.13	LLL
EU	European Union	2341.24	LLL
EUI	European University Institute	4.05	LLL
EUNIC	EU National Institutes for Culture	2.13	LLLE
EUPA	European Union Programmes Agency	6.82	LLL
EURES	European Employment Services	4.9	SLLL
EVS	European Voluntary Service	234.78	LLL
EWS	Early Warning System	3.2	LLL
EYCA	European Youth Card Association	1.7	LLL

Abbre-viation	Full phrase	Normalized freq.	Sub type
EYP	European Youth Portal	2.13	LLL
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement	9.37	LLL
FWC	Framework Contracts	1.07	LLL
GTSET	Grimsby Town Sports and Education Trust	1.7	LLLE
HEA	Higher Education Authority	4.47	LLL
HEI	Higher education institution	337.48	LLL
HRD	Human Resources Development	1.7	LLL
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority	1.7	LLL
IAB	Independent Audit Body	1.28	LLL
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study	1.28	LLLE
ICDE	International Council for Open and Distance Education	7.46	LLLE
ICILS	International Computer and Information Literacy Study	4.69	LLLE
ICM	International Credit Mobility	15.98	LLL
IEG	International Erasmus Games	1.28	LLL
IMIM	International Master in Innovative Medicine	1.28	LLLE
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance	32.38	LLLE
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights	7.03	LLL
IPTS	Institute for Prospective Technological Studies	4.05	LLLE
IRO	International Relations Office	1.92	LLL
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education	10.23	SLLL
ISP	Intensive Study Programme	20.24	LLL
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training	4.47	LLLE
JM	Jean Monnet	11.08	LLL
JMD	Joint Master Degree	3.41	LLL
JRC	Joint Research Centre	17.68	LLL
LDV	Leonardo da Vinci	1.92	LLL
LLL	Lifelong Learning	10.01	LLL
LLP	Lifelong Learning Programme	171.29	LLL
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology	1.07	LLLE
MFF	Multi-annual Financial Framework	4.47	LLLE
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture	1.28	LLL

Abbre-viation	Full phrase	Normalized freq.	Sub type
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre	41.12	LLL
NCP	National Coordination Points	2.77	LLL
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training	5.11	LLLE
NEO	National Erasmus+ Office	9.37	LLL
NESET	Network of Experts working on the Social dimension of Education and Training	12.36	LLLE
NQF	National Qualifications Framework	4.26	LLL
NSLE	National School for Leadership in Education	1.28	LLLE
NSS	National Support Services	1.28	LLL
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	69.88	LLLE
OER	Open Educational Resources	101.84	LLL
OHER	On-line Higher Education Report	1.7	LLL
OID	Organisation ID	1.7	LLL
OLS	Online Linguistic Support	59.65	LLL
OMC	Open Method of Coordination	10.65	LLLE
OP	Operational Programme	3.83	LLL
PBL	Problem Based Learning	1.92	LLL
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies	18.54	LLLE
PID	Project Implementation Directorate	1.28	LLL
PLL	Programme for Lifelong Learning	3.83	LLLE
PLM	People in the labour market	3.2	LLLE
PSA	Partner Support Agencies	19.17	LLL
RTT	Researchers, teachers and trainers	6.82	LLLE
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities	61.15	LLLE
SCHE	Short Cycles Higher Education	6.82	LLL
SEG	School Education Gateway	7.46	LLL
SGIB	Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks	1.28	LLLE
SOPHRD	Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resource Development	1.07	LLL
SSA	Sector Skills Alliances	2.13	LLL
TC	Technical Committee	1.28	LLL

Abbre-viation	Full phrase	Normalized freq.	Sub type
TCA	Transnational Cooperation Activities	25.99	LLL
URF	Unique Registration Facility	9.16	LLL
WBAA	Western Balkans Alumni Association	2.34	LLL
WPI	Work Programme Index	208.15	LLL

LLL = 1 source word represented by 1 grapheme in abbreviation letter;
LLLE = 1 source word represented by 1 grapheme in abbreviation letter with omission of words in the source phrase;
LLLE = 1 source word represented by 1 grapheme in abbreviation letter with use of syllables in the abbreviation.

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Creating tasks for eLearning Slovenian under the LanGuide project

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The introductory chapters of the article briefly outline the Slovene language, its origin, and its basic characteristics. Afterwards, the article also offers an insight into Slovene as a second/foreign language, which more and more people have been learning in recent time. The main part of the article is to introduce the methodology of creating exercises for e-learning Slovene from A1 to B1 levels. To make it easier for the user to learn the language, the exercises are upgraded in terms of content and grammar. The paper presents ten examples of exercises for all three levels on the topic of mobility, in which the grammar and the vocabulary are based on narrowed thematic sections (greetings, presentations, numbers, countries, nationalities, languages, travel and accommodation).

Keywords: *eLearning, Slovenian as a second/foreign language, creating tasks, LanGuide project.*

1. Introduction

The paper tackles the aspect of the process of creating tasks for learning Slovenian as a second/foreign language. The introductory part is followed by a chapter in which we describe the Slovenian language as an official language and as a first language. We also outline the development of the Slovenian language through history and reference some of the initial basic language manuals. Fundamental grammatical characteristics of Slovenian literary language – number

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and names of cases, grammatical gender, grammatical number, and tenses are also given. The specificities of Slovenian are highlighted in comparison to other (Slavic) languages, focusing mainly on the dual and the absence of the vocative case. Basic phonetic features are also presented – the spelling and division of phonemes, their spoken versions in a particular phonetic environment, and the phonological changes according to the sonority hierarchy. The specificities mentioned and the fact that Slovenian is a "small" language or spoken by a relatively small number of speakers make it exotic and attractive.

The increase in interest in Slovenian as a second/foreign language over the recent years has been evidenced by research in this field as well as by a higher number of foreign users of Slovenian. For foreign speakers, new materials are thus produced based on documents and manuals in the field of Slovenian as a second/foreign language, in particular, the Common European Language Framework, and the manuals *Preživetvena raven za slovenščino and Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino,* which are presented in *Chapter 3.* Tasks that were created for particular language levels are given their description or the expected level of competencies shown by the speakers upon reaching a certain level. The central chapter is dedicated to describing the creation of tasks for selected language levels, from A1 to B2, encompassing the topic of mobility[5]. The tasks are designed to be upgraded both grammatically and in terms of content. The types of tasks (drag & drop, matching, multiple-choice, type in) are customized to the selected language level. Examples of tasks are accompanied by descriptions of what is checked, consolidated, and taught with each task.

For learning Slovenian as a second/foreign language, users already have two applications – Slovene learning online and 50 languages, which cover (more) general topics, such as Slovenia, Slovenian, letters, numbers, names of days and months, food and drink, daily routines, body parts, emotions, the most common phrases in selected communication circumstances, e.g., in a restaurant, at a bank, at a doctor's office. This application, however, offers vocabulary and grammar tasks in four selected areas, intended primarily for students, higher education teachers and administrative staff, namely mobility, academic language, computer language, and administrative language. The article presents tasks on the topic of mobility in further detail.

[5] The term (academic) mobility refers to students and higher education teachers who move to another institution within or outside their country to study or teach for a limited time.

2. The Slovenian language

The Slovenian language is considered as one of the marginal Slavic languages by the number of speakers. It is used for mutual communication by around 2.5 million Slovenes inside and outside the borders of Slovenia (including members of Slovenian minorities in Italy, Austria, and Hungary, and ex-pats around the world).

The position of Slovenian language is formally defined in Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, where Article 1 states that

> Slovenian language is the official language of the Republic of Slovenia. It provides for spoken and written communication in all areas of public life in the Republic of Slovenia, except when, per the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Italian and Hungarian are the official languages in addition to Slovenian, and when the provisions of international treaties binding the Republic of Slovenia specifically allow the use of other languages. Slovenian, which is one of the official languages of the European Union, is used by the Republic of Slovenia in international contacts (Pravno-informacijski sistem).

When Slovenia became independent in 1991, it had a population of just under 2 million, of which, according to the 1991 census, Slovenian was the first language of 88.3% of the population. In 2002, when this data was last collected, it was 87.7%. In the areas of the municipalities inhabited by the Italian or Hungarian national communities, Italian and Hungarian are also official languages. In 1991 and 2002, 0.2% of the population cited Italian as their first language, while 0.5% cited Hungarian and one per cent less in 2002. (https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/News/Index/5004).

Historically, the ancestor of Slovenian is Indo-European, from which the Proto-Slavic developed. The Slovenian language evolved from one of the ancient Proto-Slavic dialects spoken by the Slavs, who came into our space in the 6th century. The first Slovenian manuscript is part of the 10th-century Freising manuscripts, written in the Carolingian minuscule. The beginning of the Slovenian literary language goes back to the time of the Reformation, more specifically to the year 1550, when we received our first book, written in Slovenian by Primož Trubar. In 1584, we received the first Slovenian grammar *Arcticae horulae succisivae de Latino carniolana* by the author Adam Bohorič, in which the meta-language is Latin. The first dictionary containing (also) Slovenian can be considered *Dictionarium quatuor linguarum*, which was written in 1592 by Hieronim Megiser, while the first dictionary based on the Slovenian language is the handwritten Slovenian-German-Latin dictionary *Krajnsko besedische pisano,* in the second half of the 17th century.

In 1781 we obtained the first printed dictionary based on the Slovenian language *Tu malu besedishe treh jesikov* by Marko Pohlin. The *Dictionary of The Slovenian Language* (1936), by Jože Gloner, is considered the first monolingual interpretative dictionary of Slovenian. The first *Standard Slovene s*pelling and grammar was compiled in 1899 by Fran Levec (Eagle 2006; Ramovš 1995; Snoj 2003).[6]

Slavic languages are divided into Eastern (Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian), Western (Czech, Slovak, Polish, Kashubian, and the Sorbian languages) and Southern (Bulgarian, Macedonian), Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, and Slovenian falling in the Western branch of the South Slavic languages (Snoj 2003, IX).

The Slovenian language has 6 cases, i.e., inflectional forms of a noun or adjective word (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, locative, instrumental) expressed by declensions. Compared to other Western South Slavic languages, the vocative was dropped, which is the same as the nominative in Slovenian, e.g., Josip, pridi.

The Slovenian literary language distinguishes among three distinct grammatical genders: masculine (brat, vojvoda, A, dežurni), feminine (mama, perut, Iris, dežurna), neuter (polje, Krško), and further divides into four stem-based declensions for each (there is no second declension for neuter).

There are four tenses in use – the future, which is formed with the verb *to be i*n the future and *the -l participle* (bom delal, boš delal, bo delal ...), the present (delam, delaš, dela ...), the past tense which is formed with the verb to be in the present and *the -l participle* (sem delal, si delal, je delal ...) and very rarely used pluperfect from *the descriptive -l participle* and the past tense auxiliary verb italcis (sem bil delal).

The peculiarity that makes people say that the Slovenian language is a lovers' language is that in addition to the singular and the plural, we also have the dual (1 hiša, 2 hiši, 3 hiše). The dual was already known in Indo-European proto-language and Proto-Slavic, and among the Slavic languages, it is also known today in the Kashubian in Northern Poland, in the Sorbian languages, which is spoken in South-Eastern Germany, and the Chakavian dialect of Croatian.

The Slovenian literary language defines 29 phonemes written in 25 letters of the alphabet. The phonemes are divided into vowels (i, ɛ, e, a, u, ɔ, o,ə) and consonants (b, c, č, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, š, t, v, z, ž in dž), which are further divided into sonorants (m, n, l, r, j, v) and obstruents, these are further divided into voiced (b, g, d, ž, z, dž) and voiceless (t, s, h, š, k, f, c, p, č). In most cases, the principle of phonetic pretext applies, especially before vocals, which means that š is pronounced [š], dž [dž], g [g] etc. The main exceptions are the phonemes v and l, which are pronounced as u (with different pronunciation nuances) before consonants and a pause, e.g. vino [vino] : vsak [wsak], lep [lep] : bel [beu̯].

[6] Today, the Fran web portal is open to the public, with several general and specific dictionaries, language resources, etc.

At the end of the word, we pronounce voiceless obstruents: rog [rok], mlad [mlat], rob [rop] etc. We also define phonological changes according to the sonority hierarchy – when two differently voiced sounds stand together, the first one adjusts to the second, e.g., glasba [glazba], sladkor [slatkor], robček [ropček] (Šeruga-Prek and Antončič 2004; Tivadar and Batista 2019; Toporišič 2000).

The number of people learning Slovenian as a second and a foreign language (SJDTJ) for a variety of reasons is increasing each year, as a result, SJDTJ has become the subject of numerous linguistic and scientific research in recent decades, as evidenced by numerous language manuals, textbooks, debates, articles, monographs, diploma and master's theses, which have been produced during this time[7] (Šumenjak and Volk 2020, 461). In addition to the printed material, several freely available applications enable learning of the Slovenian language, e.g. *Slovene learning online and 50 languages.*

SJDTJ is learned by many although there is no exact data on the number. It is learned by immigrants in primary and secondary schools, adults, and also students (Šumenjak and Volk 2020, 461), so new ways, especially web applications, are very welcome and desirable in learning Slovenian as a second/foreign language.

3. Slovenian as a second/foreign language

The starting point for the tasks for learning Slovenian was the basic manuals and documents in the field of Slovenian as a second/foreign language, namely the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR or Slovenian SEJO), which is also the basis for the manuals *Preživetvena raven v slovenščini* (A1 level) and *Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino* (B1 level). We do not yet have a descriptor for level A2 in Slovenian. CEFR "introduces common reference levels for describing language achievements, which classify language skills into six levels" (SEJO 2011, 12), namely from A1 to C2 for five language competencies (auditory comprehension, reading comprehension, speech comprehension, spoken communication and written communication) (SEJO 2011, 12). It is thus designed in general terms, covers recommendations, and provides a common basis for the preparation of language curricula, exams, textbooks, etc. in Europe (SEJO 2011, 23). *Preživetvena raven v slovenščini* and *Sporazumevalni prag za slovenščino* give a description of the A1 and B1 level for Slovenian, which is adapted to the language specifics of Slovenian.

Vstopna raven (entry-level) corresponds to level A1. Speaker at A1 level:

[7] e.g., Ferbežar 2019; Knez 2019; Lečič 2020 and 2018; Pavletić 2019; Pirih Svetina 2019; Savarin 2019; Stramljič Breznik 2019, Šumenjak and Volk 2020.

> They understand and use common daily terms and very basic phrases intended to meet specific needs. They can talk about themselves and others and respond to personal questions, such as where they live, about the people they know and about their possessions. They can handle simple interaction when the interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly and is willing to help (SEJO 2011, 46).

A1 level is the lowest level of language proficiency in the CEFR. The A1 level of communication capability is limited to simple, predictable, and routine phrases that can be used in different speaking situations, but the number of these situations at this level is, of course, limited. Restrictions also occur when listening and reading, as speakers at the A1 level cannot fully understand the usual spoken or written text but can only identify individual words and phrases. The *Preživetveni ravni za slovenščino* covers ten topics, which represent the starting point for A1 level. Individual topics also include a description of sociocultural behaviour, while the grammar in the manual does not have a specific chapter, as learning grammar requires an analytical approach and highlighting the formulaic use of language, which is too early at this level (Pirih Svetina 2016, 4–6). When listening and speaking, an A1 level speaker can understand simple instructions, engage in basic daily conversations with a predictable topic and know how to ask simple questions. When reading, they understand short and simple messages, instructions, and information. When writing, they can complete basic forms requesting personal data and write text messages containing information about the time, date, and place. (Pirih Svetina et al. 2004, 10) In creating various tasks at the A1 level, we relied on the topics, vocabulary, and competencies presented in the manual and derived from actual linguistic use.

Vmesna raven (intermediate level) corresponds to level A2 and, together with level A1, entails the capabilities of a basic language user. Speaker at A2 level:

> They understand sentences and common phrases relating to the most fundamental areas (e.g., the most basic personal and family data, shopping, local geography, employment). They are able to communicate about the simple and routine tasks that require simple and direct exchange of information on known and routine matters. In simple words, they can say something to the person in their immediate environment and meet their current needs (SEJO 2011, 46).

This level covers the majority of descriptors relating to social functions, descriptors for movement and travel, which are a simplified version of descriptors at the level of the communication threshold (B1) (SEJO 2001, 55–56). The A2 level defines another sublevel *močna vmesna raven* (strong waystage level A2+). "This is where more active participation in the conversation stands out with certain help and with some limitations" (SEJO 2011, 56). When listening and speaking, an A2 level speaker can easily express an opinion and requests in familiar contexts and spontaneously engage in a conversation. When reading, they understand basic information, public notices, simple forms, personal letters, descriptions, and simple instructions. When writing, they can fill out forms and write short and simple letters, messages or requests (Pirih Svetina et al. 2004, 10). Levels A2 and B1 are grouped below the basic level in the educational programme *Slovenščina kot drugi in tuji jezik*, because the speaker "masters the language to the extent that they can communicate independently. They can handle most everyday and reproducible situations while using a wide range of simple language" (Ferbežar et al. 2020, 14). Precise descriptors for each communication activity are separate for A2 and B1 in CEFR, and often at A2 level there is a descriptor for A2+ (SEJO 2011, 82–114), while the actual linguistic use of individual topics and language competencies from different levels are strongly intertwined.

Raven sporazumevalnega praga corresponds to the B1 level, which covers the capabilities of an independent language user. Speaker at B1 level:

> When speaking in a standard language, they understand the main points when it comes to familiar things, which they regularly deal with at work, school, leisure, etc. They can handle most situations, which often occur when travelling around the country where this language is spoken. They are able to produce simple cohesive texts about topics known to them. They can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly justify and clarify their opinions and plans (SEJO 2011, 46).

"The concept of the communication threshold indicates the degree of their ability to communicate. This is a boundary which a foreign speaker crosses when they can communicate independently in the target language" (Ferbežar et al. 2004, 9). The communication threshold is reached by the speaker at the B1 level, which means that they are able to participate in a conversation and communicate effectively in a wide range of contexts. Level B1, like A2, is further divided into the *močna raven sporazumevalnega praga* (strong waystage level B1+). It is subject to the same basic characteristics as B1 and includes descriptors covering the exchange of large quantities of information (SEJO 2011, 56–57). When listening and speaking, a B1

level speaker can express a limited opinion on abstract and specialised cultural civilisation related matters or advise on familiar topics, understand instructions or public advertisements and can participate in everyday conversation. When reading, they understand real information and articles, if related to a known field, are able to understand the essence of texts relating to their professional area or field of study. When writing, they can write letters and routine notices and take notes on predictable things (Pirih Svetina et al. 2004, 10). The communication objectives for the communication threshold or level B1 are further defined in the *Sporazumevalnem pragu za slovenščino* and are organised according to the topics (Ferbežar et al. 2004, 15–22).

4. Creating tasks for learning Slovene as a second/foreign language

The tasks for the LanGuide application were created for the three levels, namely A1, A2, and B1, and cover four basic areas: mobility, academic language, computer language and administrative language. The tasks are designed to be upgraded both grammatically and in terms of content. For all three levels, the paper presents sample tasks on the topic of mobility, and grammar and vocabulary are based on narrower thematic strands (saying hello, introducing yourself, numbers, countries, nationality, languages, travel and accommodation).

Tasks at the A1 level are designed so that the user can successfully solve them without or with minimal pre-existing knowledge, acquiring key communication competencies at the entry-level. In A1 level tasks, emphasis is placed on vocabulary, which is very basic and at the same time necessary for successful communication in Slovenian. Since users at A1 do not possess any or have minimal prior knowledge, tasks with matching and choosing the correct answer prevail. We avoided using exercises where solutions need to be entered (typed in), which are suited for higher levels when the users already have some knowledge of the language.

A2 level tasks are designed so that they can be solved by a user who has achieved A1 level language and communication goals, or by a language user of Slavic origin, i.e., someone who uses cases in their language system. Tasks at the A2 level are upgraded both grammatically and in terms of content and are based on the ones from the A1 level. The vocabulary is a bit more challenging, the sentences are composed, but still simple enough. Because users already have some language skills, the tasks are also upgraded with the type in answering format.

B1 level tasks upgrade the content and grammar of the previous two levels, and focus on the more difficult grammatical sets and peculiarities of the Slovenian language. In the sample tasks we have shown the peculiarities in accentuation, use of the dual, and the two possible declension forms in the declension of country names ending with *-ska* or *-ška.* Sentences may be slightly longer than the technical limitations of the application tools allow, but still understandable enough for users who have acquired knowledge at the A2 level. B1 level can include several types of tasks, especially multiple-choice and type in.

4.1.Sample tasks and descriptions

4.1.1.Basic vocabulary

A1 (1) Izberite izraze z en enakim pomenom. *Choose sentences with the same meaning.* (Match.)

Ime mi je ...	My surname is ...
Pišem se ...	I'm a/an ... by profession.
Prihajam iz ...	I'm ... years old.
Star/-a sem ... let	My name is ...
Po poklicu sem ...	My e-mail is ...
Moj naslov je ...	My telephone number is ...
Moj elektronski naslov je ...	I'm from ...
Moja telefonska številka je ...	My adress is ...

A1 (2) Izberite izraze z en enakim pomenom. *Choose sentences with the same meaning.* (Match.)

Ime mi je	26 let.
Pišem se	oljčna pot 23, Koper.
Prihajam iz	051 321 456.
Star/-a sem	Novak.
Po poklicu sem	martina.novak@email.com.
Moj naslov je	profesorica matematike.
Moj elektronski naslov je	Martina.
Moja telefonska številka je	Slovenije.

A2 (1) Izberite izraze z en enakim pomenom. *Choose sentences with the same meaning.* (Match.)

Ime mi je …	Imam … let
Moj priimek je …	Moji hobiji so …
Všeč mi je …	Moja najljubša pijača je …
Ni mi všeč …	Pišem se …
Najraje pijem …	Ne maram …
Najraje jem …	Jaz sem …
V prostem času se ukvarjam z …	Moja najljubša hrana je
Star/-a sem …	Rad imam …

B1 (1)

Izberite besedo s pravilnim naglasom. (Select the correctly accented word.) (Multiple choice.)

Moje _____ je Peter. a) íme b) imé	Moj _____ je Novak. a) príimek b) priímek	_____ 20 let in prihajam s Slovaške. a) Ímam b) imam
Moj _____ prigrizek je mlečna čokolada. a) nájljubši b) najljúbši	Zelo rad jem tudi _____ z raznimi omakami. a) téstenine b) testeníne	Moj najljubši prigrizek je mlečna _____. a) čókolada b) čokoláda.
_____ sem v matematiki, zato sem vpisan na študij matematike. a) Najuspéšnejši b) Najuspešnéjši	Od vseh športov mi je _____ tek. a) najpomémbnejši b) najpomembnéjši	V prostem času se _____ z glasbo. a) úkvarjam b) ukvárjam

A1 (1) shows an example of an A1 task as part of the "talking about yourself" topic. The aim of the task is for the user to learn about the basic phrases when talking about themselves in Slovenian, which they connect to the corresponding English translation. In doing so, the user is learning new vocabulary and at the same time developing their communication capability, since the task is designed in a communicative way, which means that even in a realistic situation, the user will hear and use the vocabulary and phrases from the task. At this point, the user is not yet familiar with the grammar, but learns the phrases by heart and complements them accordingly with their own data. Task A1 (2) is an example of a basic introduction dialogue in Slovenian.

In task A1 (2), the same phrases are used as in task A1 (1), since, especially at the basic level, it is important to operate only with the vocabulary known to the user in the exercises, otherwise the main objective of the task is lost as the user focuses on unknown words, which inhibits the development of communication capabilities. In task A1 (2), users develop their vocabulary but also comprehension, as the user must recognize the meanings of the phrases in the left column in order to select the appropriate answer from the right. One of the objectives of the task is also that the user can talk about themselves using the model from the A1 (2) task.

In task A2 (1), after the users already know some basic vocabulary, they are asked to identify and connect related phrases (words that mean the same or similar) from the left and right columns, since in everyday communication, it is often the case that we use different words and phrases to communicate the same meanings. This will allow the user to expand their vocabulary and communication patterns, thus being more confident in talking about themselves and others.

One of the problematic areas of learning Slovenian is also the accentuation. Namely, Slovenian has the system of free and mobile tonal accent, which means that the users have to learn the accentuation along with an individual word. Task B1 (1) checks the adequacy of the accent location in the selected words, which are often accented incorrectly. The user has two options, one of which is correct. In certain cases, the accent may change the entire meaning, e.g. hôtel (participle of the verb hoteti – *want*): hotél (accommodation facility), védenje (znanje – *knowledge*): vedênje (obnašanje – *behaviour*), and in sample cases the user learns to correct the most common accent errors. The language learning app is still in development, so there is currently only a basic (written) option, which will also be upgraded with added audio recordings of the pronunciation.

4.1.2 Grammatical tasks – example of the verb to be

A1 (3) Izberite ustrezno obliko glagola biti. *Choose the verb to be in the correct form.* (Multiple choice.)

Jaz	**Ti**	**On/Ona**	**Mi**	**Vi**	**Oni**
a) si	a) je	a) je	a) sem	a) ste	a) smo
b) sem	b) ste	b) sem	b) smo	b) so	b) je
c) smo	c) si	c) so	c) si	c) je	c) so

A2 (2) Vstavite ustrezno obliko glagola biti. *Type in the verb to be in the correct form.* (Type in.)

Jaz _____ Ana, kdo _____ti?
Jaz _____Marko, kdo _____on?
On _____Peter, kdo _____ona?

Mi _____Slovenci, kaj _____ vi?
Ali _____ oni Romuni? Ne, oni _____ Hrvati.
Mi _____ Italijani, ampak Španci.
Oni _____ Angleži, ampak Američani.
Vi _____ Francozi, ampak Madžari.

B1 (2)
Vstavite glagol biti v pravilni obliki. *Type in the verb to be in the correct form.* (Type in.)

Midva _____ Janko in Metka. Kdo pa _____ vidva?
Medve _____ iz Nemčije, od kod pa _____ vedve, Alejandra in Juanita? – Medve pa _____ iz Španije.
Janez in Marija _____ iz Kopra, ampak _____ iz Kranja.
Ali _____ Marco in Maria iz Madžarske? – Ne, onadva _____ iz Italije.
Medve _____ Slovenki. Ali _____ Ursula in Brigitte tudi Slovenki? – Ne, onidve _____ Slovenki, ampak _____ Nemki.

Grammar at the A1 level is covered to a minimum, including only the structures that are crucial for the development of basic communication skills. Such a structure is, for example, the verb to be presented in the A1 (3) task. It involves only singular and plural forms for all three persons, as singular and plural forms are already sufficient for basic, survival communication. The task requires the user to circle the

correct answer, but it should be emphasised that an incorrect or non-existent word never appears among the incorrect answers; all offered answers are appropriate in a certain context in Slovenian. This will be specified in the rubric: “Which of the following is correct in this context, as all variants offered are correct in different contexts”

At A2 level, the task is a bit more challenging. Even if the users at this level already know the conjugation of verbs in the singular and plural, the task is somewhat more difficult because it requires them to type in the correct form of the verb themselves. Although the level of A2 otherwise provides for mastery of the dual, we decided that the dual shall be implemented at the B1 level as it is more challenging to learn through language learning applications than in in-person courses. A2 (2) task requires the user to recognise the required form of the verb to be based on the personal pronouns already shown in exercise A1 (3) and to solve it by typing in the proper solutions.

The most particular and also the most difficult element in learning Slovenian for most users is undoubtedly the dual. Task B1 (2) therefore builds on knowledge from A1 and A2 levels and consolidates/teaches the use of the verb to be in the dual for all three genders and persons, both in the positive and in the negative form. Since the task contains the names of Slovenian and European places and nationalities, it summarises/connects the vocabulary from A1 and A2 levels.

4.1.3 Vocabulary and grammar

A1 (4) Izberite pravilno obliko samostalnika. *Type in the correct form of the noun.* (Multiple choice.)

Maja je Slovenka. Ona je iz ...	Stefan je Nemec. On je iz ...
a) Slovenija	a) Nemčije
b) Slovenije	b) Nemčijo
c) Sloveniji	c) Nemčija
Maria je Italijanka. Ona je iz ...	Adrian je Romun. On je iz ...
a) Italiji	a) Romunije
b) Italijo	b) Romuniji
c) Italije	c) Romunijo

A2 (3) Izberite pravilno obliko samostalnika. *Type in the correct form of the noun.* (Type in.)

Grem v _____(Avstrija).
Ivan Cankar se je rodil na _____(Vrhnika).
Nahajam se v _____(Slovenija).
Na _____(Kozina) moram prevzeti paket.
Zjutraj moram iti na _____(Kozina).
Jutri zvečer se vrnem v _____ (Romunija).
Počitnice sem preživela v _____(Španija).
Pet let sem živela v _____ (Nemčija).
Vsako leto odpotujem na _____(Bled).
Ko obiščem Slovenijo, grem na _____(Ptuj).
Na _____(Ptuj) je vedno lepo.

B1 (3)
Izberite pravilno obliko samostalnika. *Select the correct form of the noun.* (Multiple choice.)

_____ bo danes pihala burja.	a) V Primorski b) Na Primorskem
Udeležila sem se potopisnega predavanja o _____.	a) Koroški b) Koroškem
Počitnice bomo preživeli pri teti _____.	a) v Štajerski b) na Štajerskem
Vino cviček uspeva _____.	a) v Dolenjski b) na Dolenjskem
Avtomobile volvo izdelujejo na _____.	a) v Švedski b) na Švedskem
Ste se pri zemljepisu že učili o _____?	a) Finskem b) Finski
_____ si bomo ogledali nekaj turističnih znamenitosti.	a) V Češki b) Na Češkem
Mi lahko poveš kaj zanimivega o _____?	a) Slovaškem b) Slovaški

A1 (4) task upgrades the “talking about yourself” topic from A1 level, as it brings new vocabulary, namely words for countries and ethnicities, while introducing grammatical structures (the genitive) which is present in the genitive declension form of country names in conjunction with the preposition *iz* (from). Since the focus is on the development of communication skills, the user does not yet need to

know the genitive and its forms, the user learns about its use through repetitive patterns (On je iz ..., Ona je iz ... - He is from..., She is from... etc.).

A2 (3) task is a grammatical upgrade of the A1 (4) task, because in addition to the genitive form of country names, which link with the preposition *iz (from),* it also shows the distinction between the prepositions *v* and *na* (in and on) in the accusative and locative forms. The essential difference between the use of the accusative and the locative is the category of mobility, as the accusative expresses the direction of movement while the locative indicates the location. In determining the case, the key question is *kje* (where) and the verb of immobility, which requires a locative form, and the question *kam* (where to) and the verb of mobility, which requires the accusative form. With the help of the A2 (3) task, the user upgrades the vocabulary (countries and Slovenian cities) and learns to distinguish between the accusative and the locative forms with prepositions *v* and *na*, and learns about some exceptions for Slovenian city names, where the preposition *na* is used in the accusative form (na Kozino, na Ptuj) instead of *v* (v Izolo, v Koper).

With the B1 (3) task we grammatically upgraded the knowledge of different declensional forms and expanded the vocabulary of Slovenian regions and foreign countries, which users acquired at A1 and A2 levels. One of the peculiarities of feminine nouns is the names of countries and provinces with the *-ska* or *-ška* endings. These have two possible forms in the locative form of the singular – if we ask "Where?", the appropriate choice of form is e.g., *na Primorskem* (in Primorska), *na Češkem* (in the Czech Republic…); if we ask, "What about?", the appropriate choice is *o Primorski* (about Primorska), *o Češki* (about the Czech Republic…). Users choose the appropriate form of the noun, depending on the context, in a type in task.

5. Conclusion

Slovenian is the official language in the Republic of Slovenia, and one of the official languages in the European Union. In modern times, multilingualism is almost necessary, since in addition to our first language people all over the world use foreign languages on trips, in communication on social media, on business trips or work abroad, when studying. Slovenian is also among the languages that are studied by more and more people. The tendency towards a constant increase in the number of foreign students studying at the University of Primorska is also evident from the data from the Enrolment Service. The LanGuide application is primarily intended for them as well as for exchange students, higher education teachers and administrative staff, as the purpose of the project, in which the application is created, is to promote the internationalisation of higher education

using state-of-the-art technology. In the paper, we briefly presented the Slovenian language and some of its peculiarities. Since the tasks for learning Slovenian are designed for learning at three levels, we provided descriptions of A1, A2 and B1 levels. Sample tasks were presented, showing the principles of learning vocabulary and grammatical structures with different types of tasks for different levels. We primarily focused on just one of the planned topics – mobility. The sample tasks were equipped with additional explanation, indicating what will be learnt with each task and how the tasks are correlated. We expect that the tasks will be upgraded with audio recordings in the future, as auditory comprehension, speech comprehension and spoken communication are equivalent to other language competencies, which enable us to achieve language knowledge at the appropriate level.

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Integrating culture in teaching ESP via the LanGuide mobile application

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The present paper aims at describing the uncharacteristic illustration of working with the cultural element when teaching a foreign language against the background of the classicised approaches in this respect, in the context of the LanGuide project, whose objectives are to provide the users with a mobile application for learning and testing foreign languages. The approach tackled by the authors of the exercises, who are also the authors of the present study, combines two aspects from the traditional methodologies i.e., the inclusion of host-country cultural items in tasks devised in and for the English language, in order to meet the requirements and goals of the LanGuide project. Thus, students, teachers and administrative staff members involved in an Erasmus+ mobility who need to learn their English language knowledge in the fields of mobility, administration, IT and/or academic may find useful cultural elements of the countries they will visit while polishing their skills for English.

Keywords: *cultural element, cultural literacy, cultural competence, language skills, mobile application, LanGuide, ESP*

1. Introduction

Teaching specialised subject-matters in different fields is a process always accompanied by a particular methodology which describes and ensures its professional framework of implementation. Teaching foreign languages represents a particular case in point, because, besides the methods, techniques, activities, instruments and materials used, problems that may occur and possible solutions brought to them, aims targeted, as well as interactions between and among actants, the approach has always been an important aspect. As presented below, in the history of these approaches, the language skills started from playing no role, evolved towards gaining more importance and ended being the central focus in the communicative era alongside culture, a projected potential 5th skill, which has to be

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properly placed within the progression. All modern approaches nowadays agree that whenever teaching foreign languages is considered, irrespective of the language under discussion, the cultural element has to be present alongside reading, listening, speaking and writing as a core aspect in the practice of acquiring proficiency in that respective language. But what has been disputed was the very nature of the culture to be included in the dialogue, as it will be reviewed in the chapter to follow.

2. **Literature review**

Elementary questions such as: How can culture be defined?; Is there a relation between the culture of a people and the language spoken by that people?; What culture should be taught in the process of teaching a foreign language: that of the students learning it or that of the language learnt?; What is the so-called 'cultural element?; How can it be included in the process of teaching: as separate classes or melted within the paste of the exercises? and Can stereotypes be avoided or are they necessary? define the methodology that needed to be addressed and considered by the authors of the presents paper, as creators of exercises for the LanGuide mobile application, for which, in its first phase, exercises for the English language were designed, according to the scope of the project. Moreover, a question like the one Kramsch asked regarding the very nature of the cultural element: "how can we develop in the learners an *intercultural competence* that would short-change neither their own culture nor the target culture, but would make them into cultural mediators in a globalized world?" (emphasis added) (Kramsch 2013, 57) represented, as well, an important research base for the challenge of creating tasks in the English language targeting users of all cultural backgrounds and addressing, at the same time, several host-countries in whose cultures they may immerse themselves for a certain period of time.

2.1. Society and culture

Referred to in terms of *incarnation* by T.S. Eliot (1973), the relationship between a society and its culture was perceived as an interweaved canvas on which brushes from both sides colour in a reciprocal and balanced touch, society and culture breeding one another as an active and perfectly composed organism. Consequently, the paradigm of defining traits for profiling culture when attempting to define it on a syntagmatic axis is rooted in key terms such as: religion, history, literature, language, arts, philosophy, sports, physical territory, music, traditions

and politics. And even if all these can be reduced to stereotypes or clichés, which are, many times incorrectly or superficially associated to a certain culture, they need to be part of any foreign language teaching curriculum and properly mastered when included in the teaching continuum. And this is exactly what, for example, Borca (2019) tried to consider and include in her series of manuals dedicated to teaching Romanian as a foreign language, tailoring the cultural element according to the natural principle of mutual determination between language and society.

This particular way of viewing the implementation of cultural icons and characteristics into Romanian language exercises dedicated to foreign candidates to learning Romanian as a foreign language anticipates a discussion that will be reflected upon below and was previously described in detail and scientifically analysed in a research paper by Nechifor and Borca (2016, 99-108). What their study made visible to any researcher interested in this field is the fact that the cultural aspects which need to be considered when passing language information to students is that of the language taught and not necessarily that belonging to the students' background which can be done not only in separate classes dedicated to studying the particularities of one people's culture (even though the authors of this study do not disregard this as a possibility, especially when summer courses are considered, as specifically referred to in their paper), but as an organic inclusion of countless aspects that can be continuously caught in the paste of the exercises offered by the manual.

2.2. Language and Culture

Continuing with an even deeper analysis of the connection established between a society and its culture, the next inevitable stop is there where an even more sensitive liaison can be identified i.e., that between the culture of a society and its language. Without discharging two opposite viewpoints which put into perspective either culture through language, as stated by Hantrais: "culture is the beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression" (1989, 17), or the one which considers language the major generating factor of culture, as Emmitt and Pollock did (1997) when they stated that a language is rooted in its culture and that that culture, in its turn, is echoed in the language and inherited from generation to generation, we are more interested in the integrative approach as fostered by Kramsch, for example, who saw the connexion between language and culture from two simultaneous perspectives, in time, but also in the present moment, having both a historical view and a societal one, when stating that: "Language is intimately linked not only to the

culture that is and the culture that was, but also to the culture of the imagination that governs people's decisions and actions far more than we may think." (Kramsch 1998, 8).

Thus, "people do not only express experience but they also create experience through language" (Kramsch 1998, 66), and subsequently, "language embodies cultural reality" (Kramsch 1998, 14), where the term "embodies" makes a very good choice to express a suprasegmental way of looking at this phenomenon. That is why, as teachers of foreign languages, it is important to understand the need to teach not only forms, structures, vocabulary items and skills, but also essential pragmatic aspects in the linguistic-cultural life of the people whose language the students are about to learn, as their correct, full and complex perception can only be complete if and when they apprehend reality as seen through the cultural lens of that society, irrespective of the context that they might be using the language in: a native one or a derived one. Hence, the necessity we had to consider, when we designed the exercises for the LanGuide mobile application in the English language, to include elements of Romanian culture in them, as they targeted, as a special case of this project's aim, users from other countries who may visit Romania as exchange students, teachers or members of the administration in Erasmus+ mobilities. And because they may need to speak English before they learn, via the same application, the basic words, in the same specialised fields, in Romanian, their perspective of feeling included, accepted, their sense of belonging to the community they are supposed to be part of even for only 4, 6 or 12 months needs to be addressed first and has to start, in this situation, before learning the host-country language, so, actually, with the cultural element:

> To identify themselves as members of a community, people have to define themselves jointly as insiders against others, whom they thereby define as outsiders. Culture, as a process that both includes and excludes, always entails the exercise of power and control (Kramsch 1998, 8).

The same attitude had been approached by Allwright and Bailey (1991) who had equated the idea of learning a new language to that of learning a new culture, as well as by Byram (1989), who had even stated that the teachers of a new language are also the teachers of that culture, thus taken on skills from the teachers of social sciences, geography and history to impart this type of knowledge. Moreover, as Leveridge put it, a language teacher has to raise awareness of cultural differences and teach:

> the cultural background of language usage, choose culturally appropriate teaching styles, and explore culturally based linguistic differences to promote understanding instead of misconceptions or prejudices. Language policy must be used to create awareness and understandings of cultural differences, and written to incorporate the cultural values of those being taught (Leveridge 2008, web page).

And even though researchers like Gay are of the opinion that "the academic achievement of ethnically diverse students will improve when they are taught through their own cultural and experiential filters" (Gay 2002, 106), opinion disseminated beforehand by Au and Kawakami in 1994, Foster in 1995, Hollins in 1996, Kleinfeld in 1975 and Ladson-Billings in 1994 and 1995, as quoted by Gay herself, because "when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (Gay 2002, 106), still, if not out of didactic reasons, then at least out of practical ones, the target language culture should be the case even under very atypical circumstances as the one provided by the LanGuide project. Such pragmatic examples can be: countries requiring, when granting citizenship, not only a test of language, but also an assessment of the knowledge regarding that country's history and geography, as well as the desire to feel welcomed and finely integrated in a society whose way of living you know even before you learn its language.

However, Gay's concept of "culturally responsive teaching" is to be retained because it lays the foundation of teaching in a multicultural environment and analyses the even double difficult mission of a language teacher in this situation i.e., that of not only teaching a foreign language, but that of teaching a foreign language to a multicultural class, which comes along with:

> developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction. (Gay 2002, 106)

2.2.1. Cultural awareness

Being culturally aware represents, according to Nechifor and Borca's opinion, " the first step to be apprehended and acquired by both the students and the teacher of a multicultural class, but also exchanged between them when involved in a multicultural educational environment." (2020, 295)

According to Tomalin and Stempleski's vision, the term 'cultural awareness' refers to "sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication" (Tomalin, Stempleski 1998, 5) and incorporates the aspect of compassion when communicating by revealing sensitivity to the distinction between what is encoded, on the one hand, and decoded, on the other hand, from a cultural point of view. And starting from what Tomlison said that might be:

> a gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people's cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ. Such awareness can broaden the mind, increase tolerance and facilitate international communication. (Tomlinson 2001, 5)

a very clear implicature can be derived referring to the fact that in the absence of cultural awareness one can be prevented from fully exploiting their linguistic potential, thus depriving the speaker of what Stern names to be "the native speaker's perspective" (Stern 1992, 217). Hence, the stance of the "fluent fool", in Barnlund's words (in Samovar and Porter 1991, 6), who can speak a foreign language correctly and even be fluent in it, at the level of productive language skills, but completely impotent of perspectivisation and contextualization of linguist/cultural meaning in various real-life social situations, a position which can be avoided altogether if comprehension of cultural customs and preferred behaviours is facilitated from a very early foreign language learning stage. Thus, "learning the cultural roots of a language is essential for meaningful fluency" (Seelye 1993, 275), 'meaningful fluency' becoming yet another interesting concept facilitating the arch between teaching a foreign language at a proficiency level, there where fluency is expected to act, and correlating it to cultural meaning, by being able to perform a "self-examination and in-depth exploration of one's own cultural and professional background" (Campinha-Bacote 2002, 182), and at the same time by attaining the level of "recognition of one's biases, prejudices, and assumptions about individuals who are different" (Campinha-Bacote 2002, 182).

2.2.2. Cultural competence

Thus, cultural competence would come as a second logical concept in the perception of a teaching process focused on foreign languages as:

> being culturally competent means that, on the one hand, as a student in a multicultural class, one can not only be aware of differences and complexities, but can already know how to deal with them, handle them, and respond to their specificity. On the other hand, as an instructor, after becoming aware of the difficulty of teaching to a multicultural class exactly due to the same differences and complexities, one can manage the entire process in a professional way, having correct reactions, politically correct answers, a lot of bibliography to cover from this point of view. (Nechifor and Borca 2020, 297)

The link between this concept and the previous one, that of cultural awareness is covered by Sherwood who sees the value in understanding how important it is to be culturally aware, first of all, in order for anyone to be tolerant and to be able to display suitable reactions in multicultural environments, and, second of all, to be able to be culturally competent to "participate ethically and effectively in intercultural settings" (Sherwood 2015, web page), since showing signs of multifaceted attention, empathy, and active recognition of cultural diversity alongside appropriate behaviour and acceptance can generate the creation of a friendly and politically correct environment.

Nechifor and Borca develop more upon the concept of cultural competence when they see it as the step that can:

> make the transition from the awareness everyone has to have with respect to cultural differences, to embracing the particularities of the target language's culture, from swirling around tolerance, acceptance and inclusion to the parameters which define the new culture one is about to learn its language and the characteristic features which define it. It is on the psychological territory of this concept that the cultural element of the target language can be introduced and taught, at all its levels, in order, afterwards, for the cultural literacy to fully be instated, with all its rightful determinations, laws, delimitations, frames, etc. (2020, 297)

and end up by amusingly stating that: "being culturally competent embodies the step of being aware of the cultural awareness and being able to deal with it, listing 'cultural mishaps' in a lesson plan, next to the classical rubric called 'anticipated problems". (2002, 197)

2.2.3. Cultural literacy

Cultural literacy is the concept which was fully considered when creating the exercises for the LanGuide mobile application, after researching into the above-mentioned steps and concepts, as it is the element that can make the experience of learning a foreign langue complete. Referred to as 'culturacy', with a term coined by Nechifor and Borca (2020, 298) cultural literacy encompasses aspects such as:

> cultural icons, mythology and folklore, proverbs, idioms, philosophy and religion, literature, writing and speaking conventions, fine arts, anthropology, psychology and sociology, business and economics, physical sciences and mathematics, and even medicine and health practices (2020, 298)

which are also the elements depicted by *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* of 2002 when endeavouring to profile what defines the Americans as a culture: "people, places, ideas, history, politics, American literature, wireless technology, gene therapy, science and technology, and events that shape the American cultural conversation." (Hirsch, Kett et al. 2002, viii)

And all these are supposed to be part and parcel of the foreign language class experience, at all competency levels, and imbued within all linguistic compartments, from phonetics to pragmatics, going through lexicology, morphology, syntax and semantics, and not (necessarily) the subject of separate specialised classes dedicated to teaching culture exclusively.

Consequently, enabling the students to acquire a foreign language through "meaningful gestures or other social cues" (Sternberg 2002, 13–43), can lead to attaining "not only linguistic forms but also ways of thinking and behaving" (Nguyen, Kellogg 2010).

3. The LanGuide case: English exercises with built-in Romanian cultural elements

In view of all these considerations, the LanGuide project brought about a new challenge, that of creating dedicated exercises for the English language, for specialised fields, such as, mobility, secretarial/administrative, IT and academic, in order to be input in a mobile application with the purpose of offering the candidates to learning this language as a foreign language the opportunity to acquire, to practice and to test their language skills, and grammar and vocabulary proficiency in the specific fields mentioned above as quickly, mobile and practical as possible.

But besides the double perspective that the linguists' team had to consider, that of creating original content for the specialised vocabulary areas named above and that of adapting the linguistic creativity to the constraints of the Content Manager, which is the data base repository where the exercises were uploaded in the online background of the application, another aspect was still to be accounted for, and that was the cultural element.

Nevertheless, this time, as different from the two perspectives minutely described in the literature review section before, the original characteristic consisted in the fact that the culture that needed to be included in the body of the tasks prepared was that of a host country, the country where the possible candidates might find themselves living at a certain moment, for a short period of time, in the context of a mobility, for example. So, in our case, Romania and Romanian were to be addressed in terms of culture, the other countries participant in the project being: Slovenia, Croatia, Spain and Sweden, Italy being also covered by the Slovenian team of linguists. Nonetheless, the language of the exercises was English, whose own cultural element was not the focus at all, as it didn't quite represent the field-reality of the context where the English language would be the case to be put into practice by the users.

Thus, a very original, yet paradoxical, combination of language and culture paradigm emerged, by inserting these host-countries' cultural elements in otherwise English language exercises, a perspective which hasn't been approached before and which constitutes, from a linguistic analysis point of view, against the background of the situations referred to in terms of research, a unique approach. In other words, the real-life perspective of practical encounters, administrative considerations, examples of good/bad practices, institutional bureaucracy, and teaching experiences of the host-countries needed to be included in the English version of the tasks, in order for the users of the application (students, teachers or administrative staff) to become familiar with such realities via English, the language which the application offers for learning at all levels, for interaction and information exchange in the countries where an Erasmus+ mobility might take them.

Its implementation would target all exercises, at all levels, for all language personae, in all the specific fields named, regarding all language skills, grammatical structures and vocabulary range. The creation of the exercises fell into a two-step framework approach, as we considered it necessary first of all to create an appropriate task environment for all exercises, in which a Romanian related background, regarding a real-life situation from administration had to be presented in detail, in order for the candidates to immerse themselves into a possible context that might represent a familiar reality by the time they come into real contact with our country, and second of all, to include, wherever possible, as many cultural

elements as possible, according to the description of this concept and the descriptors used to define it in the literature review section of the present paper.

Representative examples for beautifully constructed task environments are presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3 below:

You are a student at the Faculty of Letters, "Transilvania" University of Brasov who has applied for an Erasmus+ study mobility in Greece. The secretary of the Erasmus+ department has informed you about the possibility of being disqualified from the competition, unless you bring the original papers needed for the application file, but you seem to have problems submitting them in due time. You are in the secretary's office now and you have to defend your case. Prepare an oral account regarding this situation, explaining why you cannot hand in the required papers before the deadline, asking for an extension of the deadline and offering alternative solutions to the problem meanwhile. Consider using an appropriate register, a wide variety of vocabulary items and grammatical structures, a well-organised and coherent discourse. Provide personal arguments and examples. Talk for approximately 3 minutes.

Figure 1. Student/Advanced/Secretarial/Evaluating&creating/Speaking/Tick and cross

You are student Silvana Enescu, you are in your second year of studies, first semester, at the Faculty of Letters. Create the correct form of an application letter for an exchange Erasmus+ programme at Granada Faculty of Letters, in Spain. You should consider:

- **describing your profile and your interests**
- **inquiring about possible syllabus matches between your BA undergraduate programme and the one of the targeted faculty**
- **asking to be selected for an interview**

You will address the letter to the Erasmus+ department with your university, Mrs. Davidescu Lorena.

In order for you to achieve this task, please select the appropriate answer for each entry on this letter from the dropdown menus available.

Figure 2. Student/Advanced/Secretarial/Creating/Writing/Multiple choice (drop-down)

As a student in the Erasmus+ programme, imagine you have to write to the Dean of the Faculty of Letters to let him know about the problems you have regarding attending the second semester in Brașov, Romania, according to the agreement. Put the parts of this formal letter in the correct order:

Figure 3. Student/Beginner/Secretarial/Applying/Writing/Ordering

Representative examples of cultural element inclusion within the body of the exercises themselves can be traced in Figures 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 below:

Date: 11.05.2020 A.D.

TRANSILVANIA UNIV. OF BRAȘOV'S AD.

POSN.: Recep. / Sec. / OA - c. 25000 Ron p.a.

Famous university in RO, located in the heart of the country, is looking for a bright, hard-working, dedicated, and ambitious Sec./OA for their busy Recep. area. Your day will be very varied, as well as the duties and tasks that you will perform, i.e.: admin. support to a lively and famous teaching staff. You must have a min. of 50 wpm, a knowledge of wp software (esp. Office Word, PP, .pdf), and min 2 yrs exp. in reception.

For app., email Simona Columbeanu (sc@unitbv.ro), from HR, ASAP, quote ref. no. 96/G41 and encl. a CV, but only after you read the T&C.

The date for the exam: TBA
FYI: For this position, an NDA is N/A

Tel: 004 789 300 202

P.S.: Even if OJT is offered, you still need at least one outstanding L/recomm.

Figure 4. Administrative staff/Advanced/Secretarial/Analysing/Vocabulary/Fill-in

1. I have made an appointment for you to see your Erasmus+ coordinator ..... 2 o'clock ..... Friday the 16th.
2. The person in charge with the incoming students is in China ..... the moment so I'm unable to make any arrangements for you to see her ..... she returns. She is away ..... two weeks, but ..... this time her duties are attributed to Ms. Carolina Davidescu, the Erasmus+ department manager. She works ..... Thursdays. Would you like me to book a meeting for you ..... her this week?
3. The Vice-Rector is due back in the office ..... a few minutes if the meeting ends ..... time.
4. Please don't forget to bring all your papers for the Erasmus+ file ..... the next few days, ... the end of the week.
5. I'll confirm if your application file for the Erasmus+ study exchange programme for Germany is complete ..... Tuesday morning ..... the latest.

Figure 5. Administrative staff/Beginner/Secretarial/Grammar/Understanding/Fill-in

1. Where's the department photocopy machine?	**a. It's Mr. Lăzărescu, assistant professor, Ph.D.**
2. What is the Dean's telephone number?	**b. At her office, on Colina, room II29.**
3. When is the Department meeting regarding the situation of the transferable credits?	**c. My appointment with the Faculty Erasmus coordinator is at 9:30 am.**
4. Who is the Dean of the Faculty?	**d. The Erasmus+ coordinator, under whose supervision you've been from the beginning of the exchange.**
5. When is your appointment with the Faculty Erasmus coordinator?	**e. I'm sorry, we're not allowed to provide it, but if you want, you can make an appointment with him.**
6. Where can I find the coordinator of the Erasmus+ programme of this Department?	**f. It is on July 4th.**
7. Who will be in charge with checking my student supplement before I return to my home university?	**g. It is upstairs, in room TI8.**

Figure 6. Student/Basic/Secretarial/Understanding/Speaking/Matching

TRANSILVANIA UNIVERSITY OF BRASOV
CENTRE FOR LEARNING MODERN LANGUAGES

Training for the future

Belonging to the Department of Continuous Education and offering courses taught by the academic teaching staff of the Faculty of Letters and of the Faculty of Business and Administration, CLML invites you to enrol for the following classes, stating the 15th March 2021:

1. Secretarial and Business courses
2. Bilingual courses:

✓ English/Spanish
✓ English/German
✓ English/French
✓ English/Japanese

3. Marketing and Advertising courses

So, if you are adults between 18 and 60 years old, registration is open on a permanent basis on cilm.ro and the courses start when a group of minimum 8 persons is formed.
You can find us for further detail at 20 Eroilor Blvd, Brasov, Romania or you can call at: 0040734202020.

Figure 7. Student/Basic/Secretarial/Understanding&applying/Reading/Fill-in

Figure 8. Administrative staff/Beginner/Secretarial/Understanding/Speaking/Match

In all 8 examples above, as, actually, in the majority of the exercises created for this mobile application within the LanGuide project, the candidates to learning English, either from Romania or from abroad, are placed in real contexts pertaining to the secretarial field – which was the field allotted to the Romanian linguistic team, connected to an Erasmus+ exchange for which they may have enrolled. They are supposed to imagine themselves in a situation that they may experience once arrived in the host country, in Romania, or before they leave Romania for an exchange, as Romanian natives, and even if, in the second case, the context may appear as unnecessary and/or unnatural, still the intention of offering even the host-country natives the opportunity to polish their specialised vocabulary in the same field, in English, with the same purpose, is fully met. However, in this case, they fall into the category of learners who are offered their own cultural element within the exercises, as described by Gay in the literature review section, which offers us one more reason not to disregard this approach as obsolete, this particular mixed design being a good example of how such a situation can still be valid nowadays.

Thus, the name of *Transilvania* University of Brașov – Figures 1, 4, 7 and 8, the name of the Faculty of Letters – Figures 1, 2, 3 and 7, the name of The Centre for Learning Modern Languages – Figure 7, the name of the Department of Continuous Education – Figure 7, the name of the Faculty of Business and Administration – Figure 7, the name of the Erasmus+ Department – Figures 5 and 8 are all examples of the cultural element imbued within the exercises, reduced to practical aspects and naturally scattered throughout the lines of the applied activities the users are offered, as names of educational establishments and departments of institutions which exist as such at our university and which can help in the field reality when and if the case.

Also, the proper names of the individuals used in all the examples extracted from the database of the exercises created are worth a special and separate discussion, as they do not only represent good practice of specific Romanian proper nouns of persons (Silvana Enescu), in order for a certain degree of familiarity to be generated in this respect for the users of the application, but, for a bit of fun, they actually represent adaptations of the real names of the persons referred to for the positions mentioned in the exercises, at the moment when these exercises were originally created by the authors of the present study (Lorena Davidescu – Figure 2 / Carolina Davidescu – Figure 5, Simona Columbeanu – Figure 4, Mr. Lăzărescu – Figure 6, Doru Muntenescu – Figure 8, Cristiana Demetrescu – Figure 8, Cornelia Dragu – Figure 8).

Moreover, particularities regarding some aspects of bureaucracy characteristic to Romanian institutions are presented within either the task environment or the body of the exercises themselves, such as: the problems one may

have with the application file "unless you bring the original papers" (Figure 1), writing to the Dean of the Faculty of Letters for certain problems "regarding attending the second semester in Brașov, Romania" (Figure 2), having the department to meet for analysing the "situation of the transferrable credits' (Figure 6), as well as institutionally related features, such as the institutional email and platforms account extension: @unitbv.ro (Figure 4), the fact that courses start at The Centre for Learning Modern Languages only when "a group of minimum 8 persons is formed" – Figure 7, reference to the person who should be contacted for accommodation in case of newly arrived students from abroad – Figure 8. All this is inserted in the body of the exercises in order for the users to be exposed to certain possible realities of the Romanian system of administration.

Nevertheless, toponyms and location indications are also a valuable cultural element that we worked with, examples such as: Brașov (spelled with the compulsory diacritical mark), "located in the heart of the country" (Figure 4), even classroom names TI8, II29 – which accounts for the territorial reality of classroom/auditoriums numbering in our university (T – for building, I – for level, 8 – for the actual classroom, for example) (Figure 6), the address of The Rectorate building: "20 Eroilor Blvd" – Figure 7, the prefix in the telephone number which is valid for Romania: 004 – Figure 7, the place where the majority of the faculties have their classes: Colina – Figure 6, as well as useful and practical information regarding even the name of a trusted taxi company: Martax – Figure 8 shape a more complex profile of living, visiting and studying in Romania and contribute to creating a familiar cultural environment that one might recognize once experiencing the linguistic offer suggested by the mobile application.

4. Conclusions

Displaying skills of cultural competency represents, nowadays, a real plus not only when working for multinational companies, or when travelling for relaxation, but more precisely when travelling for work, especially in the context of education, for mobilities and teacher or student exchanges, as well as in multicultural classes. That is why, being aware of the consistent cultural background of all the parties involved in the interaction, understanding it properly and contributing to its correct dispersion has become one of the most important skills and roles that a teacher of, especially, foreign languages must have. In this way, acceptance, patience, tolerance, sympathy and empathy are taught and developed as skills in the candidates learning a foreign language, as well as recognition of unfamiliar situation as already known, at least at a theoretical level.

But apart from referring to the benefits of being culturally literate from a cognitive and emotional perspective, there is also motivation which needs to be considered, which represented the subject of an observation made by Harmer (1991) when stating that a foreign language charms more those who want to be part of the culture of its users, as they are "more attracted to the culture of the target language community" (Harmer 1991, 4), in this way triggering what Gardner and Lambert (1972) had called 'integrative motivation.'

Summarising the main aspects tackled by the present article, the cultural element has become a must in terms of inclusion in the body of the process of teaching, learning and testing one's abilities in a foreign language. And this in terms of being either that of the source language users, as it was in the curious case of some of the exercises designed for the LanGuide project, described in the practical section of the paper above, or that of the target language users, as it is desired and natural, according to the opinion that we share of many methodologists and foreign language teachers, minutely approached in the literature review chapter of this study. However, a combination of including the cultural element of the country one would like to live in otherwise exercises dedicated to another language, as it was the special case of English language exercises comprising Romanian cultural elements, designed as such in order to meet the intentions the LanGuide project, was worth analysing even as just a case of exception from a clear path to be followed in this respect.

The conclusions of the present study look back on all the theories presented, as well as on the original examples designed by the authors of this research and pinpoint the way in which language can adapt to the necessities of a reality which sometimes is intricate, catering for the needs of, for example, students, teachers and members of the administrative staff wanting to learn or to polish their English with the aim of enrolling themselves in different Erasmus+ mobility programmes, but trying to become familiar, at the same time, with the reality of the countries they will be part of, for longer or shorter periods, depending on the length of the exchange, exactly as described by the LanGuide project's reality.

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Repenser les cours de langues sur objectifs spécifiques à l'ère du numérique

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We are the protagonists of a transformation characterized by digital, globalization, continuous and accelerated social and technological change. Particularly relevant transformation occurs in the area of knowledge production, management and dissemination and, therefore, in language learning processes. The present work, far from giving clear and firm answers, reflects, first of all, on foreign languages for specific purposes and on the teaching-learning process in digital context, and addresses the question of the role of the teacher, that of the new learner, the digital methods in a world which has recently shown itself to be decked out in what is called "digital".

Keywords*: specific purposes, teaching-learning, digital.*

1. Enseigner une langue sur objectifs spécifiques à l'heure actuelle

Les cours de langue à finalité spécifique sont ceux dans lesquels, le contenu, les objectifs, le matériel, l'enseignement et les pratiques d'évaluation découlent tous d'utilisations spécifiques de la langue cible sur la base d'un ensemble identifié de besoins spécialisés, reste à voir ce qu'on pourrait dire à ce sujet sur la méthodologie. En effet, en jetant un regard sur la littérature de spécialité, on peut constater que l'enseignement de la langue de spécialité ou sur objectifs spécifiques présente beaucoup de contraintes par rapport au temps, aux objectifs et à l'évaluation, auxquelles s'ajoute bien évidemment des difficultés liées aux besoins des apprenants. En effet, selon Lehmann, l'étape dans laquelle on cerne les besoins des apprenants est indispensable dans l'enseignement de langue de spécialité: « *Se demander ce que des individus ont besoin d'apprendre, c'est poser implicitement qu'ils ne peuvent pas tout apprendre d'une langue, donc que des choix doivent être opérés*. » (1993, 116).

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Cela veut dire que la tâche est parfois pénible, car on a un jeu de force entre les besoins subjectifs qui tiennent de la langue étrangère en général et les objectifs des apprenants concernant la langue sur objectifs spécifiques. Cela nous amène vers l'idée suggérée par Mangiante et Parpette, qui parlent d'un enseignement de la langue étrangère généraliste, avant de commencer la formation en langage de spécialité: « *N'est-il pas préférable pour l'enseignement d'utiliser une méthode généraliste en début de formation et de consacrer son énergie et son temps à la création d'un matériel spécifique destiné à un niveau un peu plus avancé ?* » (2004, 139).

Vu le public restreint, avec des objectifs très précis, la méthode spécifique pour l'enseignement de la langue sur objectifs spécifiques reste quelque chose d'illusoire, ce qui enchaîne que le rôle de l'enseignant reste capital dans la construction du matériel didactique adapté aux niveaux de la langue généraliste. Quand nous regardons les définitions de la langue étrangère de spécialité, un autre concept est véhiculé, il s'agit de celui du contexte. On parle d'un côté du contexte spécifique: le contenu et l'orientation de l'enseignement de la langue sont limités à un contexte spécifique ou même à un sous-ensemble particulier de tâches et de compétences. Dans ce cas, c'est le contexte et les personnes impliquées (par exemple, les apprenants, les professionnels sur le terrain) qui décident du programme d'études - contrairement à l'enseignement des langues à usage général, qui est souvent guidé par la théorie seule. Autrement dit, les langues sur objectifs spécifiques intègrent à la fois des connaissances linguistiques et des connaissances spécifiques à un contexte particulier en fonction des besoins des apprenants. Mais qu'en reste-t-il du contexte en dehors de la classe de langue étrangère sur objectifs spécifiques ? Ne serait-il légitime que ces cours de langue sur objectifs spécialisés prennent en compte les deux contextes, en ajoutant celui de la vie quotidienne ?

Cet enseignement-apprentissage d'une langue sur objectifs spécifiques, sorti de la mondialisation, part des besoins, comme on l'a vu précédemment, qu'on identifie chez les apprenants et qui nous mènent à élaborer des plans qui se trouvent en étroite liaison avec ce qui se passe sur le marché du travail. Par conséquent, le professeur de langue sur objectifs spécifiques se retrouve au delà des besoins linguistiques et le savoir-faire des professionnels: on mise sur la construction d'une compétence de communication autonome, mais est-ce qu'on ne retrouve pas cette compétence aussi de l'enseignement tout court d'une langue étrangère? Ce ne sont que des questions que nous nous posons pour voir jusqu'où la didactique des langues étrangères conflue avec la didactique des langues étrangères sur objectifs spécifiques, parce que nous ne sommes pas sûrs où se trouve la jonction entre les deux et on croit qu'il y a en fait une convergence beaucoup plus probable qu'on ne le pensait.

On retrouve une définition intéressante chez Richer « *Si les langues de spécialité comportent une spécificité, cette dernière ne réside pas dans le lexique, ni dans la syntaxe comme le pensait la recherche sur les langues de spécialité dans les années '60/'70, mais elle est à chercher dans les genres de discours spécifiques suscités par chaque domaine professionnel et dans le lien étroit entre langage et action qu'impose le monde contemporain du travail* » (Richer 2008, 20). Il est à noter que Richer place la différence entre la langue de spécialité et la langue générale au niveau du discours, il ne s'agit pas de travailler le vocabulaire spécialisé ou la syntaxe, mais le texte, le discours spécialisé et on voit déjà entrer en scène d'autres problématiques, comme l'action et la dimension culturelle, car le genre discursif est quelque chose qui est lié à la culture, indispensable pour comprendre celle qui est inhérente au marché du travail. À ce sujet Mendes et Gomes disent que « *pour cela, il n'est pas nécessaire de créer de nouvelles méthodes, mais d'ajuster les ressources existantes aux besoins identifiés. Le rôle des acteurs sociaux, intervenant dans ce processus d'enseignement-apprentissage, oblige aussi à porter un nouveau regard sur le besoin d'une implication directe des apprenants eux-mêmes dans l'identification et l'analyse des situations professionnelles, dans un certain contexte. Dans ce processus, devront participer tous les acteurs sociaux impliqués, le professeur et l'apprenant, ce dernier jouant le rôle d'apprenant-utilisateur »* (2013, 141). Il est maintenant à noter que l'apprenant devient un usager, qui n'apprend pas seulement, mais il devient utilisateur, donc il est au centre de l'action.

Cette perspective sur les langues spécialisées traduit la prise de conscience chez les responsables du pouvoir de diffusion de la langue étrangère car « *la « science » et la technique sont désormais partie prenante du champ de la culture, et qu'une langue qui veut conserver son statut de langue internationale de communication ne peut plus ignorer ce fait* » (Cuq et Gruga 2002, 321).

Dans un contexte d'enseignement général de la langue, le Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CECRL) offre un vaste éventail de choix, proposant une nouvelle perspective pour le développement des compétences communicatives, appelée *abordage par l'action*: *« Cette perspective actionnelle correspond à la prise en compte d'un nouvel objectif social lié aux progrès de l'intégration européenne, celui de préparer les apprenants non seulement à vivre mais aussi à travailler, dans leur propre pays ou dans un pays étranger, avec des natifs de différentes langues-cultures étrangères. Il ne s'agit plus seulement de communiquer avec l'autre, mais d'agir avec lui en langue étrangère »* (Puren 2006, 58).

Cette perspective actionnelle accorde à l'enseignement/apprentissage une authenticité que l'approche communicative ne permettait pas. Le niveau de compétences de l'apprenant est alors défini par le nombre de tâches qu'il arrive à accomplir dans le quotidien afin de s'incorporer dans une communauté pour devenir un vrai acteur social. Ces tâches sont présentées en deux catégories: les

tâches de précommunication pédagogique, c'est-à-dire les exercices didactisés et les tâches pédagocommunicatives, c'est-à-dire, les simulations qui permettent d'exécuter des tâches proches de la vie réelle, choisies en fonction des besoins de l'apprenant hors du contexte académique.

Arrivés à ce point là, nous voulons noter que, pour ce qui est de la méthode active, nous n'en avons pas une définition claire et précise, mais toute la littérature de spécialité met en avant les tâches ancrées dans la vie réelle, ce qui nous rapproche de l'idée qu'entre la didactique de langue de spécialité et la didactique de langue étrangère il n'y a pas un fossé aussi large qu'on ne le pensait dans les années '60, autrement dit, on ne peut pas dissocier à cent pour cent langue étrangère généraliste et langues sur objectifs spécifiques et qu'il existe toujours une jonction fort possible entre les deux.

Certes, on est confronté à une langue native en permanente transformation qui s'édifie à partir des documents authentiques. Sa pratique a été facilitée avec le développement d'Internet qui a mis à disposition des enseignants et des professionnels du domaine une bibliographie cohérente et actualisée. Et cette exploitation de documents spécialisés est très certainement le point de départ de la croissance de la motivation des apprenants.

Dans ce cas, l'enseignement de la langue doit s'adapter à l'évolution de la discipline. La didactique des langages de spécialité est un ensemble dynamique qui apporte une nouvelle perspective pédagogique puisqu'elle « *se définit par son public [...] en direction de ce public* » (Perrin 1994). L'analyse des besoins requiert une attitude d'écoute active préalable. C'est un enseignement intensif lié au professionnel où les activités sont présentées par des tâches à réaliser. Ces dernières s'inscrivent dans un contexte culturel et sociétal en rapport direct avec le domaine d'activité de l'apprenant. La finalité du cours de langue étrangère est desservie par la langue de spécialité.

Cela étant dit, nous voulons nous pencher plus dans ce qui suit sur le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage d'une langue étrangère face au numérique, en se posant des questions sur les compétences dont les apprenants auront besoin à l'avenir, en partant de l'idée ordinaire que la réussite de l'apprentissage dépend de la réussite de l'enseignement.

2. La transformation digitale n'est pas une question d'outil, mais d'état d'esprit

Lors de Big Boss Summer Edition, qui a réuni les grands acteurs du digital du 9 au 11 juin 2017 à Marrakech, Opinionway dit que « la transformation digitale n'est pas une question d'outils, mais d'état d'esprit et que le digital force le nomadisme. Avec les nouveaux moyens de communication, les individus travaillent plus dans

leur temps libre, ce qui fait que les frontières entre l'interne et externe s'estompent ».

Cet idée d'état d'esprit est applicable aussi dans le domaine d'enseignement des langues: le professeur de langue et tout professeur d'ailleurs ne doit pas percevoir le numérique comme une menace par rapport à sa place. Nous pouvons en tant qu'enseignant, et d'autant plus pendant la dernière année, nous demander si le professeur ne risque pas de perdre sa place à cause du numérique, en partant du fait qu'enseigner une langue est « différent » quand on est en compétition avec Internet, les réseaux-sociaux, YouTube et toutes les autres techniques si populaires auprès des jeunes. Et si on réfléchit mieux, les « nouvelles » technologies ne sont pas l'expression des temps modernes vu qu'en didactique, la première rencontre avec ce domaine remonte fort probablement à la méthode structurale audio-visuelle.

Si les cours reposent sur la lecture d'information, en effet, avec le nouvel apprenant, l'enseignement doit avoir peur du numérique et ce fait, malheureusement, a été évident pendant la pandémie Covid-19, car on a vu des enseignants qui n'ont pas fait face à l'enseignement à distance.

Dans ce contexte de l'enseignement d'une LE sur objectifs spécifiques, le terme de compétence doit être approché non plus en termes de savoir-faire, mais de savoir-agir, ce qui mènera vers une dynamique plus forte et beaucoup plus motivante du nouvel étudiant en tant qu'acteur social, si l'on veut en tant que citoyen. De ce fait, ces nouveaux apprenants « *sont amenés à identifier et à créer leurs propres représentations des situations dans lesquelles ils devront agir, mettant en action les stratégies nécessaires en fonction de leurs compétences* » (Mendes et Gomes 2013, 51). Alors, si on revient au couplet enseignement-apprentissage, on peut bien évidemment observer qu'apprentissage signifie construire ses connaissances, ses compétences diverses: s'activer, s'informer, produire, (se) motiver, interagir. Enseigner signifie mettre en place des opportunités pour que l'étudiant apprenne, par une multitude d'outils que nous apportent les technologies.

3. Quelques principes de l'utilisation du numérique

Un des principes de base de ce processus est **la collaboration:** il y a toujours des problèmes à résoudre et le mieux est de faire de la collaboration des apprenants un principe de base, car l'apprenant de langue étrangère sera de cette façon plus confiant et plus prêt à s'engager. Cet apprenant est très ouvert à ce type d'enseignement, vu sa grande expertise dans ce domaine de la communication. Favoriser la collaboration entre les apprenants semble être la compétence de XXIème siècle et pour ce qui est de l'enseignement des langues est quelque chose de très

important. Nous soutenons l'idée de Mangiante et Parpette de « *l'alternance d'activité en autonomie et par groupe afin de « désacraliser » l'acte d'écrire et d'enrichir les connaissances par la collaboration entre pairs* » (2011, 168).

La ludification, en tant que processus qui permet d'utiliser d'éléments ludiques et des techniques de conceptions des jeux dans le domaine de l'enseignement-apprentissage est un autre principe qui devra « conduire » ce mouvement et qui s'allie très bien au numérique parce qu'on le sait qu'il faut jouer pour devenir sérieux. Parfois, avec le jeu, le feedback est beaucoup plus rapide (par exemple Kahoot) ce qui peut être quelque chose de bénéfique dans ce processus d'apprentissage et il permet d'impliquer plus de personnes. Le feedback peut ensuite être développé par l'enseignant, ce qui ne fait qu'augmenter la possibilité de résoudre les problèmes qui apparaissent au fur et à mesure de l'apprentissage. Dans cette ligne, l'enseignant est un « performer » selon Nechifor (2019) pour les apprenants en bas âge, mais nous soutenons l'idée conformément à laquelle nous pouvons travailler avec ces méthodes digitales, dès le début du parcours didactique, vu que les dernières générations sont exposées au milieu numérique dès les plus bas âges et le concept de ludification représenterait certainement un succès incommensurable de ce point de vue. Dans ce sens, à l'Université Transilvania de Brașov, on déroule un projet, qui a comme objectif principal l'introduction du concept de « gammification » dans les cours de langue roumaine en tant que langue étrangère, y inclus les les cours sur objectifs spécifiques, en partant de la conviction que celui-ci peut s'avérer une très bonne méthode d'enseignement/apprentissage pour les langues, qui puisse fonctionner comme une sorte d'échafaudage pour les apprenants sortant des milieux d'éducation extrêmement différents.

La créativité est, on le sait depuis longtemps, très recherchée dans l'apprentissage des langues. Au lieu de demander aux apprenants de faire de l'expression écrite, on peut leur demander de créer des podcasts, ce qui sera à la fois une expression écrite, mais aussi une expression orale qui permettra à l'apprenant de prendre son temps dans la création, d'ajuster sa prononciation et, le plus important, de s'écouter et de se faire écouter par les autres.

Développer **l'esprit critique de l'apprenant** est, comme nous l'avons mentionné ci-dessus, un enjeu de taille pour l'enseignant de langue étrangère et, la compétence informationnelle est liée à cette idée, car il faut faire apprendre à chercher de l'information dans la langue étrangère et apprendre à apprendre. Pour ce qui est de la langue sur objectifs spécifiques, nous le savons, il faut travailler avec des documents authentiques et le numérique, à ce niveau-là, est très offrant. Ensuite, l'enseignant de langue n'accompagne l'étudiant que temporairement dans le cas de la langue roumaine en tant que langue étrangère, pendant une année, puisque l'année prochaine il intégrera une autre faculté. Dans ce cas, l'autonomie de

l'apprenant découlant de ce défi aidera le futur étudiant en médicine, en économie ou en lettres à mieux se débrouiller pendant son parcours universitaire ultérieur.

4. La classe inversée – un exemple de métissage des formes d'enseignement

Vu que récemment, nous avons été contraints de travailler à distance et en présentiel, nous nous proposons maintenant de jeter un regard sur le modèle de la classe inversée, utilisée pour les cours de langue roumaine en tant que langue étrangère, qu'on a mis en place pour cette période pendant laquelle le numérique s'est avéré la seule possibilité d'enseignement.

Avec cette technique, nouvel essor des pédagogies actives, on va vers un métissage des formes d'enseignement et par conséquent une nouvelle considération des concepts **dichotomiques**: enseigner/apprendre, présence /distance, espace/temps. Pour ce dernier couplet, on parle de mobilité et flexibilité qui joue un rôle très important pour l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère. Traditionnellement, l'enseignement se réalise en synchronie, tandis que l'apprentissage est asynchrone. Il suffit de penser à des cours de langue étrangère et on ne peut pas avoir la prétention que l'enseignement se fait en même temps que l'apprentissage, autrement dit, pendant que l'enseignant enseigne, l'apprenant apprend ou non. Il est fort possible que l'apprentissage complet se réalise dans un autre espace et dans un autre temps que l'enseignement. Avec cette classe inversée, les rapports changent: l'enseignement sera asynchrone, à distance, par des médias enrichis par le numérique, tandis que l'apprentissage se fait en présentiel, autrement dit, on exploite la présence pour faire de l'actif, du collaboratif, ce que la didactique demande actuellement.

Cela nous rappelle la théorie de l'apprentissage par problèmes du Canada, développée dans les années '50, basée sur le cognitivisme et socioconstructivisme, qui accordait à l'apprenant un rôle actif dans son processus d'apprentissage, en le rendant capable de formuler de questions, d'émettre des hypothèses, de chercher et de trouver des informations nécessaires pour comprendre les problèmes.

Dans cette nouvelle perspective, on peut encore se poser des questions sur ce que l'enseignement signifie à l'heure actuelle et nous pensons que le rôle de l'enseignant a quand même changé, car il va développer avec la classe inversée d'autres compétences: la recherche documentaire, le travail collaboratif, l'esprit critique, etc.

Et cela d'autant plus qu'on parle de l'enseignement de langues sur objectifs spécifiques, car on parle dans ce type d'enseignement en termes d'efficacité, de rapidité.

Avec les nouvelles technologies, on pousse l'enseignant de langue à sortir de sa zone de confort et aborder le travail « smart », car depuis longtemps son travail

n'est plus censé être répétitif, il ne s'agit plus d'aller en classe de langue et dire la même chose. Son « utilité » va au-delà de la transmission des connaissances, il travaille dorénavant sur les ressources, sur la motivation des nouveaux étudiants (peut-être moins dans le cas des langues sur objectifs spécifiques, car ceux-ci sont bien évidemment plus conscients de la nécessité de cet apprentissage), sur l'activité, sur la production.

Ces cours de langue sur objectifs spécifiques avec la méthode de la classe inversée étaient censés au début aider les étudiants étrangers, par un prolongement de l'apprentissage en dehors de la classe, qui d'ailleurs passait par un Moodle, d'autant plus que ces étudiants n'étaient pas physiquement présents dans le pays d'accueil. On s'est rendu vite compte, qu'à part les apprentissages autonomes que cette forme d'enseignement offre, les étudiants étaient beaucoup plus motivés à apprendre et beaucoup plus ouverts à la collaboration, entre eux, mais aussi en présence de l'enseignement.

L'auto-apprentissage, que la classe inversée met en avant, reste un défi notable pour tous les étudiants, d'autant plus que les apprenants des langues sur objectifs spécifiques proviennent des pays différents, donc ils conçoivent différemment cette relation enseignant-apprenants, et, de surcroît, il s'agit des pays où l'on pratique encore un enseignement traditionnel.

En fin de compte, la méthode pratiquée en cours de LE sur objectifs spécifiques a été en mesure de promouvoir une pédagogique active, fortement centrée sur l'apprenant et de profiter des « rencontres » qu'on avait avec d'autres activités de réflexion, de conception et de mobilisation des connaissances sous l'attention directe de l'enseignant.

En partant de cette expérience de l'utilisation de ressources technologiques en cours de LE sur objectifs spécifiques, qu'on a vue, qui permet de repenser toutes les places qu'occupent les acteurs du processus d'enseignement-apprentissage, nous allons nous pencher par la suite sur le rôle du numérique en classe de langue.

5. Alors, quel est le rôle du numérique?

Dans cette nouvelle perspective de la méthode active, on l'a déjà dit, l'apprenant de langue étrangère doit être un citoyen, un apprenant-usager, qui a de l'autonomie dans cette approche socio-interactionnelle, cela imposant un certain genre des tâches, qui se traduisent dans la langue sur objectifs spécifique par la présence des projets intéressants que l'enseignant peut proposer, comme par exemple cette classe inversée, dont nous avons parlé ci-dessus, mais qui ne constitue pas la seule démarche.

Les technologies de l'information et de la communication sont présentes aujourd'hui dans tous les domaines de la société, ce qui a provoqué une transformation profonde dans de nombreux aspects, y compris la pandémie que nous traversons actuellement. Comment pourrait-il en être autrement vu que ses effets se font ressentir également dans l'environnement éducatif, pour faire apparaitre ce que l'on a appelé l'apprentissage en ligne, c'est-à-dire l'utilisation de la technologie par des moyens technologiques modernes dans le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage.

Depuis l'apparition des premiers ordinateurs, de nombreux chercheurs à travers le monde ont commencé à enquêter et à travailler sur l'accolement des outils informatiques dans le domaine de la didactique. C'est ainsi qu'est né l'enseignement des langues assisté par ordinateur, ses domaines d'intérêt étant l'innovation pédagogique appliquée à la recherche sur les méthodes d'enseignement-apprentissage et l'acquisition des langues étrangères. Pourtant une recherche poussée sur les langages de spécialité à travers le numérique ne s'est pas produite et ce présent travail ne prétend pas y participer fondamentalement, mais c'est l'occasion de se poser des questions sur ce que le numérique peut apporter dans ce domaine.

A une époque où presque tous nos apprenants sont nés au XXIe siècle, nous, les enseignants du XXe siècle, devons abandonner notre éventuelle peur et quitter certaines méthodologies du IXe siècle afin d'apprendre à s'intégrer et à vivre avec les réseaux sociaux, avec le numérique et voir comment on peut en faire l'usage pour arriver à ce qu'on souhaite tous: le progrès de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. Les soi-disant natifs digitaux, les homo zappiens, finiront par être sortis du monde digital si nous ne parvenons pas à nous adapter aux technologies qui, après plusieurs décennies, ont montré qu'elles sont là pour rester.

On a pu voir dernièrement que le temps de changement est venu, un changement qui fera que les salles de classe de langues étrangères (que ça soit générale ou langage spécialisé) passeront d'un lieu limité par quatre murs à un espace où le processus éducatif n'aura pas de limites géographiques et temporelles. La réalité est que les nouveaux apprenants ne séparent pas tellement entre le numérique et le physique, puisqu'ils vivent, grandissent et apprennent à la fois à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du réseau sans voir de différences entre les relations qu'ils entretiennent dans un contexte ou dans un autre: les gens n'arrêtent pas d'être des personnes quand ils sont derrière un écran, il est donc nécessaire de travailler sur la coexistence dans le réseau pour éviter les conflits et les risques dérivés de son utilisation. Bien connaître chaque technologie et comment elle est vécue est donc une condition totalement indispensable pour éviter les risques et faire face aux défis que ce nouvel espace de coexistence a apporté.

Nous avons eu la possibilité de voir, toujours lors de ce changement qui est arrivé plus vite qu'on ne l'imaginait, que la salle de classe n'est plus un bâtiment, elle est un espace social, qui nous a également donné l'opportunité de profiter du potentiel que nous offrent les réseaux et le numérique. Savoir faire bon usage du numérique et l'importance d'instruire par son intermédiaire, cela nous évitera d'avoir un processus d'enseignement stérile.

L'apparition d'Internet introduit deux concepts déterminants: l'interaction (action qui poursuit une finalité communicative) et l'interactivité (simulation électronique du processus d'interaction). C'est pourquoi le Web a une série d'utilisations très pratiques dans l'apprentissage des langues et il est devenu encore plus évident à notre époque. Parmi ses usages, on peut souligner son utilisation comme source d'informations actualisées à un coût réduit (journaux, radio, télévision, etc.), comme l'accès aux dictionnaires en ligne, la possibilité de participer à des débats asynchrones, l'accès aux bibliothèques et à de nombreux ouvrages en format électronique, etc. Une autre application très importante du Web a été l'éducation virtuelle (e-learning). Aujourd'hui, il est impossible de laisser la technologie hors de la salle de classe et ces derniers mois, nous avons vu émerger de nouvelles manières de créer et de travailler ensemble, ce qui nous a prouvé que la société a besoin d'un nouveau citoyen dont les dimensions sociales et professionnelles intègrent le virtuel et l'analogique.

Si les réseaux sociaux, les téléphones portables et les jeux vidéo sont si captivants pour les jeunes et qu'il ait été démontré que ce sont des technologies utilisables en classe à des fins pédagogiques et notamment pour l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, il ne reste plus qu'à motiver et accompagner les enseignants à se joindre à la promotion de nouvelles compétences pour une société de plus en plus connectée. Si nous voulons que les étudiants fassent un effort, nous devrons apprendre à utiliser et tirer parti des réseaux et des technologies pour pouvoir guider et évaluer les étudiants tout au long du processus pédagogique d'enseignement des langues étrangères. Nous ne savons pas comment sera le monde auquel nous serons confrontés dans une décennie, ni quels seront les rôles que jouera l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, mais nous savons qu'ils nécessiteront des compétences numériques comme moyen et forme qui permettront d'autres moyens d'apprendre les langues.

L'intégration du numérique dans l'enseignement des langues représente un grand potentiel stratégique. Ils ne sont pas la solution en soi pour tout, mais ils fournissent et spécifient une série de possibilités tangibles, car le CECRL considère les apprenants en langues comme des agents sociaux qui, à travers l'utilisation de la langue, doivent être capables de fonctionner dans une série de situations de communication. Pour acquérir cette compétence communicative, les étudiants doivent passer un grand nombre d'heures en contact avec la culture et la langue, en interaction avec d'autres locuteurs de celle-ci. Pour les étudiants qui ne peuvent ou ne veulent pas voyager dans un pays étranger, les nouvelles technologies leur

donnent accès à des espaces d'interaction, d'information et à des matériaux authentiques qui, autrement, ne leur seraient pas accessibles. En ce sens, le digital est une excellente contribution en raison de son potentiel à promouvoir l'apprentissage autonome.

L'importance d'intégrer la compétence numérique dans nos salles de classe aujourd'hui est incontestable. Cela nous permet de travailler dans un domaine en constante évolution, flexible et ouvert aux besoins de différentes personnes. De même, nous pouvons avoir une classe plus interactive, avec un échange non seulement informatif, mais aussi culturel.

L'utilisation de la technologie nous permet de découvrir, d'analyser et d'interpréter les différentes perceptions culturelles et sociales du monde dans lequel nous vivons d'un point de vue communicatif, social et participatif.

L'un des grands avantages que nous offrent les nouvelles technologies est qu'elles nous permettent de faire des cours plus personnalisés. Ça peut être un outil singulier pour les enseignants. L'utilisation des médias interactifs doit responsabiliser l'apprenant dans son action d'apprentissage, ils l'aideront à résoudre des problèmes, à prendre des décisions, à rechercher les données nécessaires à l'accomplissement de la tâche.

6. Conclusion

Le premier constat est que nous avons encore du chemin à faire. Nous avons encore un long chemin à parcourir, même après tout ce qui précède, il semble clair que la question principale concernant l'utilisation des technologies dans l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères ne réside pas dans la question de la disparition possible de l'enseignant, mais dans l'indéniable modification qui a entraîné dans la méthodologie d'enseignement: il est évident que la présence des ordinateurs dans la vie de tous les jours et donc aussi dans les écoles est déjà une réalité. Il s'git désormais d'intégrer son utilisation dans l'apprentissage de la programmation comme une ressource de plus, à ajouter à celles existantes. C'est une ressource qui peut faciliter l'enseignement et devenir un outil certainement utile pour les étudiants.

Ensuite, ce qui s'impose d'emblée dans cette nouvelle perspective de l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies dans le processus de l'enseignement-apprentissage est que le numérique n'est pas en mesure de motiver les apprenants, de les inciter à mieux apprendre, mais l'usage que l'enseignant fait de ce numérique qui sera un facteur déclencheur pour ce nouvel apprentissage. Par conséquent, on revient sur ce que nous avons soutenu toute au long de ce travail, que la position de l'enseignant ne change pas, il doit juste résister à toute cette « révolution numérique ». Réfléchir sur le rôle du numérique dans ce processus nous pousse à aller plus loin de sa vision utilitaire dans l'apprentissage de *homo zappiens*: c'est

un trampoline qui nous permet de transformer de réformer la façon d'enseigner et d'apprendre des langues étrangères, le numérique permettant aussi à communiquer plus facilement et ayant un objectif plus ample, d'autant plus qu'à présent nous n'avons pas eu le choix. L'enseignant actuel, s'il est technophobe, il n'aura aucune chance, mais il est quand même le pivot qui devra chercher le juste équilibre entre le traditionnel et le numérique. Si l'enseignant est technophile, on peut voir dans le numérique quelque chose qui peut participer pleinement à la réussite des apprenants et à la motivation, car le numérique a un grand potentiel, mais ce qui reste à gérer c'est ce côté distractif du numérique qui constitue un défi majeur pour l'enseignant, qui résoudra tous les problèmes par des tâches significatives, des tâches ancrées dans le quotidien et en mesure de permettre un apprentissage par engagement.

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Microsoft Teams as a potential asset in teaching English for the Air Force: Activities and skill-specific task types where permanent use may entail long-term benefits

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As the current international context has forced a faster integration of technology into teaching in general, a hands-on assessment, based on the tutors' experiences, of the benefits and shortcomings brought about by remote (online) learning tools in FLT is already feasible at this point. Based on the said premise, but with a narrower scope in view, the article focuses on the potential advantages of teaching ESP to Romanian air cadets via Microsoft Teams. The primary point of interest is to overview the situations (teaching/learning activities and skill-specific tasks) in which using the above-mentioned (business) communication platform may represent an asset in everyday teaching.

Keywords: *online teaching, ESP, Air Force, STANAG 6001, radiotelephony (RT)*

1. Introduction: Air Force English [AFE] as ESP

I have termed 'Air Force English' ['AFE'] or 'English for the Air Force' ['EfAF'[2]] a variation of ESP which combines what is generally referred to as 'Aviation English' (see, for example, Moder 2013 or Emery 2008), with elements of what is broadly termed 'Military English' (see, for instance, Bowyer 2001) or 'English for the Military' (see, for example, Mellor-Clark 2006) and is characterized by a series of specificities. To understand and assess the potential benefits online teaching might entail for this particular discipline, the general objectives and peculiarities of 'Air Force English' must be first briefly overviewed.

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[2] I have decided to include the lower-case initial of the preposition 'for' in the abbreviation proposed here for the phrase 'English for the Air Force' (EfAF) in order to avoid potential confusion with the common abbreviation for 'Expeditionary Aerospace Force' (EAF).

1.1. AFE versus Aviation English

As shown by Carol Lynn Moder (2013, 227), Aviation English as a type of ESP is a rather diverse discipline, encompassing a variety of approaches to teaching EFL with the goal of achieving multiple (and sometimes divergent) objectives. FLT may (or rather, must) cover, in this case, a wide range of broad teaching objectives, from the hyper-specialized jargon and the phraseology used in radiotelephony [RT], to the so-called teaching of 'plain' "English for General Purposes" [EGP] (Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

In addition to these two essential lines of work taken into account by Moder, a number of detailed semantic fields should be mandatorily taught, such as the semantic field of airplane, helicopter and airdrome parts, weather phenomena and atmospheric conditions affecting aviation, cargo-related issues, the specific medical terms referring to pilot incapacitation, potential flight incidents or delays… in a word, what I will call here 'the specific vocabulary' (including the right terminology and the linguistic structures around it) the pilot or ATCO must be able to smoothly integrate in communication at all times.

Even so, it must be considered that teaching Air Force English (referred to as AFE from now on) is still different from what Moder describes, as it has further specificities, as well as further dimensions or 'facets'. Let us, for instance, consider RT English: in the military, a significant number of specific military codes and procedure words must be added to the linguistic arsenal, while other aspects might be treated as less specific (e.g., ATIS information), and yet other structures that students will have to be familiarized with might look rather different in the military (e.g., call signs). The same goes for the 'specific vocabulary' to be taught, where the particularities of military aircraft, airdromes, equipment, specific actions etc. must be added to the specific vocabulary of aviation in general. As far as EGP is concerned, the tutor[3] must note that general politeness and military courtesy might sometimes differ, for example, or that everyday routines, or garments, or accommodations, etc. might have their own specific denominations and traits in the military. That is, the tutor must also focus on what I will call here 'English for General Military Purposes' (to build on Hutchinson & Waters' phrase) or 'General Military English' [GME].

Thus, it becomes readily obvious that as far as military aviation is concerned, further subsequent directions should be taken into account, besides the already mentioned subdivisions of Aviation English (which are still not to be ignored), and

[3] I will generally favor the term 'tutor' here, as the person teaching AFE is not necessarily a university professor – they may just as well be a teacher or an 'expert' (if they are employed by military language centers).

that EfAF is both a hyper-specialized and a more diverse English than sheer 'aviation English'. This is why, in order to be able to look into the advantages (and disadvantages) that the use of Microsoft Teams might bring on the long term, what needs a closer look is EfAF as a discipline, with a focus on the objectives that the tutor (professor) must consider accomplishing.

1.2. AFE as a multi-faceted and multi-layered approach to ESL teaching

For one, the general vocabulary of 'Military English' – or 'General Military English' [GME] – must represent a constant preoccupation for professors teaching ESP in military academies, especially under the form or (correctly) contextualized spoken and written performance involving both lexical structures and related semantic fields. But there are, in fact, two main reasons to legitimate such preoccupation.

The first is an end-objective in teaching AFE: since 21st century warfare is first and foremost an international, joint endeavor, especially for countries such as our own, which are among the signatory states of various international political and military treaties, (US) English has rapidly earned the status of 'the' international language of international operations and organizations, becoming at the same time one of the major challenges of interoperability.

The second reason is a secondary (or meta-) objective, meant to ultimately serve the former: just like the service members of the other state militaries holding NATO membership status, Romanian Air Force Academy [AFA] graduates have to pass what the official NATO document describes as a "general English proficiency (non-military specific)" Test of English for International Communication – or TOEIC – (Tannenbaum & Baron 2013, 1). The test is based on what is commonly referred to as STANAG 6001 – a Standardization Agreement describing the six language proficiency levels of military personnel: "0 (no proficiency), 1 (survival), 2 (functional), 3 (professional), 4 (expert), and 5 (highly-articulate native)" (Tannenbaum & Baron 2013, 1). Even if the test is described as non-specific, the official level descriptors as defined in *STANAG 6001 Language Proficiency Levels*, 5th Ed., issued by NATO's NSO(JOINT)1530(2014)NTG/6001 (December 2014) and the indications provided by such official guidelines as the *STANAG 6001 Overview of Language Proficiency Levels (5th Ed.)*, issued by NATO's Bureau for International Language Coordination [BILC] in February 2019, provide specific "Examples of military tasks", annotated by means of a reference stating that "Some military tasks require specialized training in addition to language proficiency" (BILC 2019), by virtue of the job-specificity displayed by certain tasks. Therefore, if indeed the degree of specialization does not extend beyond basic military-specific vocabulary and knowledge for the target levels to be reached by Romanian air cadets

(respectively, levels 2 and 3[4]), a certain degree of mastery is necessary in order to successfully carry out job-related tasks. The tutor also has to remember at all times that periodical TOEIC tests will have to be passed by service members during their entire career, and that the results may affect career progression.

Additionally, besides the said preoccupation for STANAG scores, and even though GME is supposed to cover the basics for all military careers, job profiles and specializations, and in spite of the fact that air cadets are supposed to prepare for joint and combined operations – the latter term implying that they have to acquire basic knowledge about the minimal specialized vocabulary of all military service branches and fields – an overview of the common core curriculum is still not sufficient: advanced operational language elements need to be studied as far as the various military aviation job profiles are concerned. In other words, each of these job profiles' linguistic specificities need to be thoroughly taught. It is true, on the one hand, that only two of these specialties, which are basically related to aviation management and air traffic control, have (and share) their own, proper jargon (understood as a specific profession-related functionality of language): (military and civilian) RT is to be used by AF pilots and air traffic control officers [ATCOs]. Thus, if the "specific" English competencies of AF pilots and ATCOs must bridge the jargon and specific functionalities of radio telecommunications and the adjacent vocabulary (e.g. lexical items associated with aircraft and airdrome configuration, specific equipment and actions etc.), the other specialties' learning objective mainly revolves around the specific operational lexicon and its typical semantic and syntactic associations – the 'specialized vocabulary' I have mentioned before.

Nevertheless, special vocabulary or language skills are involved with each of the other specialties typically trained in the military academy. For instance, the subtleties of military writing, the vocabulary of leadership, decision management or planning are mostly the province of staff officers; weather officers are supposed to be aware of the denominations and descriptions of weather phenomena and atmospheric conditions, their effects on military aviation management, to be knowledgeable when it comes to the specific abbreviations used by standard meteorological codes; in their own turn, just like air defense [AD] officers, EW and radar officers are supposed to master the technical terminology related to their equipment, to calculations and measurements, to master elements in the vocabulary of sciences such as engineering, physics, IT, etc., which they might need to use in professional communication. Thus, a special interest must be shown in finding ways to teach the specialized vocabulary and necessary skill arsenal for each sub-branch.

[4] Proficiency levels 2 (or 3, for specific job descriptions) in TOEIC constitute a base, position-specific, mandatory requirement for Romanian Commissioned Officers.

Last but not least, as mentioned before, military 'airspeak' (Robertson 2008) itself is not identical to the civil aviation jargon. In fact, it would be more precise to say that military RT includes it, but also adds its own specificities to common radiotelephony English (e.g. it includes specific phrases and coded indications, such as, for example, a variety of brevity code words[5] never used in civilian RT).

To sum up, AFE must be understood both as a (paradigmatically) **multi-faceted** discipline – i.e., a discipline taught with rather dissimilar hyper-specialized purposes in view (such as those to be considered in military aviation and air traffic management, as opposed to those to be considered in the AFE taught for air defense and air surveillance systems, or for weather officers or, again, staff officers) – and as a **multi-layered** discipline (at syntagmatic level), i.e. a discipline that bridges EGP, GME, and the specificities of the various branches of AFE meant to cover for the needs of a range of different air force job profiles and/or fields. Thus, one should have in mind all the multiple 'facets' and 'layers' of EfAF in order to provide a thorough analysis of the potential benefits technology might bring along in this particular subdivision of EFL teaching.

However, on a 'horizontal level', what the tutor must ultimately consider teaching comes down to the tasks and activities that may serve either two or three different types of end-objectives, namely: 1) teaching EGP and GME through skill-oriented activities and tasks, so as to best answer level 2 [L2]/ level 3 [L3] STANAG 6001 requirements and exigencies; 2) teaching 'specific vocabulary' (as defined previously) through a combination between the same skill-oriented activities (whose practice must remain a constant part of ELT) and (specific) vocabulary practice; 3) in the case of AF pilots and ATCOs, RT teaching and practice must be additionally integrated into the learning process, and the ways in which RT can be associated with or can partially replace speaking and listening practice must be considered. Under concern number three, mention should also be made that if, as listening tasks RT exchanges meet and perhaps surpass STANAG L3 exigencies, it is rather disputable whether (or to what degree) the practice of standardized spoken exchanges can be considered equivalent to or relevant for STANAG L2 or L3 speaking tasks. This is why I will consider in what follows that in the case of AF pilots and ATCOs, RT practice is used alternatively with STANAG-oriented L2 and L3 training in listening and speaking carried out separately, since it is also the way in which I chose to deal with the diversity of teaching objectives in my actual professional practice.

[5] Multiservice tactical brevity codes are voice procedure words designed to convey complex information synthetically, in a concise and specific manner.

This is why, in what follows, I have structured my analysis according to the four language skills as defined by NATO standardization documents (Skill L – Listening; Skill S – Speaking; Skill R – Reading; Skill W – Writing), including RT Skill L and RT Skill S practice under the same sub-section, and I have referred separately to (specific) vocabulary teaching and practice, tutorial-specific activities, and eventually, to certain relevant aspects of class-management, course materials management and evaluation.

2. Analysis: Teaching AFE through Microsoft teams

One of the choices professors have been provided with at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as an alternative to both in-person classes and more specific, but more cumbersome learning management systems [LMSs] (Navas apud Luna and Taillefer 2018, 79) such as Moodle, was Microsoft Teams (further referenced here as MT). It was also my alternative of choice, and I have used it to teach AFE for three semesters, as a complete surrogate of face-to-face, in-person teaching. The following remarks and analyses are based on my firsthand professional experience with Microsoft Teams virtual classrooms.

2.1. Listening Practice(s)

As shown before, two different types of listening tasks are essential in AFE: STANAG-type tasks and RT-type tasks. A third type of listening activities can be associated with the recognition, memorization, contextualization and practice of specific vocabulary elements, but since such listening tasks do not differ significantly in procedure from the former category mentioned above, the two types will be discussed together under the same sub-section. And since the practice of the above-mentioned task categories is typically separate (successive and/or alternative), but plain English and vocabulary-focused practice may also overlap on occasion (e.g. L2 STANAG-type tasks, where job-related specificities are frequent), while RT-type listening skills are (for the most part[6]) to be separately trained, the analyses will follow in the same line, i.e. they will be separated into two corresponding sub-sections.

[6] i.e., even if they are implicitly a way to competitively train listening skills, due to their general features and level of difficulty.

2.1.1. STANAG 6001-Type Tasks and Vocabulary-Focused Listening Practice

As far as STANAG-type and vocabulary-focused listening practice are concerned, the use of MT to replace classroom environment provides three major advantages to be considered.

First, with a maximum file upload limit of 100 GB/per file, the availability for each individual team Online Share Point site to use a 1TB document library capacity and up to 25TB upload per "site collection or group"[7], the possibility to upload large audio or audio-video content makes MT a much more competitive tool than many learning platforms (e.g. Moodle). This impressive online storage space constitutes a tremendous advantage as far as general listening practice is concerned, since practically any type or size of audio or AV content can be used. The enabling of live video content (just like that of live audio content) which can be shared (as well as interrupted or replayed) in real time by the tutor or by the students themselves is a great asset, since it allows for diverse and (whenever necessary) attractive listening activities that would benefit from potentially enhanced and to some extent personalized sound quality (e.g. the use of headphones can be encouraged) and volume. In-built video and audio players allow the tutor using MT to easily control the material, much in the same way as in a real classroom environment, but with the students being able to personalize basic sound and video features the way they would in a digital language laboratory (using such technology provided by platforms like Optimas School or ProLang). Of course, the 'Files' section of a given 'Team' can be used to distribute STANAG-type or vocabulary practice worksheets.

Second, MT provides the tutor with the possibility to use classroom management in order to enable differentiated instruction – a tremendous improvement as compared to real classroom conditions. By simply uploading differentiated material – e.g. L1, L3, as well as vocabulary-focused listening materials and worksheets – and by providing students with the necessary instructions allowing them to download and time-manage their assigned recordings and documents (while answers are to be checked when the common time-limit expires by means of uploaded answer sheets and/or discussions), the tutor can create an environment which easily permits students to do different individual or group work simultaneously, without perturbing others in the process. Under this respect, MT is literally able to generate an (almost) ideal classroom environment.

[7] As specified on the online page referring to the "Limits and specifications for Microsoft Teams" provided by Mirosoft, available at https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/limits-specifications-teams [27.11.2021].

Third, by means of the students' self-management of basic sound quality features such as volume and/or the tutor's management of common tasks and tests, useful (relatively) lifelike STANAG 6001 testing procedures can be efficiently simulated.

In spite of all these decisive advantages, there is one (rather minor) drawback to using MT to be taken into consideration: the potentially cumbersome simultaneous management of worksheets and audio materials, especially by inexperienced students. A workable solution, however, is the provision of clear policies and/or instructions concerning the synchronized management of multiple windows and paper sheets or notebooks together. Great improvement in this sense can also be achieved if the teacher possesses the technology and skill to perform basic editing actions on the audio/video content to be used, when necessary (e.g. cutting or pasting selected sequences might come in handy at this point). Such operations are fairly easily manageable by means of free sound and video editing software tools available online as well as offline.

2.1.2. RT-Type Listening Practice

Some of the major benefits, as well as the shortcomings described under the previous section (2.1.1) also apply in the case of RT-type listening practices. More specifically, if differentiated instruction or test format simulation are not pertinent in this case, the possibility to upload sizable files and to simulate real-life audio conditions (often, but not always provided on-tape) remain an asset, as final practice sessions often involve lengthy, full-flight procedure recordings, while in other cases short RT signal failures (interruptions) may be simulated live by the teacher to enhance the difficulty and/or veracity of the exercise.

Additionally, a specific diagram meant to emphasize the presence of standard dialogue structure and phrases may be displayed simultaneously on the common screen, as the students listen to the RT fragments. Such diagrams are specific for learning activities in the field of RT and provide beginners with the basic framework according to which each exchange type must (or should) be organized. An example of such a diagram, extracted from a specialized coursebook (Robertson 2008, 3) and representing one of the simplest standardized exchanges is shown in Figure 1.

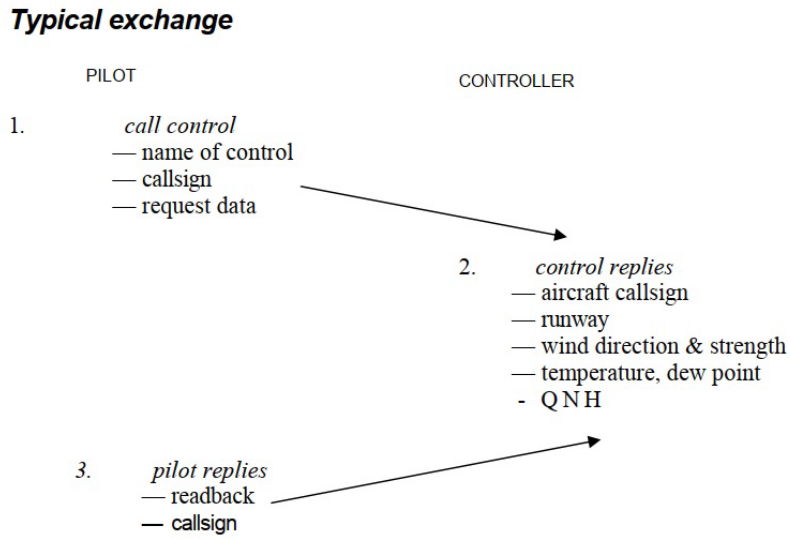

Figure 1. RT exchange diagram by Fiona A. Robertson (2008, 3).

2.3. Speaking Practice(s)

Just like in the case of listening practices, STANG-type speaking tasks, specific vocabulary-focused speaking tasks and RT-type speaking tasks differ to an extent which justifies two separate analyses, with the first discussion regrouping the first two activity/task types under the same subsection.

2.3.1. STANAG 6001-Type Tasks and Vocabulary-Focused Speaking Practice

There are several visible benefits to using MT for STANAG 6001-type task practice, but there are also several drawbacks which are significant enough to be mentioned.

Under the category of beneficial aspects, perhaps the first to be mentioned is the possibility to record (and replay) spoken performances. As Thinh Van Le shows in his 2018 article on voice recording in second language acquisition outside the classroom (130-132), several researches conducted between 2009 and 2016, among which one has been targeted at Romanian users of English (Pop, Tomuletiu and David 2011), have shown that voice blogging and voice recording have noticeable constructive results. But the instrumentation of voice recording as in-class practice is now made possible via the use of MT (and other platforms), with several major potential benefits: the possibility for students to self-assess their own performances with increased precision, the possibility for quality peer, student-to-

student feedback as defined by Sackstein (2017); an increased tutor-to-student feedback quality due to the electronic enhancement of teacher memory (i.e., the teacher's ability to memorize mistakes and inadequacies).

Of course, in the case of voice recording, there are specific legal provisions which must be observed: the expressed accord of all the parties involved must be explicit. However, in my experience, students tend to express their accord almost unanimously when asked. The few refusals I have experienced were all related to the emotional tension felt as additional pressure either during the first activity of this type, or for tasks they felt were extremely difficult and required their full concentration. Furthermore, the emotional stress of being recorded seemed to fade in most cases after their colleagues' first tries, as students gradually realized that the exercise of replaying such recordings gave them a better sense of the mistakes that they were inclined to make without consciously realizing that they did so. Basically, the sense of efficiency rather swiftly overcame any tendencies to shy off from the practice.

Another advantage to take into account is the fact that online speaking activities make timing answers easier for teachers, which also results in more accurate feedback and evaluation of performance. The simple fact that a digital clock is displayed at the corner of the screen results in the more precise and user-friendly timing of speaking activities, with the student being virtually unaware of the instances where the tutor checks whether or not time concerns have been met, which also results in less stressful, more detached performances.

A high degree of feasibility characterizes the online displacement of such speaking tasks into MT. The "Files" section is appropriate for distributing STANAG 6001 task cards (prompt cards) or card-like assignments and tasks. It is also an environment fit for the specific Q&A sessions, as headphones or other hardware may be used to perceptibly increase sound quality and performance. The fact that this software uses remote internet servers is also a plus in terms of the speed and quality of the connection, making video and audio communication quite accessible. However, the fact that the software wasn't originally designed as an educational environment has a tendency to show in the case of larger (20+) groups and may count as a slight drawback, as the quality of video and audio communication evidently drops on occasion in such cases (vision may become blurred, sound may become unclear, there may be echo effects or sudden interruptions which may occur as the connection temporarily fails). This problem can be solved to a certain extent by only using one/two camera(s) and microphone(s) at a time – typically, the camera and the microphone used by the student performing the task and those used by the teacher – while the other students are supposed to listen and watch the speech/dialogue with muted microphones and cameras turned off. This also

means that the teacher cannot see his/her other students during the spoken interaction, which may result in poor class management. Nevertheless, let us remember that many of us experience similar problems in face-to-face educational environments when working with large groups of students – there is a reason why speaking practice, as we are all aware, is not recommended as an activity when student groups are numerous.

2.3.2. RT-Type Speaking Practice

The remarks under 2.1.1. are also applicable in the case of RT-type speaking task practice, during which air cadets are supposed to mimic real-life radio exchanges between AF pilots and ATCOs.

One major difference justifies a separate analysis of such specific speaking activities, and that is the fact that if potential unexpected interruptions, poor sound quality, interference and lack of video contact are to be avoided for as much as possible in the case of STANAG-type task practice, the same isn't true in the case of the former. First, video contact is to be suppressed either way, since it is not available in radiotelephony – and the software provides us with the possibility to easily allow or deny video referencing. Alternatively, the tutor may even be interested in considering the possibility to simulate such conditions himself/herself while the dialogue takes place to mimic specific alterations of sound quality (e.g. interference, noise etc.) by superimposing various sound effects or even instructing the students to simulate interruptions by intermittently turning their microphones on and off as they speak while performing the role-play. Such minor, unforeseen communication problems or even failures are rather typical of real RT exchanges, which may add to the realism of the entire setup to the point at which the environment may turn into a real-life simulator. Also, the fact that the students may be encouraged to use headphones and microphones that they are supposed to switch on and off according to procedure also provides a plus of realism to the overall student experience, and the tutor may consider turning these conditions into an asset. Briefly, choosing to turn off video communication may result in a more realistic simulation of the actual environment specific for RT, while minor communication failures can also be used to simulate real-life RT-specific syncope, to which ATCOs and AF pilots must attempt to adapt by using standard phraseology and procedures.

Another benefit is the possibility for students to be simultaneously shown a diagram to guide them in their first exchanges while they articulate their messages, by means of an image shared on the common screen by the teacher while the exchange takes place.

In sum, as far as this hyper-specialized type of speaking practice is concerned, MT provides major benefits as a more lifelike classroom environment as compared to in-person teaching, mainly due to the fact that both real RT communication situations and the virtual classroom environment provided by MT are typically mediated by similar technologies and equipment (computer, headphones, microphones, control panels for volume control or switching between interlocutors etc.) – an advantage which may be speculated by the tutors to their own advantage.

2.4. Reading and Writing Practice(s)

As far as reading and writing practices are concerned, we must first note that unlike in the case of listening or speaking skills, there are no specific RT tasks to consider, which leaves us with only one bipartite category to retain, i.e., the category of STANAG 6001 and vocabulary-focused tasks, among which the latter category can be assimilated (as practice) to the more general reading and writing activity types centered upon the assimilation, interpretation and correct usage of newly acquired specific vocabulary items in context – especially since the numerous essential researches conducted during the last three decades of the 20th century and more recent approaches alike (Schmitt 2000; Nation 2001; Nation and Meara 2002) have unequivocally demonstrated that the role of context in vocabulary learning remains vital.

However, both reading and writing training conducted with specific vocabulary acquisition in view can be easily supplemented or reinforced by means of specific exercises such as gap-filling or matching exercises, sentence construction practice, semantic field or word-family construction tasks, vocabulary collection through reading and online reading, or more particular EGP versus ESP oriented differentiation practice achieved by means of similar strategies.

2.4.1. Reading Practice(s)

As shown above, reading practices in AFE can be considered to fall under two main categories: STANAG-type and vocabulary-oriented practice, respectively. As activity types, the two differ mainly in terms of format – i.e., while both open-ended and closed-ended solutions and grids are all practicable with the latter category, the former category implies grid-test practice of a specific format only.

Thus, the use of MT as a surrogate classroom environment essentially affects both types of reading practice much in the same way, and that is, almost not at all, for the better or worse equally. But if readability, time management, worksheet distribution, just as well as the teacher's effort to edit materials in order to improve

suitability are, basically, the same in MT and real classroom environments, there are still a few specificities to mention before moving on.

First, MT provides the tutor with a material advantage: the printing of hand-outs and copies of lengthy texts is no longer necessary, while the use of high-resolution images and colorful fonts is greatly facilitated. Second – and more importantly – just like with listening and speaking practices, group work and differentiated instruction are also enabled and/or enhanced in MT.

A rather mild drawback might be the fact that the conversion (digitalization) of printed materials might involve a (slightly) greater effort than with the use of hand-outs and physical copies, even though, in theory, the latter category should also be carefully designed to provide user-friendly displays of text and essential information.

2.4.2. Writing Practice(s)

In the case of writing practices, again, the opposition between STANAG 6001-type tasks and vocabulary-oriented tasks is not pertinent enough to justify separate approaches, if one considers contextual use as the core of lexical acquisition, and the supplementation of contextual approaches by means of specific written exercises.

The benefits of MT are, much in the same way as with reading activities, mostly material (as printed copies need no longer burden the professor's teacher bag), but also a matter of graphic design and readability: bad/difficult handwriting becomes a non-issue, text legibility increases, including for corrections (for which Microsoft Word's Review tool is an extremely suitable instrument). Thus, we could sum up the advantage analysis of MT as the provision of increased readability and comfortability for students and teachers alike.

There is, on the other hand, a major disadvantage to be taken into account here, especially since it can (at least to some extent) be turned into an asset: Microsoft Word and MT spellcheckers and proofreading tools can work for the students' benefit when used to actively (and diligently) improve spelling and grammar as part of self-assessment processes, but may result in unrealistic end-results and feedback in writing tasks, with the tutor being virtually unable to check whether or not such tools have been used to undeservedly enhance student results.

Another mild inconvenience may be constituted by student worksheet and homework organization. More specifically, it may typically reside in the unorderly use of document titles by students, in the sense that if documents representing practice or tests are not titled properly or are inaccurately managed, establishing authorship may also become an issue. And even if the issue is usually not impossible to solve, the potential solutions are rather exhausting and time-consuming.

2.5. Tutorial (Lecture) Activities and 'Specific Vocabulary' Teaching

What we have been looking into so far were mostly activities and tasks meant for either seminars or laboratories, as most skill-oriented teaching (and learning) is recommended as small-group educational practice. Specific vocabulary-related activities have also been referred to mostly rather under the dimension of hands-on training than tutorial-type teaching. This choice was mainly motivated by the fact that as a discipline (as well as in terms of its recommended practice[8]), AFE teaching has a dominantly practical (pragmatic) character as opposed to a rather implicit theoretical dimension. Nevertheless, a number of tutorials (or more specifically, lectures) is also included in the Romanian AFE curriculum. It is manly directed at introducing the 'general specific vocabulary' of GME and the profile-'specific vocabulary/vocabularies', terminology/terminologies and/or phraseology of hyper-specialized 'languages' and jargon, as well as the necessary structural specificities of certain discourse features such as the modes of discourse or military writing styles etc.

In the case of such activities, MT can demonstrate again its specific utilities: just like any specific leaning platform system, it allows for spoken lectures to be supported by PowerPoint presentations, images, videos and all sorts of materials, as the tutor's desktop can be shared with the entire student group at any time, while a cursor or mouse pointer can be used to indicate specific sections or points on the screen. This feature enables an increased visibility and legibility for word-lists and phrase lists meant to define/outline essential semantic field elements, for instance.

Furthermore, lectures can be recorded (of course, the tutor's consent is mandatory) and replayed by students if necessary. The possibility for students to re-access course materials, spoken and/or written, is especially an asset when paperback copies of coursebooks and manuals are not readily accessible (such as during the restrictions imposed by the current pandemic).

At the same time, the possibility to upload a basically unlimited number of audio and video files directed at vocabulary tasks results in the increased attractiveness of lecture-specific activities for students, as well as in the less cumbersome management of material resources (i.e., the use of projectors, projector screens, speakers, cables and other hardware is visibly reduced).

Last but not least, the use of MT for tutorial (lecture) activities represents a major advantage when large groups of students are involved, in the sense that both the tutor and the students need to make lesser efforts in order to

[8] Typically, it is the AF Senior Staff or its subsidiaries that are involved in issuing such recommendations, whose applicability is not compulsory.

communicate: lower voice volume can be used to deliver the necessary knowledge, visibility and sound clarity is increased at an inversely-proportional rate to the distance between the students and the teacher's voice or visual materials. With video cameras turned off (which, of course, means lower control over student focus and participation, especially if the activities do not include any interactive elements), MT can enable about 100 participants at once, while the issue of maintaining control can be relatively easily solved by regular checkups through short or complex, unannounced spoken interactions between the teacher and randomly selected students in the list.

3. Conclusions and further considerations: Class Management, Course Materials' Management and evaluation

In the analysis articulated under section two, I have pointed out several major arguments to favor MT as a viable alternative (or, more likely, as a permanent complement) to the in-person, traditional teaching of AFE, among which the strongest are likely to be the possibility to improvise language lab specific strategies, to simulate real RT communication situations and conditions, and to successfully practice differentiated instruction and deploy advanced class-management techniques.

As previously shown, MT is basically a great help in matters concerning class management, enabling typically unavailable options such as differentiated instruction and prominently enhancing the possibility of group and pair work, by providing such simple options as the possibility to mute microphones or cut sound volume. Discipline is not necessarily a problem either, since student involvement can be checked at all times by the simple, regular elicitation of answers or feedback from randomly chosen students in the participants list. On the contrary, MT is rather a plus especially when working with large groups (e.g., for lecture-specific activities): it provides better acoustics, better video quality and written material visibility and / or legibility than traditional equipment. In the meantime, the 'Posts' section in MT can be very efficiently used as a forum for further discussions or announcements.

The software also provides great freedom concerning the owner's (tutor's) ability to organize materials posted online. Displayed as folders, sub-folders and individual files posted under the 'Files' library section assigned to each particular team, teacher materials are easy to identify, access and use. A virtually unlimited number of teams can be 'owned' by the same user. Folder and file names can be changed, documents and other files can be moved from one folder to the next,

individually or as bulk, all materials can be quickly and easily uploaded, modified and re-downloaded, as well as re-organized according to the 'team owner's' preference. This provides teachers with the possibility to showcase course materials in an orderly fashion, update them and ultimately improve on their content, arrangement and structuring, on-the-spot or in view of later imports. Even classic paperback coursebooks and manuals can be used by means of scanned pages or book/chapter sections.

Another major advantage is the possibility of live or online improvement, as the correction or modification of already uploaded materials is enabled for all Microsoft file types (e.g. MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel documents). But the best thing about it is that both the 'team owner' and the other 'team members' may modify uploaded documents, whenever such options are not restricted to owner privilege. Individual rules can be set up for individual files, folders as well as entire team file libraries, according to the tutor's teaching interests (he or she may enable general access and modifications for a document meant for group work or brainstorming notes, but may just as well restrict student access to task prompt cards, for instance, within the same folder).

Ultimately, the fact that MT uses Internet storage space results in the overall avoidance of network saturation and failure, as well as in financial and environmental benefits – or, in short, in the efficient and sustainable use of time, space, money and natural resources.

In opposition, just like with other similar platforms, but perhaps less than in the case of institution-managed e-learning systems, the mild risks which are the province of online teaching platforms in general are also a fact in MT: technical/connectivity problems or Internet speed issues cannot be fully overcome; much in the same line, the tutors' lack of ability to establish the truth behind connectivity issue claims is also a stress; the necessity for relatively expensive technical support (teacher and student laptops or PCs mandatorily endowed with video cameras, strong Internet connection are *sine qua non*) may also constitute a major impediment as far as implementation is concerned. And of course, the social-relational aspects of learning and teaching are nearly completely eliminated, from nonverbal communication to the complex sociability of the various participants involved in academic activity.

Besides, if there is a major drawback to be mentioned – with MT as well as most online/virtual learning platforms and tools alike – it is the disadvantage of not being able to perform proper assessment, in oral examinations as well as in written exams. The risk of potential technological failure and/or fraud are facts of life in a context where set deadlines, time limits and dates are to be strictly observed, while students are virtually free to communicate to professionals, peers or to simply

google answers over the Internet for ultimately irrelevant solutions. Of course, fraud can be reduced to some extent by the provision of individualized written exam tasks, by favoring oral examinations over writing, and by thoroughly checking similarities between student productions and Internet content to (discouragingly) identify and disqualify plagiarism. However, none of the said potential strategies is workable in the case of sizeable student groups.

Thus, in sum, a rather sensible conclusion would be that Microsoft Teams is an unexpectedly versatile tool in teaching AFE, but it is at the same time rather suitable for skill practice or for lecture-specific activities, than for evaluation purposes, which ultimately indicates that a combined, traditional-virtual approach, where MT could successfully replace basic language laboratory technology might still be the ideal middle ground for Romanian air cadets' foreign language training.

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Building a terminological tool as implementation instrument of the sustainable built environment

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The Sustainable Built Environment, as corollary to Sustainable Development, is a EU policy priority whose implementation is legally stipulated for all EU countries. As for the Romanian specific terminology employed by decision makers, there are critical inconsistencies pertaining to mistranslations or fluctuating translations of standardized English terms. This article outlines the purpose and objectives of the envisaged project, highlights its interdisciplinarity, and displays the steps to be taken in developing a terminological tool that is meant to be of use to linguists, scientists and field specialists alike.

Keywords: *sustainable built environment, glossary, terminology*

1. Introduction

In 1987, The *Bruntland* Report "Our Common Future", introduced for the first time the concept of sustainable development: *"The development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"* (WCED 1987, 27). The concept was developed as a response to current problems, such as the accelerated reduction of non-renewable energy resources (coal, oil, natural gas) and pollution, especially the increase of greenhouse gas emissions. In the long run, the implementation of the concept of Sustainable Development is expected to have a positive and global impact on the quality of life and on the economic and social development. EU's main strategic priority for development consists in identifying clean, efficient, feasible solutions, economically and socially acceptable, for energy production and consumption. This means that particular attention has to be paid to the development of the Sustainable Built Environment as the energy consumption in the built environment represents 40% of the world energy demand.

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The measures to be taken in order to obtain a sustainable built environment are regulated by the laws in force which encourage the use of renewable energy sources and the energy performance of buildings (in EU, Directive 2012/27/UE, Directive 2010/31/UE, Directive 2009/28/CE, Directive 2002/91/CE; in Romania, Law no 159/2013, Law no 220/2008). To summarize, the quoted directives stipulate that, starting from 1 January 2019, all new buildings occupied or owned by public authorities have to be buildings with almost zero energy consumption (from conventional sources) (nZEB), and by the end of 2020, all newly built constructions must be nZEB. These directives have been recently reviewed and amended and new sequential stage deadlines were proposed for implementing the directives up to 2050 (Law no. 101/2020). The obligation to implement these directives by the due date is indisputable, and the responsibility for this action falls on all the stakeholders: authorities, architects, real estate developers, builders, university teaching staff and students, future practitioners of jobs in this field. All the stakeholders will have to observe the above mentioned implementation deadline and, consequently, will need a substantial and reliable common specialized vocabulary, which will facilitate the communication among them as well as the correct and fully-informed transfer of concepts to the general public (the ultimate beneficiary of the implementation of the sustainable built environment) and the acceptance by the general public.

In this context, an analysis of the Romanian translation of the EU Directives currently in force reveals it to be generally correct; however, it also shows terminological inconsistencies in the Romanian version, the lack of certain terms or their incorrect transfer into Romanian, which can be partially explained by the relative novelty of the field in the Romanian context. For example, even the structure nZEB (Eng. Nearly Zero Energy Building) is taken over and defined in Romanian in two different ways, in two different legislative sources: (a) *"building whose energy consumption is almost close to zero = very high energy performance building, whose energy demand from conventional sources is almost zero or is very low and is mostly fulfilled from renewable sources"*, (Law no 159/2013) and (b) *"building whose energy consumption is almost close to zero = a building with very high energy performance"*, (Directive 2012/27/UE). Although they define the same concept, the translation versions are different and both of them suggest that we are dealing with a building which consumes almost no energy (from any source), when, actually, nZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) refers to a Building whose energy consumption *from conventional sources* is almost zero.

In fact, one of the recommendations in the final report of the ENTRANZE consortium project, Policies to Enforce the Transition to nearly Zero-Energy Buildings in the EU-b28, is: *"Consistency in terminology and timing between*

Directives and CEN standardisation procedures should be further enhanced"(2012, 6), resulting from the identification of a terminological inconsistency, among others: *"Moreover, there is a lack of consistency in the terminology, e.g. the term deep renovation should be clarified and quantitatively defined. At the moment there are two terms used: 'deep renovation' in EED and 'major renovation' defined and regulated by EPBD. Due to the lack of a definition for deep renovation in the EED, confusion often happens between the two terms. Consequently, in the next EED recast the term 'deep renovation' has to be properly defined or, alternatively, replaced by 'nZEB renovation' which can be immediately linked to the national nZEB definitions already in place"* (2012, 46).

Thus, at the same time as the actual implementation of the sustainable built environment, it is important to develop a homogeneous terminological framework, commonly agreed upon by all stakeholders, which will influence decisively the degree of understanding and acceptance by the general public, but also by all the key-stakeholders involved in the actual implementation of the sustainable built environment. Consequently, the aim of this research project is to fill a terminological gap by developing a single terminological platform adapted to the scientific progress in general, and to the stakeholders' needs in particular, an enterprise with immediate social, economic and technological impact, materialized in the increase of the public level of acceptance relative to EU and Romanian directives currently in force, as well as in the improvement of communicability.

The main difficulty, but also the great advantage of this initiative, refers to its high level of interdisciplinarity, which supposes the corroboration and integration of the latest data in various fields: linguistics (terminology, translation studies, lexicography), sustainable development (product design and environment, renewable energies), computer sciences, constructions and architecture.

As for the current state of the art in the field to which the project topic is subsumed, three distinct aspects are worth mentioning: (a) the research performed in the area of sustainable built environment (written mostly in English and published in prestigious international scientific journals, in specialized conference proceedings or in other domain-specific publications) does not include the analysis of the currently employed terminology, (Hosseini and Kaneko 2012; Fernando and Sauma 2013; Martinez-Val 2013; Vişa 2014; Boian 2007); (b) the terminological and lexicographic studies and instruments, in print format (Naftanailă and Naftanailă 2000, Niculescu 1963, Niculescu 2001), or electronic format (Trilingual Dictionary of Constructions and Architecture, English-Romanian Technical Dictionary), cover various technical fields, but not that of *sustainable built environment*; (c) there are monolingual glossaries in the area of sustainable development both in Romanian (Glossary of terms: Development Resources, Glossary of Environment, Glossary of

terms – Sustainable Plastics, Glossary of terms – Green Buildings), and in English (The USA Glossary of Green Buildings, The Glossary of Green Buildings, The Counsellors Glossary of Eco-constructions). For all these resources, internet links are provided in the reference section.

Regarding corpora as terminological resources, starting from the 80s, there have been various attempts to extract terms for bilingual glossaries from parallel corpora, (Chen 1993, Kay and Röscheisen 1993; Melamed 1997a; Melamed 1997b), which became increasingly easy with the emergence of electronic corpora and automatic extraction instruments (Wu and Xia 1994). However, in most specialized fields, parallel corpora are difficult to compile (because of the lack of direct translations) and are quantitatively non-representative. As a result, bilingual glossaries were built by extracting data from comparable corpora, (Munteanu 2006, Robitaille et al. 2006; Morin et al. 2007; Yu and Tsujii 2009). In this area, a complex study is presented in the FP7 *Accurat* project (http://www.accurat-project.eu/), which deals with techniques for exploiting comparable corpora to supplement the data obtained from parallel corpora in specialized fields, idea focusing on the advantages of comparable corpora in the domains and languages where few parallel corpora are available (Munteanu and Marcu 2005; Lu et al. 2010; Abdul-Rauf and Schwenk 2011). A large-scale project exploring the advantages of comparable corpora, automatically compiled from the Internet (using the Babouk platform), is *TTC – Terminology Extraction, Translation Tools and Comparable Corpora* (http://www.ttc-project.eu/) whose objective was to develop monolingual and bilingual terminological instruments in the field of renewable energy and IT, in seven languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Latvian, Russian and Chinese (without direct reference to sustainable built environment).

2. Aims of research

The main purpose of our research is the development of a complex terminological instrument in the field of sustainable built environment, capable of ensuring the harmonization, uniformization and regularization of specific terminology, and, simultaneously, of increasing the acceptance level relative to the implementation of new field technologies, both among stakeholders and within the society – the ultimate implementation target.

To the end of achieving this purpose, a first objective will be that of developing an En-Ro glossary as an inventory of all the terminological variants encountered in En and Ro domain-specific written documents. We estimate the number of En written texts to be larger than Ro similar texts, which would result in

misbalanced data. To prevent this situation, we intend to: (a) compile a parallel En-Ro corpus consisting of original En texts and their Ro translations, e.g. official, legal texts in the field of sustainable built environment, their automatic alignment, the term extraction, with the preservation of direct access to original larger contexts. Because of the reduced number of such texts and their translations, the parallel corpus will not be sufficiently representative, and, consequently, (b) compile a comparable corpus made up of similar texts in the field of sustainable built environment, e.g. texts from specialized sites, conference proceedings, etc., and their extraction with the preservation of access to larger contexts. In both cases, the term extraction will be performed manually. The results will be a bilingual glossary and two monolingual glossaries, which, when merged, will generate a bilingual glossary in the field of sustainable built environment, including the En standard terms and several Ro variants, widely-circulated in the written medium. The innovative character here is subsumed to the methodology of developing such an instrument for the language pair involved and for the domain covered – sustainable buildings – an area which has never been linguistically explored in Romania, even though Romania's status of EU member would require such an action.

The second research objective of the project aims at developing the linguistic framework which will, on the one hand, integrate and interpret the data yielded by achieving the first objective, and, on the other hand, blueprint the development of the third objective, by means of consultations with team specialists and with beneficiaries. The potential bottleneck of the second objective – the difficult management of the high number of Ro terminological variants and their inherent meanings – will be minimized through consultation and negotiation with all the stakeholders. Thus, starting from the standardized En terms identified as problematic at transfer (with multiple equivalent, overlapping other equivalent, or with no equivalent), and after rounds consultations within the group of linguists and sustainability specialists, a list will be generated consisting of explanatory descriptions in Ro. The list will be the source of an ample questionnaire devised so as to elicit the terms that the respondents employ for the concepts described by the explanatory definitions. The questionnaire will be administered to the project beneficiaries, and we estimate the data will cover not only the terminology circulated in the written medium but in the spoken one as well (potentially different results). The innovative aspect consists in bringing together all the stakeholders, in view of reaching linguistic agreement, an action meant to ensure the high degree of acceptance relative to the concrete terminological solutions effected by the end of the project.

The third research objective envisages the construction of a bilingual terminological e-dictionary (with inherent definition in Ro) in the field of sustainable built environment. We assess as challenging the harmonization of the terminological solutions proposed as correct with the already circulated terminological variants, and we plan to minimize the challenge as follows: (a) several consultation meetings will be organized within the reunited groups with a view to building an explanatory monolingual dictionary (Ro) by reducing the terminological solutions previously obtained in the previous activities, by including coherent explanations, subsequently formulated as lexicographic definitions (agreed in the linguists group); (b) the Ro entry-words (already in the dictionary) will be matched with the En counterparts in the bilingual glossary, and eliminating the redundancies in the initial glossary. The result of this stage is a perfected version of the bilingual glossary; (c) the newly obtained glossary will be integrated in the explanatory monolingual dictionary, and the final domain-specific electronic product will be issued – the bilingual terminological dictionary with inherent definitions in Ro, in the field of sustainable built environment. The originality of this product is conveyed by its complexity (built by merging a glossary and a dictionary), by the domain it covers, and by the stages followed to its construction, involving dialogue and reaching consensus within working groups, and also between these groups and beneficiaries, due to the fact that, given the field dynamics, it is imperative to consider aspects pertaining to the recommended usage, as well as to the applied usage.

3. Potential impact of research

The project has the potential to influence significantly the scientific fields it stems from. Through the working methodology and terminological instruments it develops, this project will impact the field of linguistics (more precisely: terminology, lexicography, translation studies); the project puts forward an interactive model for the development of dynamic linguistic tools, a model which can be replicated each time we strive for a rapid implementation and conceptual and terminological acceptance on a large scale, which is the case of new highly specialized scientific fields. At the same time, the area of sustainable development will benefit from this terminological resource which can be used as such by the direct beneficiaries of the project, by university teaching staff and students.

In addition, we anticipate that the socio-economic impact of the project will be notable; the fact that the proposed terminological tools were generated by consensus guarantees the stakeholders' acceptance. Once accepted and

implemented, the linguistic instruments will influence considerably the actual implementation of the legislation in force in this field. The correct understanding of the terms by the stakeholders, and thereupon, by the general public, will result in openness towards this type of buildings and in the acceptance of the idea itself without the legal constraint related to the expiration of the implementation term. Another socio-economic effect is the increasing openness of the general public towards the financial incentives offered by the state and by banks (*green credits*), which currently go unnoticed. Last but not least, *Transilvania* University of Braşov intends to create sustainable development programs adapted to the particularities of each faculty. The linguistic sustainability promoted by this project enforces and supports such an initiative, and could become an example of good practice.

4. Research methodology

For each particular objective, several investigation methods and tools can be traced. Thus, in view of achieving the first objective, our working tools are parallel and comparable corpora, some of the most reliable instruments when it comes to term extraction for glossary and dictionary compilation. Given the language pair involved (En-Ro), the data extraction from the corpora will be performed manually, for the following reasons: (i) due to the novelty of the field, and its high degree of specialization, a terminological list must be generated from scratch; (ii) we identify both lemmas and morphological variations; (iii) we identify word-to-word, word-to-structure or acronym-to structure counterparts; (iv) as the Romanian field terminology is so variable, no clue in the form or the meaning of the English term could ensure the identification of all its Romanian counterparts; (v) the quite manageable size of the corpora (a parallel corpus made of publicly available legal texts and a comparable corpus balanced in size relative to the number of available Romanian specialized texts). The result of corpora processing and data integration will be a bilingual glossary in the field of sustainable built environment. In order to achieve the second objective, our methodology focuses on consultations between linguists and sustainability specialists, and the principal methodological tool will be the questionnaire.

Although the overwhelming majority of specialized glossaries and dictionaries are not drafted consensually, we integrate the questionnaire as essential working instrument because only by directly consulting the parties involved in the implementation per se of sustainable built environment, one is certain to attain rapid and securable acceptance of the specialized terminology

proposed eventually. To attain the third objective, we shall concentrate on collaboration between teams, on workshops, which represent the foundation of the results of this project – the monolingual explanatory dictionary, the bilingual glossary and the bilingual terminological dictionary (with inherent definitions).

The main challenge of the project, which is simultaneously the triggering factor of the entire enterprise, is the novelty of the domain of sustainable built environment. Several secondary challenges branch out: (i) the impossibility of identifying a relevant number of written texts for terminology extraction in view of compiling the bilingual glossary. In order to mitigate this risk, we rely on supplementing the parallel corpus with a comparable corpus and extending the text search for the comparable corpus (in particular for the Romanian texts) to other sites and sources offered by fellow professors. (ii) the difficulty faced by beneficiaries (authorities, real estate developers, general public) in comprehending the direct link between the terminological implementation and the law implementation per se. As mitigation factor, we count on supplementing the number of consultative meetings and workshops; (iii) the impossibility of reaching linguistic agreement, which can be solved via successive consultations with Romanian or foreign linguists who are not involved in the project.

5. Conclusion

This research project is meant to fill a terminological gap by developing a single terminological platform, adapted to the scientific progress in general, and to the stakeholders' and professionals' needs in particular, an enterprise with immediate social, economic and technological impact, materialized in the increase of the public level of acceptance relative to the EU and Romanian directives currently in force, as well as in the improvement of communicability. The scientific impact of the project lies in the innovative character (with respect to complexity and domain) of the proposed tool – a bilingual terminological e-dictionary, with inherent Romanian explanations. In developing such a tool, the concrete involvement of the stakeholders is an innovative action, which ensures a high degree of acceptance relative to the proposed terminological solutions, as well as a major social impact on the population, as ultimate implementation beneficiary.

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La capsule vidéo « moyen de transfert » de la connaissance en FLE d'une situation A à A $^{n+1}$ situations: chausser de nouvelles lunettes sur le monde à l'ère du numérique

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Our work starts from questioning the effectiveness of individual viewing of a video capsule in French, with grammatical content, with a view to targeting the representations of learners related to the effective transfer of knowledge in virtual class, which, in turn, targets the role of the teacher. This work is therefore interested in the concept of learning transfer among 15-16 year-old learners in digital and distance working situations who do not have academic difficulties and who have an A2 level of knowledge of French in accordance with the CECRL, in heteroglot environment.

Keywords*: video capsule, virtual classroom, contextualization, representation, source task, transfer of learning.*

1. Introduction

La visée de ce travail est de participer au développement des compétences de transfert des connaissances en classe de FLE virtuelle, en contexte roumain bilingue francophone hétéroglotte. Il vise surtout à fournir aux enseignants des pistes concrètes leur permettant de prendre des décisions des plus judicieuses en ce qui concerne la démarche méthodologique à adopter dans leur enseignement numérique et à distance des contenus grammaticaux au travers de la capsule vidéo en français. En d'autres termes, il s'agit plus précisément de rendre compte et de discuter des enjeux méthodologiques qu'impliquent ces données. Les deux questions auxquelles nous tenterons de répondre au fil de ce travail pourraient être formulées comme suit: quel transfert des connaissances et quelles

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représentations de l'enseignant et de l'enseignement-apprentissage de la grammaire pendant la dispensation des cours des connaissances grammaticales au travers d'une capsule vidéo en français langue native en ligne?

Cet article se divise en quatre parties: (1) la synthèse du travail comprenant un ancrage disciplinaire, la question de recherche et les hypothèses qui en découlent, (2) le cadre méthodologique au sein duquel nous présenterons le choix du public et le choix des outils de l'enquête, (3) la constitution du corpus, (4) les résultats de l'enquête, et (5) la conclusion.

2. Exposé du travail

2.1. Synthèse du travail. Hypothèses de recherche

Ce travail s'inscrit dans le champ de la didactique des langues. Nous avons étudié l'évaluation comme facteur de motivation en contexte roumain bilingue francophone hétéroglotte et cette contribution se situe dans le prolongement de nos intérêts sur l'enseignement en ce contexte. La capsule vidéo en français utilisée en classe provient du site web YouTube.[2] Cette première exploration du site web nous a conduite à envisager par la suite une démarche comparative entre le discours de l'enseignante pendant la dispensation la classe virtuelle ayant pour objectif de transmettre le discours indirect et la concordance des temps à l'indicatif, et le visionnage d'une capsule vidéo en français, en ligne, auprès du même public sur le même sujet. Ce travail nous a conduite après à identifier un état de choses en ce qui concerne le transfert des connaissances en situation de classe virtuelle à distance. Nos premières lectures visant le transfert des connaissances en apprentissage et en situation d'acquisition nous ont confrontée d'une part à un certain nombre de travaux visant les théories de l'apprentissage et de l'acquisition, et du transfert des connaissances (Gaonac'h 1990; Tardif 1992; Tardiff et Meirieu 1996 ; Bastien, 1997 ; Marion et Houlfort 2015 ; Bigot 2015) ou, d'autre part, dans le champ de la capsule vidéo.

Dans les principaux champs disciplinaires que nous visons, il nous semble que la perspective adoptée dans ces recherches a contribué à l'émergence d'outils conceptuels et méthodologiques permettant d'approfondir la question du transfert des connaissances grammaticales dispensées au travers de la capsule vidéo et de donner à ce travail un regard autre que comparatif. C'est à l'issue de ce constat que nous avons réorienté notre travail en adoptant une approche plutôt descriptive.

[2] Ce choix se justifiait à l'époque par le fait que ce site web est celui qui est le plus consulté par les apprenants en situation d'acquisition dynamique non guidée, avec du déploiement numérique, dans des domaines qui ne relèvent pas du domaine scolaire.

Il nous semble nécessaire premièrement d'établir un état des questions du transfert des connaissances. Dans ce qui suit, nous présenterons premièrement une partie théorique, et puis la partie pratique.

Pour mieux éclaircir la notion de transfert, on doit penser le transfert en tant que processus cognitif à travers lequel une compétence acquise dans une situation spécifique est réutilisée pertinemment dans un autre contexte et par conséquent « l'étude du transfert est donc l'étude de la manière par laquelle une connaissance acquise dans une situation est appliquée (ou échoue à être appliquée) à une autre situation (Singley et Anderson 1989, 24) ». Ou Tardif (1999) donne cette définition du transfert: « [Il] fait essentiellement référence au mécanisme cognitif qui consiste à utiliser dans une tâche cible une connaissance construite ou une compétence développée dans une tâche source » (1998, 58).

Les « similitudes » (Tardif, 1999) ou les « similarités » (Frenay 2004) entre la tâche source et la tâche cible représentent le degré de ressemblance entre stimuli-réponses. S'inspirant de Tardif et Meirieu (1996), Presseau définit le transfert comme étant « le processus par lequel des connaissances construites dans un contexte particulier sont reprises dans un nouveau contexte, que ce soit pour construire de nouvelles connaissances, pour développer de nouvelles compétences ou pour accomplir de nouvelles tâches » (Presseau 2000, 517).

Ainsi, est-il nécessaire de faire une « recontextualisation » (Tardif 1999, 59) et non pas une suite d'exercices d'entraînement. Celle-ci se présente sous la forme d'une situation problème à résoudre et une qui comporte un réemploi des stratégies relatives à des connaissances particulières et compétences développées dans la tâche initiale. Ainsi, il s'avère très important de trouver et de définir précisément le cadre de *la recontextualisation* comme un élément tout à fait essentiel tout comme l'importance de l'organisation des connaissances précédentes des apprenants.

Somme toute, la subjectivité de l'apprenant peut construire ce cadre dans la perception de certaines similitudes entre la tâche source et la tâche cible (recontextualisée) d'où la réalisation ou la non-réalisation du transfert. Le transfert, loin de constituer un processus automatique, et malgré la difficulté d'être distingué des processus d'apprentissage de haut niveau, nécessite de la part de nos sujets un ensemble de stratégies qui doivent s'appuyer sur des environnements pédagogiques adéquats et par des pratiques d'enseignement et d'évaluation orientées vers le développement des compétences dans de nouveaux contextes, sans passer par une suite d'exercices ou d'activités. Il semble que les difficultés de transfert soient attribuables plutôt au blocage éprouvé par un apprenant lié au *contexte initial* dans lequel il a appris, contexte qui empreinte fortement la situation d'acquisition. Cela rend très importante l'étape de *décontextualisation*

(moment où un apprenant se rend compte ou pas de l'utilité de la connaissance dans d'autres situations ou contextes de sa vie quotidienne. On pourrait associer cette étape à l'étape intitulée *debriefing* des débats académiques*). La recontextualisation*, finalement, constitue en effet, l'étape de réemploi dans d'autres contextes, et c'est effectivement à ce niveau qu'il faudrait vérifier le transfert des apprentissages.

Pour ce qui est de notre travail, loin d'être un simple visionnage de la capsule vidéo à contenu grammatical, le visionnage est interactif et nous l'avons compris se développant sur deux plans qui rendent compte d'une conjonction entre la sémiotique, le social et le technique[3]:

(1) *le plan de la compréhension* interactive – *le téléspectateur d'un écran*, du point de vue cognitif, peut à la fois s'appuyer sur des données provenant du texte, donc des éléments de nature linguistique tels que le mot ou la phrase (modèle bas-haut), sur des images, des couleurs, des exemples qui mettent en relief les éléments ciblés qui sont offerts dans la capsule vidéo, des éléments paraverbaux du transmetteur (une voix de femme dans notre cas, etc.) et sur des données relevant de ses connaissances antérieures qu'il projette sur le matériel vidéo à travers un processus d'émissions et de vérifications d'hypothèses en vue de dégager le sens (modèle haut-bas). La conjugaison des deux modèles, bas-haut et haut-bas, communément appelée *modèle interactif*, est une pratique majoritairement recourue par les téléspectateurs en vue de la compréhension. La notion *d'interactivité* fait référence aux rapports « homme-machine» pour opérer une différence entre ce concept et celui *d'interaction* qui se rattache aux rapports entre individus, sans médiation des dispositifs numériques. Et c'est à ce niveau que nous situons notre travail d'observation, tel qu'il s'effectue au cours d'une situation de visionnage de capsule vidéo à contenu grammatical.

(2) *le plan de la compréhension interactive* - il est admis que l'acte de compréhension est une interaction entre lecteur, scripteur, texte et support (Giasson, 2000) qui se traduit par un certain mode d'agencement du texte et par la présence d'indices de différents ordres disséminés dans le champ textuel par le lecteur. L'interaction est donc ici à comprendre au sens de collaboration, de coopération, telle qu'elle a été développée par Giasson (2000).

Pour décrire et comprendre dans les grandes lignes (puisque ce n'est pas notre but) la perspective d'interactivité à laquelle nous faisons référence, nous sommes partie du concept *d'exposition discursive* tel qu'il est exposé par Develotte *« Nous appelons espace d'exposition discursive l'environnement d'énoncés auquel*

[3] Voir aussi le terme de *médiologie* qui voudrait étudier les rapports d'interaction unissant les faits symboliques et un milieu matériel technique. Debray, R. (1991, 234).

sont exposés tels ou tels acteurs du système éducatif considéré. C'est en fonction de cet espace d'exposition que chaque agent du système éducatif configure à un moment donné ce que nous appelons son espace de production discursive, c'est-à-dire les discours qu'il peut tenir dans l'institution, en fonction de son espace d'exposition discursive » (Develotte 2006, 2, cité par M. Razanadrakoto 2014, 87), particulièrement parce que ce concept est revisité par Develotte en contexte d'enseignement-apprentissage en ligne visant donc des enseignants et des apprenants des campus numériques, ce qui est notre but.

Hypothèses: De ce point de vue, la question principale qui a orienté notre travail est: quelles représentations des apprentissages et quel transfert pendant la dispensation des connaissances grammaticales à travers une capsule vidéo en ligne? En réponse à cette question, nous proposons deux hypothèses articulant deux dimensions, l'une linguistique et l'autre didactique.

Hypothèse 1 – linguistique - les discours des apprenants en visionnement seraient des vecteurs pour des représentations sur la capsule vidéo à contenu grammatical en ligne en tant que produit reçu par un public de niveau A2 en L2, sur l'enseignant mais aussi sur son efficacité en transfert des connaissances.

Hypothèse 2 – didactique - la réception orale / la lecture dépendrait, entre autres, de l'agencement et des spécificités technodiscursives de la capsule vidéo dispensée en ligne en tant qu'espace d'exposition discursive, qui vont, éventuellement, engendrer de nouvelles pratiques d'enseignement de la grammaire en langue étrangère, L2.

3. Cadre méthodologique

3.1. Le public

Le public d'enquête est un public captif, constitué d'un groupe de treize apprenants de 15 à 16 ans d'une classe de vingt-huit apprenants, en situation de compréhension de l'oral et lecture d'un contenu grammatical en classe de FLE, L2. Ils sont tous issus des classes qui ont étudié le français deux heures par semaine, donc le français n'est par leur langue de scolarisation, et cela leur confère une certaine uniformité dans l'étude de la L2. La L1 de ces élèves est uniquement le roumain. Ils font partie d'une classe de 28 apprenants en profil bilingue francophone étudiant le français pendant cinq sessions par semaine dont la durée est de cinquante minutes par session. Le travail s'est déroulé pendant le second semestre avec des apprenants qui ont été toujours en situation d'enseignement-apprentissage en ligne, à part trois semaines au début de l'année scolaire lorsqu'ils ont fréquenté les cours en alternance avec l'autre groupe de la classe.

Nous nous sommes posée la question de la représentativité de ce public, et nous avons décidé de continuer l'enquête dans ces conditions en prenant en compte les facteurs expliquant le niveau initial de tous ces élèves arrivant dans cette classe bilingue francophone et la finalité et la durée des études: l'accès en cette classe bilingue francophone après passation d'une épreuve DELF A2 à l'Alliance française de Brașov ou après passation de l'épreuve d'admission en filière bilingue francophone organisée par l'Inspection Scolaire de Brașov à titre équivalent, ils ont les mêmes visées, l'obtention du même diplôme DELF B2 en terminale à profil SVT, et la même durée des études en Roumanie. D'autre part, regarder une capsule vidéo en langue étrangère n'est pas chose facile pour ce public. Nous faisons également l'affirmation peu hasardeuse que ces élèves ont besoin d'un type de soutien de compréhension vu le besoin d'un niveau supérieur de compréhension en L1 pour pouvoir transférer les connaissances en L2, sans prendre en compte les piètres apprenants en grammaire (Alderson et Urquhart 1984).

3.2. Les outils de recueil de données

Dans cette étape, nous décrirons l'exploitation des différents outils d'enquête sollicités pour le recueil des données sur lesquelles reposent notre analyse et les résultats qui en découleront. Nous partons de l'hypothèse que les représentations sur la capsule vidéo dispensée en ligne véhiculées par les élèves en classe bilingue francophone choisis comme public d'enquête pour ce travail, détermineraient en partie leurs pratiques de lecture de ladite capsule.

Cela implique de voir s'il y a des convergences entre les discours des élèves et la pratique effective de classe. Ce qui implique de prendre en compte, à côté des discours des lecteurs, les procédés ou les modalités de compréhension observables et mises en œuvre au cours d'une situation du visionnage d'une capsule vidéo sélectionnée par l'enseignante. À cette fin, nous avons retenu l'entretien et la capture d'écran comme principaux outils pour la collecte d'informations tout comme les questionnaires en ligne offerts par le logiciel *Google Form.*

3.3. La phase exploratoire

D'abord, nous avons observé des difficultés du côté de l'enseignant et des apprenants à établir une connexion de façon à ce que les deux acteurs présents en classe virtuelle soient *sur la même page* lors des sessions d'enseignement de la grammaire. Les difficultés constatées en classe virtuelle ont visé principalement la capacité des apprenants de faire attention pendant les explications de l'enseignant tout au long de l'exposé et l'impossibilité de l'enseignant d'utiliser des méthodes

qui puissent *aller au delà de l'écran* pour maintenir ses apprenants concentrés, même en utilisant la méthodologie communicationnelle prônée par le CECRL. De plus, les explications de l'enseignante étaient trop longues par rapport à la durée de la session virtuelle diminuée de dix minutes chacune en raison de la crise sanitaire et de la prolongation du programme devant l'écran de l'ordinateur des apprenants.

Ensuite, le point de départ de notre travail est l'observation empirique et l'idée que les apprenants sont très habitués à regarder des vidéos sur YouTube tout le temps, et que cela pourrait les rendre plus réceptifs à la transmission des connaissances en effaçant le rôle actif de l'enseignant.

Par conséquent, nous sommes parties de l'idée de comparer deux groupes du même type de public décrit ci-dessus, l'un où la distribution du contenu est assurée par l'enseignant avec un autre groupe où cela est assurée par une capsule vidéo, l'enseignante en connexion avec ses élèves pour assurer le guidage, si nécessaire. Cette comparaison a connu rapidement ses limites en raison principalement de la structure de l'année scolaire changée plusieurs fois, ce qui menaçait la bonne fin de ce travail entrepris, et donc la disponibilité des apprenants, puis du programme scolaire qui aurait dû être ajusté de manière répétitive et impromptue. C'est ainsi que nous avons recentré notre travail sur un seul groupe d'apprenants sans entraver leur parcours ni le nôtre sur les représentations sur le transfert des apprentissages, sur le rôle négligeable de l'enseignant et sur l'efficacité de cette méthode d'enseignement-apprentissage vu l'espace d'exposition discursive.

3.4. Le questionnaire - méthode d'entretien scientifique

Vu notre objectif de prendre connaissance des représentations des apprenants sur l'utilisation de la capsule vidéo en classe virtuelle, nous avons choisi cette méthode parce que l'entretien est une méthode scientifique qui permet de recueillir des énoncés subjectifs des locuteurs sur des faits et des croyances d'autrui. Le questionnaire-entretien représente donc un moyen d'accès à ces représentations des apprenants en permettant *l'observation participante* de l'enseignante, le commentaire, l'adhésion, l'exemple, la citation, etc. En plus, le lieu de rencontre nous a permis un cadre de rencontre virtuelle en accord avec notre démarche, ce qui est un atout pour notre travail, car les apprenants ne sont pas bouleversés par une alternance de travail présentiel / distance.

Le guide d'entretien que nous avons élaboré vise les discours des apprenants lors du visionnage, leurs habitudes de visionner, les modalités de résoudre des

difficultés lors du visionnage, l'efficacité de cette organisation de la classe de grammaire, la prise de notes pendant le visionnage, le niveau d'effort déposé lors du visionnage, les connaissances sur le discours rapporté acquises après avoir visionné la capsule vidéo en français langue maternelle.

Deux entretiens-questionnaires ont été livrés aux apprenants dont la durée moyenne de chacun est estimée à une demi-heure, en raison des contraintes temporelles portant sur le programme quotidien très chargé des apprenants.

4. Constitution du corpus

Dans notre vision, une « capsule vidéo » est une séquence vidéo brève, d'une durée de 1 à 5 minutes en général, mais cela peut durer plus. Pour être efficace, une capsule doit être scénarisée, organisée. Le mot « Capsule » désigne une « production écrite, orale ou audiovisuelle qui traite, de manière condensée, d'un sujet ou d'un thème donné. » [4] Une capsule vidéo est jugée comme un incontournable aujourd'hui avec le développement du *numérique* dans l'éducation grâce à son aspect ludique, accrochant, et agréable, facile à utiliser et très à la portée de la main des enseignants.

4.1. Les limites de l'approche

4.1.1. Une approche longitudinale

Une limite de notre travail vise l'approche longitudinale qui engendre des comportements originaux difficilement classifiables. En outre, en classe virtuelle, nous ne possédons pas des informations visant le niveau d'engagement des parents dans l'étude scolaire, ou les attitudes des apprenants face à l'école à l'ère du numérique ou leurs aspirations scolaires. Pour ce qui est de la motivation du transfert indispensable pour que les apprenants mobilisent les capacités cognitives et affectives convenables ou bien, l'autorégulation des méthodes qui engage une évaluation constante par les élèves de l'efficacité des stratégies cognitives utilisées en lien avec les divers processus de transfert, nous ne pouvons pas fournir des indices fiables.

[4] *Qu'est-ce qu'une capsule vidéo* ?, https://atelier-canope-19.canoprof.fr.

4.1.2 . L'accessibilité du public à la démarche

Comme nous l'avons évoqué auparavant, nous avons fait le choix de mener notre enquête auprès des apprenants issus des cours ayant le français comme L2 et inscrits depuis un semestre en L1, profil bilingue francophone. Le nombre d'informateurs semble réduit, même s'ils sont des apprenants captifs. Une limite de notre travail fait référence donc aux situations qui peuvent paraître moins ressemblantes à nos apprenants par rapport aux situations présentées, à cause de l'incompréhension de notre démarche. Par contre, nous sommes assez confiants d'avoir pu éliminer un des défis, celui de la subjectivité de l'apprenant conformément auquel l'apprenant peut comprendre très différemment la tâche cible, et donc il se peut qu'il ne puisse pas repérer le stimulus objectif, car les consignes ont été expliquées en classe virtuelle par l'enseignante et en plus, un lien avec les connaissances antérieures a été établi en amont.

4.1.3 . Les conditions techniques

Une des limites de notre approche réside dans l'organisation du recueil des données. Pour ce qui tient de l'organisation du visionnement, lors de la distribution de la capsule vidéo avec des sous-titres, les apprenants ont été tous organisés *chacun chez soi*, avec connexion directe Internet avec leur enseignante sur *Google Meet*. La capsule vidéo leur a été transmise sur la plateforme *GWorkspace* utilisée pendant l'enseignement-apprentissage au long de l'année scolaire. Une fiche de travail individuel conçue par l'enseignante leur a été transmise en même temps à l'aide du logiciel *Google Docs*. Des informations visant le but de cette étude et le déroulement de la session leur ont été transmises comme la langue de la prise de notes, la durée de la capsule vidéo, la possibilité de regarder la capsule autant de fois qu'ils le veulent, l'orthographe qui ne sera pas pénalisé, le manque de temps imparti. En même temps, on leur a demandé de la sincérité totale lors du remplissage des deux questionnaires visant les aider à la compréhension et au rôle de l'enseignant durant ce type de processus d'enseignement-apprentissage. En outre, nous n'avons pas connaissance de la qualité de la connexion de chaque apprenant, tout comme de la capacité de chaque apprenant de manipuler les dispositifs nécessaires pour avoir accès aux documents. Les connexions se sont établies, comme nous l'avons déjà évoqué, dans des lieux privés, chaque apprenant disposant de connexion Internet propre sans aucun rapport avec la connexion Internet de l'institution scolaire. Or, cela aurait pu présenter des dysfonctionnalités lors du déroulement, ce qui aurait pu nous fournir des informations sur les

échanges qui ont eu lieu au cours du visionnage en situation visant les interventions des apprenants sur l'espace d'exposition discursive.

Description du déroulement: Exposition à la situation

Acquisition[5] – les apprenants ont été exposés à des situations de communication en mode lecture où la problématique des discours direct et indirect a été présente[6].

Apprentissage – (1) réviser les temps verbaux-formation et les valeurs; (2) visionner individuellement la capsule vidéo distribuée par l'enseignante le jour même du déroulement de la recherche. La capsule vidéo prévoit des situations guidées de discours rapporté au présent et au passé de l'indicatif, où les règles sont exposées et exemplifiées par une locutrice native, et qui font revisiter les mêmes situations rencontrées dans le texte *Patience!... ;* (3) remplir la fiche apprenant sans l'aide de l'enseignante; (4) remplir le *Questionnaire 1* ; (5) discours de l'enseignante visant le but de l'étude et le rappel des connaissances antérieures (se rappeler le contenu de la capsule vidéo, les transformations du discours rapporté au passé) ; (6) remplir le *Questionnaire 2*.

4.2. Le corpus de réponses au questionnaire

Dans cette partie, nous présenterons et commenterons quelques éléments de notre corpus médié par la technologie et très fragile (un effet sur les réponses des apprenants peut se constater quand-même) de notre point de vue, ainsi que les méthodes d'analyse adoptées pour le corpus.

4.2.1. Le corpus d'entretien-questionnaire

Le corpus d'entretien-questionnaire est composé de la transcription de deux entretiens-questionnaires que nous avons distribués à nos apprenants, et des réponses à ces questionnaires, de la fiche de l'apprenant complétée en ligne par chaque apprenant lors du visionnement de la capsule. Le premier questionnaire est intitulé *Capsule vidéo,* et le second est intitulé *Transfert après visionnage de la capsule vidéo - Le discours rapporté.* L'enseignante a tenu un journal de bord pour planifier le travail. Le premier questionnaire a été rempli après avoir regardé la capsule, et le second, après une semaine, en classe virtuelle, sans regarder encore une fois la même capsule.

[5] La différence entre acquisition et apprentissage est opérée par Krashen.

[6] Lecture du texte *Patience!...,* Belleville 2, Gallier, T., Grand-Clément, O., Livre de l'élève, Edition CLE International, 2004.

Traces des discours:

RA: *Je peux retourner et revoir [la capsule] ce que je n'ai pas compris; et je peux apprendre dans mon propre rythme, je peux visionner encore une fois quand j'ai besoin d'éclaircissements, et ça ma semble plus efficace.*

TO[7]*: Je pense que c'est efficace car cela m'aide à améliorer mes connaissances de français tout comme mes connaissances de grammaire.*

SS: *Puisque nous travaillons dans notre propre rythme et le prof est là pour nous aider à tout moment.*

5. Les résultats de l'enquête

La lecture de ces entretiens-questionnaires nous a permis par exemple de relever des pistes d'analyse relatives à/aux :

- ***Représentations:***

o Sur la manière dont les apprenants-lecteurs se représentent *l'efficacité* de la capsule vidéo à contenu grammatical retrouvée sur YouTube et distribuée par l'enseignante en classe virtuelle, et qui vient remplacer le discours de l'enseignante sur des questions de grammaire. Ainsi, dans le premier questionnaire, pour tous les treize apprenants, l'efficacité de l'utilisation de la capsule vidéo se montre assez élevée, 4 ou 5 points sur une échelle Likert de 1 à 5. Ainsi, six apprenants sur douze[8] (50%) ont mentionné le gain en ce qui concerne les connaissances dispensées ainsi et la langue améliorée, 25% ont mentionné le gain en ce qui concerne le travail en rythme propre, 16, 6 % ont mentionné la nécessité de l'aide du professeur, 0,8% ont avoué avoir attiré l'attention de l'élève, et 0,8% la mémorisation. Par ailleurs, cela est *le statu quo* dans le second questionnaire. Tous les treize apprenants ont indiqué les valeurs 4 et 5 sur l'échelle Likert pour indiquer l'efficacité de la capsule vidéo en classe virtuelle. Dans le second questionnaire la situation a changé de peu. Le rythme propre de travail et la possibilité de revoir plusieurs fois la capsule vidéo, sans pression, a gagné des adeptes. Ainsi, huit apprenants sur treize (61,53%) ont indiqué l'utilité de la capsule vidéo.

o Toutefois, des réponses qui montrent *l'inefficacité* de l'emploi de la capsule vidéo dans ce contexte existent. Ainsi, pour neuf apprenants sur treize, des difficultés ont été signalées comme par exemple la difficulté de comprendre seul la grammaire en contexte - quatre apprenants (30,76%); le manque de communication pendant la classe - un apprenant (7,69%); une capsule vidéo désorganisée - un apprenant (7,69%); la trop grande vitesse d'expression de la

[7] On observe le problème d'identification de la grammaire comme partie intégrante d'une langue.

[8] Une réponse ne peut être encadrée car cette réponse vise une autre question du questionnaire.

locutrice - un apprenant (7,69%); trop de temps assis nécessaire pour travailler - deux apprenants (15,38%).

- Représentations sur *le rôle de l'enseignant*: Dans le premier questionnaire seulement 15% des apprenants ont mentionné le besoin de bénéficier de l'aide de la part de l'enseignant lors de l'apprentissage par l'intermédiaire de la capsule vidéo. La majorité, en revanche, déclare que cette approche, où le rôle du professeur est très effacé, apportait des bénéfices pour ce qui tient notamment d'un rythme propre de travail et de la possibilité de regarder plusieurs fois la capsule. Dans le second questionnaire, le rôle de l'enseignante est en statu quo, le même pourcentage de 15,38% vient soutenir un appui en classe de la part d'un professeur.

SMS: *Il est bon d'apprendre de cette manière car nous travaillons par nous-mêmes mais en même temps nous avons un professeur à notre disposition qui peut éclaircir nos doutes. (Nous avons travaillé comme suit: 1. J'ai regardé la vidéo 2. J'ai pris des notes 3. J'ai répondu aux questions).*

FP: *Cette activité est beaucoup plus bénéfique lorsqu'elle est réalisée de cette manière. Tout d'abord, le visionnage asynchrone d'un clip vidéo, avec sous-titres et prononciation claire, assure une meilleure compréhension du sujet présenté. Par exemple, j'ai mieux compris l'accord des temps dans un discours indirect grâce aux exemples donnés dans la vidéo. Ils m'ont surtout aidé pour les transformations du futur proche et du futur simple, que je ne maîtrisais pas, ainsi que pour la transformation du présent à l'imparfait. Dans le même ordre d'idées, ce type d'activité a l'avantage de nous permettre de structurer nos propres idées à partir de la vidéo, nous pouvons les écrire nous-mêmes, de manière colorée, l'organisation nous appartient, nous pouvons donc apprendre plus facilement. Par exemple, cela m'aide à souligner les mots qui font la transition du discours indirect au discours direct, les verbes, les expressions ressortent beaucoup mieux lorsque je les écris, que si j'avais vu la vidéo sans avoir pris aucune note. J'aime donc ces activités de grammaire, je les trouve très efficaces et j'espère que nous en aurons d'autres. Bien qu'il soit un peu plus difficile de s'asseoir devant l'ordinateur, d'écouter et d'écrire pendant environ une heure, je pense que cela en vaut la peine et que nous retenons beaucoup de choses.*

CSP*: À mon avis, ce genre d'activité et ce quiz nous aident à mieux fixer les informations décrites dans la vidéo. Cela nous donne la possibilité de chercher et de mieux comprendre les notions. De plus, le fait d'avoir observé la leçon par nous-mêmes, sans explications supplémentaires, développe notre capacité à mieux travailler par nous-mêmes et nous aide à être plus confiants.*[9]

[9] Traduit avec www.DeepL.com/Translator (version gratuite),consulté le 15 juin 2021.

- ***Transfert des connaissances – la décontextualisation***.

o Sur l'échelle Likert mesurant l'intensité, les options forcées des informateurs sont allées vers un degré important de réemploi des contenus présentés au travers de la capsule vidéo. Ainsi, dans le premier questionnaire au plus élevé degré d'intensité, cinq apprenants, c'est-à-dire 38,46% ont indiqué la valeur 5, puis 53,84% , c'est-à-dire 7 apprenants ont indiqué la valeur 4, et un apprenant se situe à 3 points sur cette échelle, c'est-à-dire 7,69%.

o Dans le second questionnaire, par contre, la situation change par rapport au transfert des connaissances. Quatre questions variées, deux items de type QCM, un item de type d'association, et un item de type transformation ont été conçus pour mesurer le transfert des connaissances en recontextualisant l'apprentissage afin d'assurer une signifiance pour l'apprenant, mais ***sans médiateur*** *(le rôle de l'enseignante en classe)*. Comme nous l'avons déjà évoqué, aucune révision n'a été réalisée en classe par l'enseignante avant de distribuer le questionnaire. Les deux premières questions de type objectif ont offert des réponses qui ne nous offrent pas la possibilité de voir clair.

➢ À la première question treize apprenants sur treize ont donné une réponse incorrecte, comme dans la Figure 1.

➢

Figure 1. Distribution des réponses à la première question

➢ À la deuxième question, douze apprenants sur treize, c'est-à-dire 92,30 % ont correctement répondu, comme dans la Figure 2.

Figure 2. Distribution des réponses à la deuxième question

➢ À la troisième question les réponses sont en plus grande proportion erronées. Ainsi, onze apprenants sur treize ont donné une seule réponse correcte, ce qui signifie un pourcentage de 84,61. Et deux apprenants ont donné deux réponses correctes, ce qui équivaut à 15,39%, comme dans la Figure 3.

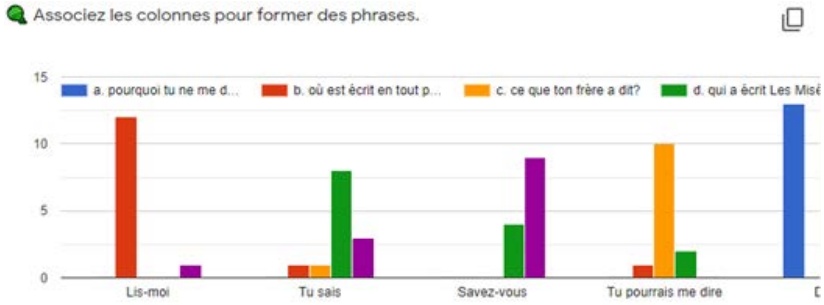

Figure 3. Distribution des réponses à la troisième question

➢ À la quatrième question, les pourcentages montent. Les transformations ont été repérées par plusieurs apprenants. Ainsi, huit apprenants sur treize, ce qui signifie 61%, ont correctement identifié les transformations de contenu nécessaires à trois des cinq questions, pour indiquer des réponses correctes en proportions différentes telles 46% ou 38 % aux deux autres questions décontextualisées, comme dans la Figure 4 :

Figure 4. Distribution des réponses à la quatrième question

- ***Améliorations. Les améliorations proposées par les apprenants visent :***

- Aide de l'enseignant: quatre apprenants proposent encore l'aide du professeur en tant que tel pour expliquer les données, ce qui donne 30,76% ;
- Débit du locuteur sur la capsule vidéo: un apprenant indique un trop grand débit verbal de la locutrice ce qui empêche la compréhension et indique 7,69% ;
- Eliminer la limite de temps impartie à la résolution de la tâche en asynchrone: deux apprenants ont y fait référence, ce qui signifie 15,38% ;
- Sans remarques, les apprenants n'ont rien à rajouter: quatre apprenants, ce qui donne 30,76% ;

- ***Les plus utiles aspects*** de la leçon organisée de cette manière: la capsule vidéo a été désignée l'élément le plus utile suivi par les exemples et les exercices, puis le classique tableau de la concordance des temps vient en troisième position et un seul apprenant a considéré utile la révision en ligne réalisée sur https://quizizz.com/ avec des quiz visant la manière traditionnelle d'enseignement règle de conjugaison plus les terminaisons spécifiques plus exercices interactifs. Dans ce qui suit nous présentons les choix des apprenants. Ainsi :

- La capsule vidéo: plébiscitée par huit apprenants ce qui donne 61,53% ;
- Les exemples offerts et les exercices: choisis par deux apprenants, ce qui donne 15,38% ;
- Le tableau de la concordance: choisi par un apprenant, ce qui donne 7,69% ;
- La révision: désignée par un apprenant, ce qui situe cela à 7,69%.

- **Niveau de l'effort** déposé par les apprenants dans la compréhension de la capsule vidéo. Les apprenants ont considéré assez difficile ce type de travail. Ainsi, par exemple dix apprenants sur treize, ce qui signifie 76,92 % ont déposé un effort important en cochant les cases indiquent des valeurs de 4 ou 5 sur l'échelle Likert dans le premier questionnaire. Les autres trois apprenants ont indiqué des valeurs inférieures, telles 3, 2, ou 1 sur cette même échelle.
- La nécessité de ***faire appel à des ressources complémentaires*** bénéfiques à la compréhension de la capsule vidéo, soit la présence d'un *espace d'exposition discursive.*
  - Ainsi, les apprenants ont indiqué qu'ils avaient fait appel *partiellement* à des ressources complémentaires ou qu'ils avaient demandé des éclaircissements, tels un autre professeur de FLE (nous pensons que cette réponse vient renforcer notre idée d'incompréhension de la donne) ou un collègue. Pour exemplifier, 46,15% des apprenants ont répondu qu'ils n'avaient pas eu besoin de faire appel à d'autres ressources pour comprendre la capsule vidéo distribuée. Nous n'avons pas connaissance de « la polyfocalisation chez nos apprenants qui regardent de multiples fenêtres d'interaction sur l'écran en même temps qu'ils parlent avec des gens dans leur milieu immédiat» (Develotte 2012, 513) tout comme nous n'avons pas la certitude de l'existence ou de l'inexistence d'une communication via des dispositifs synchrones et asynchrones utilisés en parallèle, le multi-fenêtrage à l'écran.
  - Également, un seul apprenant a indiqué la désorganisation de la capsule vidéo comme caractéristique technodiscursive entravant l'accès au sens.
- ***Sujet*** de la capsule 100% des apprenants ont compris le contenu: un accord entre les temps verbaux de deux phrases, et 23,07% ont ajouté des informations visant la transformation des adverbes de temps, si présents.

6. Conclusion

Les corpus que nous avons obtenu est foisonnant, et il est hors de notre but de l'analyser en entier.

Sur le plan des représentations des apprenants du FLE, en L2, en visionnement en ligne sur l'efficacité de la capsule vidéo à contenu grammatical en tant que moyen d'enseignement-apprentissage, les discours des apprenants fournissent des indices favorables. Les discours favorables des apprenants seraient des vecteurs pour des représentations sur rôle de l'enseignant dans la classe virtuelle. Selon nous, à la lecture des discours, l'enseignant garde un *rôle de médiateur* entre *le support* choisi à être regardé et sa classe, et un second *rôle de guide*, d'appui qui ne lui est pas nouvellement assigné qui favoriserait le travail en

autonomie, offrirait la possibilité d'avoir un rythme propre de travail sans la pression d'un temps imparti et assurera le feedback.

Sur le plan du transfert des connaissances, le problème reste épineux vu l'impossibilité de contrôler le multi-fenêtrage et la polyfocalisation chez l'apprenant, ce qui, de notre point de vue, représente un problème majeur de l'évaluation en système en ligne qui est plutôt moins organisée, moins valide, moins fiable. Les apprenants font preuve d'un système approximatif de compréhension, d'une compétence transitoire de rapporter des discours. Cela signifie une structuration progressive des connaissances, car instables, variables, perméables, complexes chez le même apprenant. Mais c'est rassurant d'être sur la bonne voie. Pour ce qui est de nouvelles manières d'engendrer le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage-évaluation, nous proposons la prise en compte de l'efficacité de la méthode plutôt que les représentations des apprenants devant la liberté de travailler si besoin est.

Sur le plan didactique, les réponses des apprenants ne nous ont pas fourni des éléments pour tirer une conclusion sur *l'espace d'exposition discursive*. Un apprenant sur tous a déclaré avoir mis les sous-titres en roumain langue maternelle lors du visionnage. Toutefois, l'appel aux collègues et à d'autres professeurs de FLE rend compte, de notre point de vue, du besoin d'explications des apprenants face à une capsule vidéo en français langue maternelle.

Sur ce plan empirique, vu le public auquel nous nous sommes adressés, un nombre retreint de transferts a été effectué sans soutien de l'enseignant. Ce travail ouvre sur l'importance des interventions de l'enseignant pour décontextualiser et recontextualiser les connaissances pour former des compétences chez l'apprenant. Il serait important de mettre le procès d'enseignement en branle à partir des situations expliquées en contexte pour pouvoir proposer aux apprenants des activités efficaces en lien avec leur vie quotidienne qui fassent sens.

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Readjusting teaching instruments. Online dictionaries in the spotlight

Cristina Silvia VÂLCEA[1]

The recent world medical condition (COVID 19) has triggered unimaginable changes to a domain where changes are well thought of long before implementation and where advancements are slow and costly. The domain is none other than education which has found itself deprived of the most basic facilitator: physical presence of both teachers and pupils/ students in classrooms. The response of the system to the medical crisis has been intuitive, at times individual, as it came down to each teacher's material and inner resources to find an advantageous solution for students. At the other end, lured by the possibility of spending extensive time on computers while attending classes, students have had different attitudes to learning and taking advantage of all the technological advances available. This article is a small-scale analysis of how the students understand to continue and deepen the study of foreign languages by retorting to online dictionaries which have been introduced as vital and indispensable tools in general and even more in times of medical insecurity.

Keywords: *online dictionaries*, *learner's autonomy, pronunciation*

1. Education challenges in times of medical crisis

This quantitative study addresses the students' interest in accessing online dictionaries which might be correlated to the students' exposure to online resources and dictionaries and their actual use of online dictionaries in particular and dictionaries in general. Facing the new challenges of online education generated by the COVID 19 pandemics, both teachers and learners have gone to great lengths to overcome the distance and the emotional difficulties that might have shown up. New teaching methods have been gradually developed and a new era in education has started. Whether both teachers and students have been ready to adjust to this new reality is still to be decided on, but this period has revealed that, now more than ever, learner autonomy has turned into an issue that needs

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more research into in order to find the best means of encouraging it and of furthering it. Certainly, that brings along a number of other questions that need to be addressed which refer to the redefinition of the school and teachers' role in the education of the youth. Or the question related to how to help develop student autonomy and how autonomous students should be still need to be dealt with.

In light of the above, this research tests engineering students' autonomy when using a fundamental instrument such as the dictionary and analyses students' relationship to dictionaries from a multifaceted perspective. First and foremost, the analysis is interested in revealing the students' appetite for meaning searching of the various unknown words in their technical materials. Secondly, the study inquires students' preference for paper-based or online dictionaries given that the moment when the questionnaire was applied was one whole year through the COVID 19 pandemics when school had been predominantly online. Then, the study examines the students' awareness of features of online dictionaries in order to check the informativeness on the dictionary features and use by teachers or schools. Therefore, the students are questioned about the features they know the dictionaries have. Subsequently, the focus is reduced to one conspicuous feature in the online dictionaries, namely, the pronunciation. The standing out feature of pronunciation is deemed by comparison to the paper-based dictionaries that share the same feature, but they presuppose supplementary phonetic knowledge that would enable users to decipher the correct pronunciation of the word. Out of all the features in an online dictionary, pronunciation is prominent as, by comparison to paper-based dictionary, it readily contributes to students' correct pronunciation. Last but not least, the students were questioned about their latest online dictionary access in terms of what made them access it. The reason behind this question is an indicator of their semi-controlled (school-guided or teacher-imposed) or independent (ensuing from personal interests) access of the dictionary.

2. Online dictionaries or a way to avoid learning slow down

Learning is a natural datum which presupposes imitation of others' habits (in behaviour) and verbal patterns or wording (in speech). When institutionalized, learning, though still imitative at times, becomes more structured and learners take advantage of an array of tools which help learning with demonstrations, further explanations, and examples (Ranalli 2013, 82). Laboratories enhance practical learning, gadgets facilitate an easy and cheap access to knowledge and dictionaries open new worlds to secrets of languages otherwise hidden to the uninitiated. As yet, the dynamics of modernity has delivered products that combine the traditional

and the progress in order to provide updated, ready-to-use, easily accessible tools that facilitate learning. Such a tool is certainly the online dictionary that will become the focal centre of this paper.

But, what is it that learners should know about online dictionaries? What are the features that learners should know for their effective use of a dictionary? In order to answer these questions an accessible definition of what a dictionary is will be provided so as to extract a dictionary's content and utility. Bergenholtz (2012, 30), in an attempt at finding an as comprehensive as possible definition of what a dictionary is, has provided the following definition:

> Lexicographic reference work containing dictionary articles related to individual topics or elements of language, and possibly several outer texts as well, which can be consulted if someone needs assistance with text reception, text production or translation or would simply like to know more about a word, part of a word or a combination of words.

Bergenholtz's definition may not be the most complex, but it certainly reflects the author's concern for accuracy when defining certain terms. Thus, Bergenholtz proves very judicious when defining the items in dictionaries as articles not words that may serve as a helper when confronted with unknown words in one's own language or in foreign languages.

With a growing need for the establishment of equivalences between languages, dictionaries (Béjoint 1984, 210) have turned into authorities that facilitate the translation from and into languages, covering a variety of data ranging from word origin, form, gender, number to synonyms, antonyms, idioms, etc. By further additions dictionaries turned into encyclopaedic collections of word data drastically reducing their accessibility and manual handling. Yet, new times bring along new ways and thus, dictionaries have undergone the transition to onlineness which has facilitated dictionary access and manoeuvrability (Műller-Spitzer & Koplenig 2014, 164). Important dictionaries have split their addressability between the paper-based and online versions targeting a wide range of end-users, thus popularising dictionary usage among learners.

3. Online dictionary skills

Nevertheless, easiness in accessibility does not really mean that dictionary usefulness is actually reached as there is a long way between a dictionary's online existence and its becoming a really useful tool bringing a serious contribution to

the learning of any language (Summers 2013, 120). There are some elements which are meant to render dictionaries really useful to learners in particular (Cowie 1983, 137) and to learning, in general. As simplistic as it may seem, no one can expect learners to start using dictionaries without any previous instruction on dictionary symbols and handling (Alhaisoni 2016, 31). Effectiveness of usage is yet another lesson that needs teaching as, though perceived as a deductible skill, using a dictionary requires training rather than intuition. Intuitive as they may be, dictionaries entail solid knowledge (Béjoint 2000, 42) as far as making the best of them is concerned and a real appetite for the discovery of the language in study. Teaching dictionary skills (Bae 2015, 46) is indisputably a desirable action as it will maximize learner autonomy and will certainly improve language efficiency in students.

Among the elements that should be taught about dictionaries is that dictionary articles may have more than one meaning which means that learners should discriminate between the multiple meanings of the word they are interested in and choose the one that fits their context (Műler 2002, 719). When confronted with a word they meet for the first time learners would rather be able to identify the technical/ non-technical (general English) use of a word as that might contribute to their correct selection of a word's meaning from a dictionary. To exemplify, in the context 'At high engine speed, physical breakage and piston ring flutter can occur, resulting in power loss or even engine destruction. Piston ring flutter occurs when the rings oscillate vertically within the piston grooves they reside in' learners should recognize the indicators of the technical context (Liu and Lei 2019, 115) that could help them decide on the right meaning of 'flutter'. Yet, that is not all that it is to it. Additionally, learners should be trained to identify the speech part the word they look for is. Making the decision on what the word is might strongly influence the correctness of their answer as English has got a number of difficulties that appear from either the noun and the verb having the same form (as in 'to gauge' and 'gauge') or the noun having an unexpected form from that of the verb. Thus, as the meaning of a word varies according to the context and to the speech part, learners should be trained to check carefully the data provided by online dictionaries in as far as these two aspects are concerned.

Although technology-wise, learners should be trained on how to effectively and efficiently use the online dictionary. Generously displayed, online dictionaries are highly organized by meaning and by speech part. The meanings of an article are gradually displayed from the most common to the least common accompanied by numerous examples meant to help students identify how the word functions in the sentence, what preposition it might be followed by, etc. The difference between the various meanings is easily graspable and online dictionaries make sure that

every new meaning is highlighted in order to draw the attention of the interested. When the speech parts have the same form, the passage from one speech part to the other is clearly marked so as to clearly delineate the two speech parts.

Working with students who specialize in a domain such as engineering will inevitably add further challenges to online dictionary usage (Chung and Nation 2004, 252). Leaving aside the dispute on what technical vocabulary is, engineering students need live demonstrations of how dictionaries can help them. Seeing is believing for the students who apply science in all their classes that might emphasize the pragmatic and strongly-applied character of their studies. Yet, despite engineering students' empiric learning method, they demonstrate a rather reduced availability when working with an online dictionary. They have many inaccuracies about English pronunciation, word meaning, grammar accuracy, yet, they prefer to avoid checking in online dictionaries which, although readily available on their mobile phones, will be left unchecked and the mistakes will perpetuate. Still, observational reporting can be challenged by the questionnaire meant to discover engineering students' usage of online dictionaries in pandemic times.

4. Questionnaire description

The questionnaire applied was made of five multiple choice and one open-ended questions all directed at discovering engineering students' attitudes to online dictionary use in the COVID pandemics. The participation in the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous and it was answered upon the completion of a two-semester technical English course where the dictionary use had been introduced to students with a special emphasis on the progress they could make based on dictionary word checking. As all the activities were online, class-, group- or individual work entailed consistent dictionary access for various reasons from among which the following were the most frequent: checking for other speech parts derived from the words provided, checking the spelling of rather infrequent technical words, checking the pronunciation of new unknown words, checking for prepositions, verifying the meaning of idioms or phrasal verbs, etc. These activities were online and simultaneous, which means that they were under the permanent surveillance of the teacher who would encourage dictionary use. The ultimate purpose of the test is to actually check whether the regular classroom preoccupation for online dictionary access had transformed into a personal habit.

4.1. Online dictionaries and unknown words

The first question in the questionnaire was meant to obtain the students' options as to what they do when facing the situation of encountering an unknown word. The choices the students were provided to select from covered a range of options that people usually retort to when confronted to a similar situation. Hence, despite the practice and the students' awareness of the advantages they have when accessing the online dictionary, most students prefer to deduce the meaning of the unknown word in the context although the context may not be in all cases a great helper in deciphering the meaning of a word. Not infrequent were the situations when students mispronounced basic words in engineering although they had been presented the easiness and the advantages of checking pronunciation online. Less than half of the students admitted to be using the online dictionary when finding an unknown word. Though not really representative for the group of students participating in the research the choices 'I don't look the word up in a dictionary because it takes too much time' and 'I don't care much about learning new words' show that there are students who do not bear any interest in perfecting their English knowledge. The preference for the deduction of the word's meaning in the context may be interpreted as convenience. On the other hand, it may also stand for an insufficient practice as dictionary skills are still considered inaccessible, heavily related to bulky paper-based dictionaries. The transfer of the dictionaries in the online is a chance that should be exploited to the maximum and students should be encouraged to access it as often as possible.

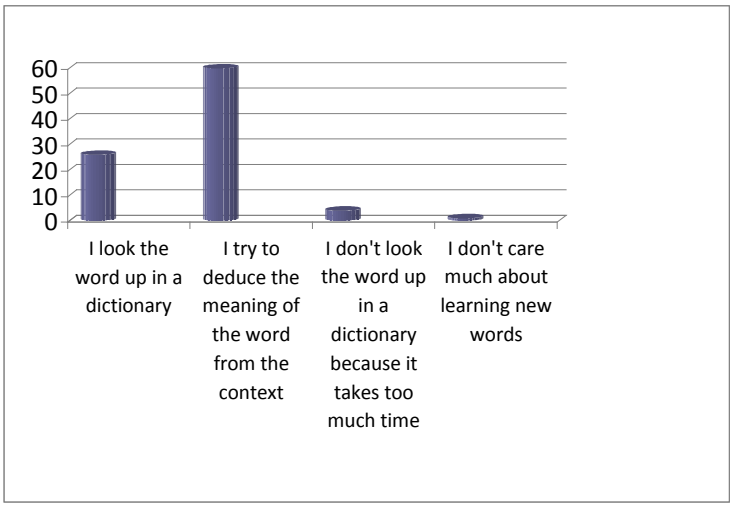

Figure 1. Students' attitude to unkown words

4.2. Paper-based or online dictionaries?

The next two questions are intentionally meant to kindle students' interest in balancing the amount of research they do in paper-based and online dictionaries. Taken separately, question 2 collects data about the students' possession of and interest in paper-based dictionaries. The answers agglomerate in the area of an occasional use of a paper-based dictionary with a view to checking data in a dictionary. Data that speak volume about the physical existence of dictionaries in the case of engineering students can easily be extracted from the chart. The reduced dictionary use owes majorly to the absence of paper-based dictionaries which used to be rarities before the introduction of online dictionaries. The price of paper-based dictionaries, their scarcity and reduced popularisation would implicitly lead to a reduced access to data otherwise vital to language learning. The choice that scores second is not negligible as it reflects a pervasive way of relating to the paper-based dictionaries of the engineering students participating in the research.

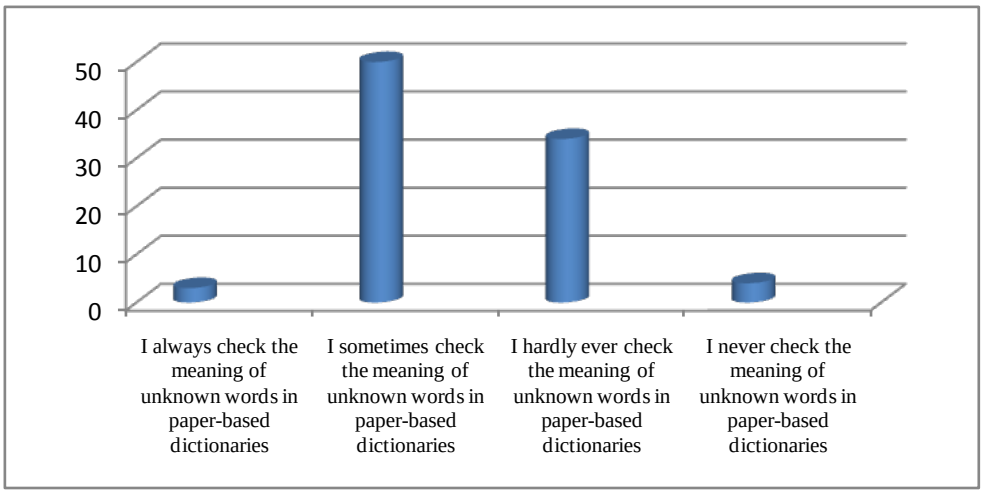

Figure 2. Students' preferences for online and paper-based dictionaries

The third question, though compiling data about the use of online dictionary solely, provides solid grounds for a comparison between the use of paper-based and online dictionaries. To begin with, the data show that the majority of students check unknown words in online dictionary with another representative share that

'sometimes' checks the information in online dictionaries. Summed up, the two choices represent 87 out of the total of 92 participants. The number of students who do not access online dictionaries is reduced and the possible causes for their not accessing the online dictionaries may be either inappropriate technology, or a faint interest in English or insufficient exposure to information epitomizing the importance of dictionary use. The effortless access of online dictionaries in a period when mobile phone have become an affordable commodity for most people does impact students' access to data that might contribute to a better learning of the language. What is more, free access to online dictionaries facilitates foreign languages exposure as there would be fewer tax-paying students willing to spend their money for dictionary access. Notwithstanding, pupils or students should not be expected to discover the advantages of using online dictionaries by themselves. Dictionary use should be taught by teachers, popularized and students encouraged to use it as often as possible as a means of valuable discovery. Though engineering students may be primarily interested in STEM subjects, they equally understand the importance of learning foreign languages as an easy way of accessing information produced in a culture or language other than theirs. The blatant difference that is immediately observable is the clear choice that students make in favour of online dictionary when it comes to checking the meaning of an unknown word in a paper-based or online dictionary. If in the case of the paper-based dictionary only three students always check the unknown word, in the case of the online dictionary there are 49 students always checking the unknown word. What is different between these two actions is not the action itself, but the means that facilitates the access to the unknown word which shows that the easier the access, the more accessed the source. When comparing the second choice where the key word is 'sometimes' fifty students access the paper-based dictionary, whereas 38 students access the online dictionary. Consequently, students' first choice is accessing the online dictionary and the second to access the paper-based dictionary.

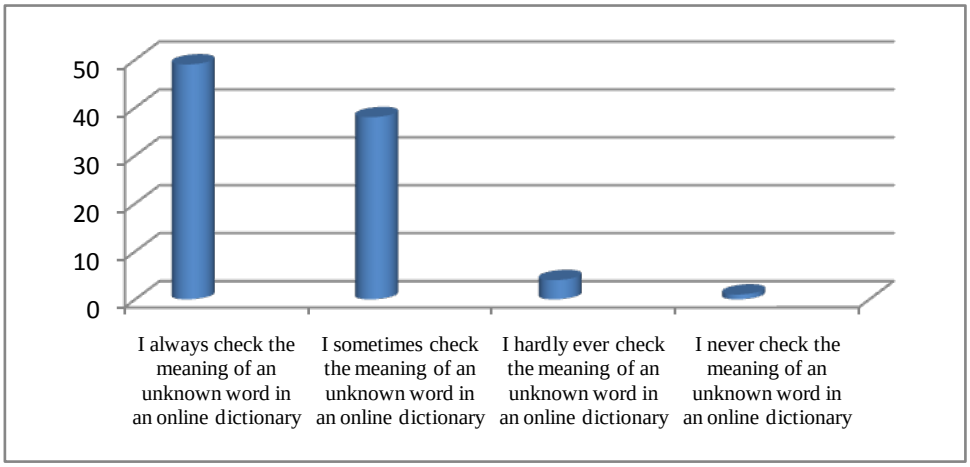

Figure 3. Frequency of online dictionary accessing for unknown words

4.3. Pronunciation: to check it or not?

One question included in the questionnaire that bears a great importance for the engineering students is the pronunciation of new technical words which does represent a challenge for students. As speaker of English, mispronouncing words may lead to disastrous consequences for science. International cooperation on research projects is guaranteed by communication in languages that have attracted a majority of speakers that can handle that language comfortably. Or disregarding a vital aspect such as pronunciation bringing as a reassuring factor the ignorance of others or the importance of transmitting one's message whatever the deficiencies may eventually lead to communication failure. Checking the pronunciation of new words in an online dictionary is one of the first pieces of advice students are given as it notably facilitates a correct pronunciation. Pronouncing words where to apply rules applicable in other situations is certainly counterproductive and might entail misunderstandings in communication. To exemplify the above, a common error that students commit is the pronunciation of the word 'engine', a word largely used in the mechanical engineering domain. Students mispronounce the word as they apply the pronunciation they learnt at the beginning of their English studies of the English alphabet. Thus, they learnt that 'i' is pronounced as [ai] which makes them pronounce the word 'engine' as [en.dʒaɪn] instead of [en.dʒɪn]. If this mispronunciation were met only once, it would have been interpreted as a slip, but

the mispronunciation is predominant with only a few students pronouncing the word correctly. The students participating in the study have been instructed at the beginning of the semesters about where to look for the correct pronunciation, about the advantages of learning the correct pronunciation of words and it was all up to them to actually take advantage of this feature of online dictionaries. Yet, as the students admit in the questionnaire, there is no majority involved in checking word pronunciation for new words. The number of students who do not usually check pronunciation is significant representing almost a third of the participants in the study, in this way perpetuating possible pronunciation mistakes. Dictionary skills are those skills by which students learn how to handle a dictionary, where to look for a particular type of information, how to discriminate between various speech parts, but it should not limit to that. Though it may seem unimportant, students should be encouraged to access online dictionaries as often as possible as this will transform dictionary use into a habitual activity that will no longer be perceived as an activity that puts students out of their comfort zone.

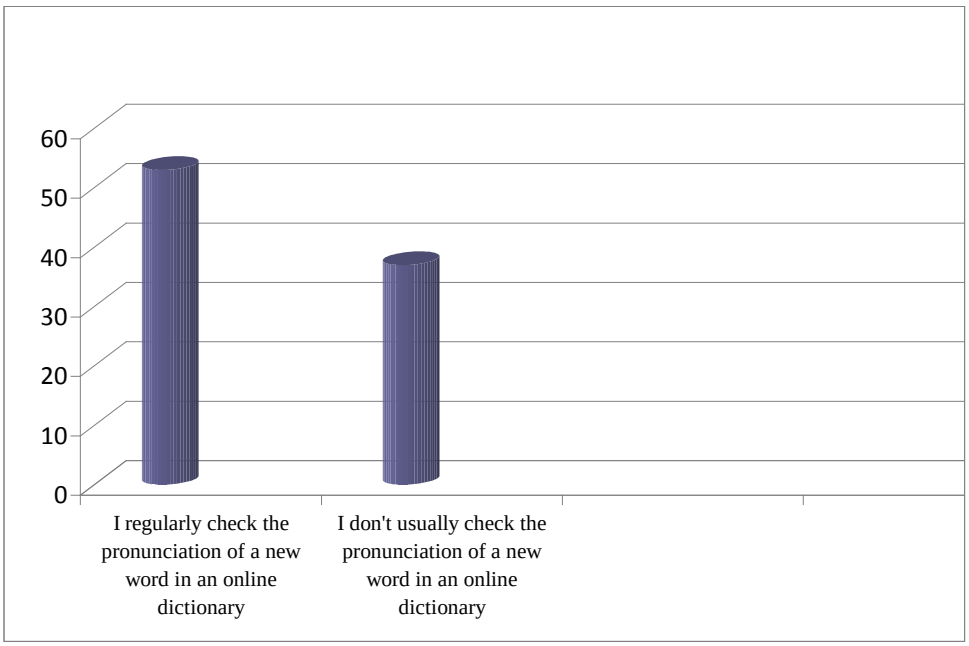

Figure 4. Students' pronunciation checking habits

At the end of a year's instruction, the students are questioned about the reasons that they access an online dictionary for. Unlike the other questions where students are restricted to the choices introduced in the questionnaire, this is an open-ended question which allows participants to indicate the purpose of their latest dictionary accessing. Their reasons are among the expected ones as apparently their dictionary use is mostly associated to university-related interests. In fact, they mention preparing for university English projects as this is part of their semester assessment. Another reason is finding a car component for either their seminar projects or for their lecture activities. The third reason is checking dictionaries in order to discover the meaning of unknown words which they may find in the various technical texts they are exposed to during the lecture. Though rare, some students mentioned the situations when they use the online dictionary with a view to checking the correctness of a word's form when they need to produce their own technical texts. Pronunciation is not left aside and students indicate that sometimes they access online dictionaries in order to discover the correct pronunciation of a new word. After identifying the participants' latest reasons for online dictionary use a few ideas are worth mentioning:

- Firstly, they have understood that online dictionaries are tools readily available that they should take advantage of as often as possible
- Secondly, they use online dictionaries for activities that are largely related to their university English-related classes
- Thirdly, though that was not the aim of the research, it is hard not to notice that students do not mention any other activities when accessing online dictionaries
- Fourthly, accessing dictionaries for a range of data about a language signals that students have understood the importance of dictionaries that they get used to using more and more frequently

4.4. Dictionary features known by students

After the introduction of online dictionaries at the beginning of the university year, after an entire year's online classes where the advantages of online dictionaries have been demonstrated and frequently used as it has been at hand to retort to them when working on the projects, students are presented a list of features that dictionaries have and they have been asked to tick the ones they know online

dictionaries to have. As the results show, the participants are more familiar with some features (explanation of the word's meaning, pronunciation, examples and translator), whereas other features such as level of complexity, idioms, word lists, and quizzes score very low as they are known to a very reduced number of students from the participating student population. This repartition of students' knowledge related to dictionary contents is highly helpful as, when considered appropriate, teachers might direct students' attention to these features that are underestimated and which equally provide precious information for the students and for whoever might be interested in learning more English.

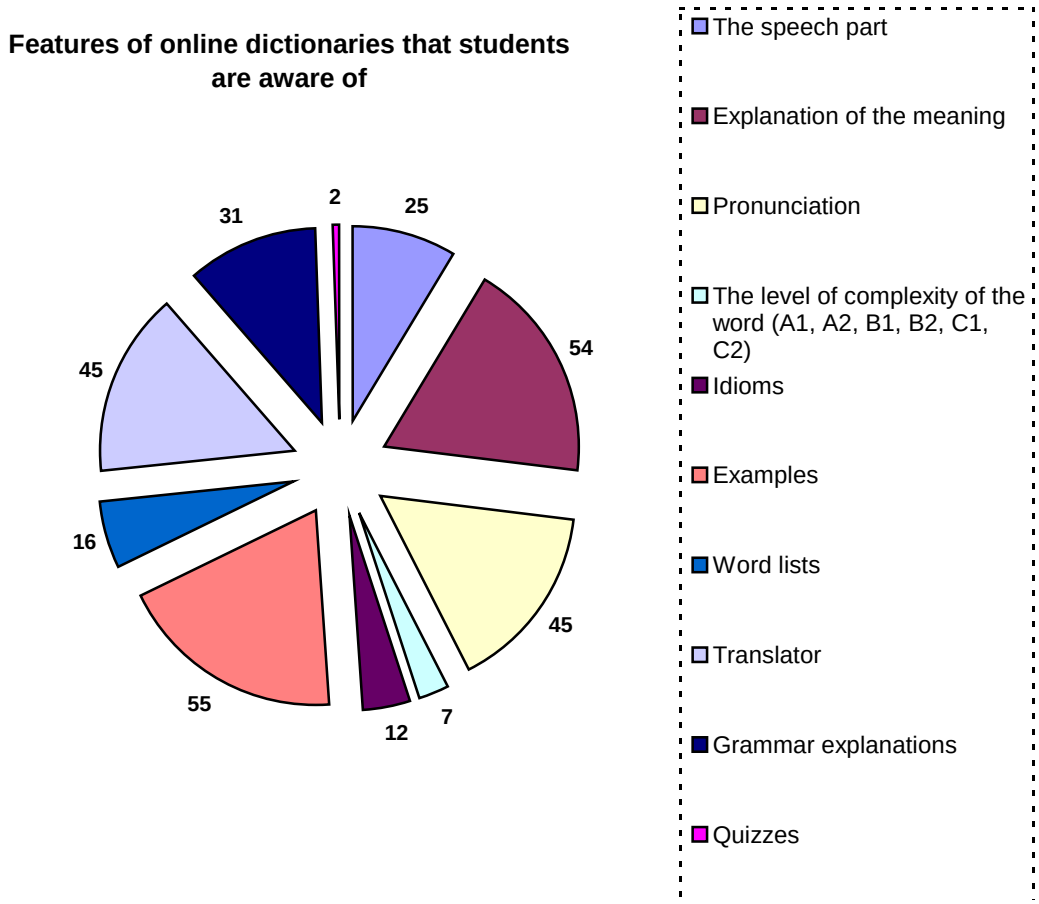

Figure 5. Features of dictionaries known by students

5. Conclusion

This study has been aimed at popularizing the need for teaching dictionary skills to students as, though it seems accessible to everybody, dictionary work is a habit that requires practice before it becomes a routine. Students should know what dictionaries have to offer and teacher-organised activities need to prove the effectiveness of dictionary use. The study is equally collecting data about student routines when learning foreign languages by means of dictionary. Thus, the data have revealed that students prefer to deduce the meaning of the word in the context taking the risk of misinterpreting the context, consequently, the meaning of the word. It is a signal that what has been done in the direction of getting students familiarized to using online dictionary hasn't been enough and that more should be done in this direction. The study has also indicated that students prefer online dictionaries to paper-based dictionaries and they consistently claim using them in the study of English. Somehow unsurprisingly, students have a reserved attitude to checking pronunciation, which is easily noticeable when interacting with them. Slightly over 50% of the respondents manifested their interest and constant preoccupation for a correct pronunciation of English words. As dictionaries have quit providing basic information and as they become more and more complex, the study targeted at exposing the students' awareness of the profuse information dictionaries offer about the articles in them. The students' answers have showed that some dictionary features are better known than others, which again beckons the necessity to transform dictionary skills classes into mandatory classes with an important contribution to the dictionary's comprehensive use by the students.

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Einblick in die digitale Realität

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The objective of this article is to reveal how, by capitalizing on new technical means and communication technologies, additional and more efficient opportunities for language learning are created. The article also shows how these new technical means can neither simply replace the old ones, nor, moreover, can they lead to miraculous results because, by doing this, they would restrict the freedom of the participants in the teaching-learning process. It is exactly for this reason why the aspects of computer-related learning should not be seen in isolation from the whole context of learning but, on the contrary, as a component of it, as a teaching and working tool and as a means of communication, even if, by using new media, the results do not always reach the level they are expected to. Consequently, it is not technology itself that is the problem, but rather the problem consists in what can be done with it and throughout it.

Keywords: *media expertise, learning software, key concepts of media didactics.*

1. Einleitung

In diesem Artikel geht es darum, zu zeigen, wie aus der Nutzung der elektronischen Medien und Kommunikationstechnologien sich weitere Möglichkeiten für Bildung und Unterricht ergeben und wie diese Medien als Unterrichtsgegenstand aufgefasst werden können. Der Schwerpunkt dieser Arbeit liegt auf der Frage, welche Rolle spielen die Medienkompetenzen in der Bildung. Dabei ist es nicht so, dass die elektronischen Medien die geprinteten vollständig ersetzen würden. Oft wird von den neuen Medien Wunder erhofft und gefordert, aber dieses bleibt häufig fraglich, denn moderne technische Ausstattungen erfordern moderne didaktische Konzepte, die das selbstverantwortliche Handeln fördern. Eben deshalb darf man die Aspekte der mediengesteuerten und -unterstützten Bildung nicht isoliert vom Unterrichtgeschehen selbst betrachten, sondern als dessen

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Bestandteil. Die Rolle der Medien als didaktische Hilfsmittel, als Werkzeuge und als Kommunikationsmittel dürfte nicht verabsolutiert werden. Nicht die Technologie ist das Problem, sondern es kommt immer darauf an, was man mit ihr macht.

2. Teilhabe an der neuen Technologie

Informationsflut, Mediengewusel und Vernetzungen werden in der letzten Zeit immer unübersichtlicher. Immer neue technische Möglichkeiten eröffnen weitere Informationsquellen für ein detailliertes Wissen oder für bloß profanen Trash. Welcher Weg ist in der Mediennutzung der richtige, wenn auf dem Netzwerk Medium alle möglichen Inhalte laufen und wenn auf allen medialen Brettern, seien sie in Form eines Bildschirms oder anfassbar und glatt wie ein gediegenes Buch, oder faltbare, papierähnliche Bildschirme, wenn doch keine davon die geprinteten Medien gänzlich ersetzen können? Das ist die Meinung mancher Zukunftsforscher (Horx 2006; 2009), die uns in ihren Forschungsarbeiten zeigen, wie wir mit den Medien leben werden.

Wie man mit den neuen technischen Medien umgeht, muss erlernt werden und das braucht Zeit und Bildung, Bildung die nicht nur aus einer Anhäufung von Wissen resultiert, sondern auch aus der Formung von bestimmten Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen, welche Informationen auf das Wesentliche bringen. „Das Wesentliche entstammt unseren Weltbildern, unseren Erfahrungen und unserem kulturellen Selbstverständnis" (Schwanitz 2002, 25). Schwanitz hat Bildung als ein durchgearbeitetes Verständnis der eigenen Aktionen, die Teilhabe an der Kultur ermöglichen, beschrieben. Eine entscheidende Frage ist, wie weit sich die kognitiven Fähigkeiten der Menschen unter dem Einfluss der neuen Technologien weiterentwickeln.

Diesbezüglich gibt es unter den Zukunftsforschern verschiedene Meinungen. Flessner (1998, 72), dessen Forschungsschwerpunkt die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Literatur und Technik ist, spricht über die Wirklichkeit im Zeitalter der Virtualität als von einem Rückschlag, einem sogenannten „digital backlash", der von einem offline Trend in der Medienwelt markiert ist. Die Erklärung ist darauf zurückzuführen, dass es eine gewisse Anzahl von Menschen gibt, die die Informations-, Bilder- und Töneflut eher als nervend und störend empfinden und sich eher wieder den realen Erfahrungen zuwenden möchten als einer technisch erzeugten Realität.

Andere Meinungen wiederum (Castells 2003, 399) stützen sich darauf, dass Bildung, Neugier und sozial- beruflicher Aufstieg mit der Nutzung aller Medien zusammenhängt und die Stärken der Medien können nur dann erschlossen werden, wenn Menschen vernetzt denken, kommunizieren und arbeiten. Dafür brauchen sie Fach- und Medienkompetenzen.

Obwohl die schnelle Teilhabe an Informationen heutzutage über das Netzwerk Medium verfügbar ist, kann leider nicht jeder etwas mit dem Wissenswesen des Internets anfangen, denn es gibt immer noch viele passive Medien- Benutzer, für die das Internet ein Nachschlagekatalog bleibt und dann stellt sich die Frage der Bildung, einer Neubildung, in der die Stärken des Fortschritts liegen. Dafür muss jeder verantwortlich sein, nicht nur die Bildungsinstitutionen, die einem vielmehr als nur Lesen und Schreiben beibringen müssen. Diese Idee vertritt auch der amerikanische Literaturkritiker Birkerts (1997).

Er stützt sich auf Beobachtungen und Analysen, die den Übergang vom Gutenberg- Zeitalter ins elektronische Zeitalter markieren und meint, dass für unsere Alltagsbeobachtung diese Entwicklung über ein so weites Zeitintervall, das von Gutenberg bis heute reicht, kaum wahrnehmbar ist, denn was in der Technik vor einigen Jahrzehnten noch im Entstehen begriffen war, kann heutzutage auf breiter Basis bereits weltweit angewendet und erweitert werden. Aus Birkerts Analyse geht hervor, dass Menschen, die intensiv lesen und eine intensive geistige Tätigkeit ausüben, von den unvermeidlichen, modernen Medien einen bewussten und disziplinierten Gebrauch machen, sodass die Lesekompetenz als eine Voraussetzung für die Medienkompetenz gelten kann.

3. Medienkompetenz in der Bildung

Der Begriff „Medien" wird vielfältig verwendet und man bezeichnet damit nicht nur die Printmedien wie z.B. Buch, Comic, Foto, die selbstinszenierten Medien wie Sprache, Spiel, Theater, die bewegten Bildmedien wie Film und Fernsehen, die auditiven Medien, d.h. Hörfunk,Tonband, und die mechanischen wie z.B. Dias, Mikroskop, Kassette und CD, sondern auch die sogenannten Neuen Medien. Dazu zählen Video, Computer, Internet, Handy, Palme, die als elektronische Medien zusammengefasst werden können. Diese ermöglichen Arbeiten mit der Desktop Oberfläche Windows NT, z.B. Einrichten von Verzeichnissen; Arbeiten mit einem Textverarbeitungsprogramm oder mit einem Rechtschreibeprogramm; Arbeiten mit Netscape Navigator, z.B. Anlegen von Markern, Speichern von Daten, Surfen im

Internet mit einer Suchmaschine, Einrichten persönlicher E-Mails, Versenden und Empfangen von E-Mail-Nachrichten. Über Webseiten können detaillierte Informationen auf den aktuellsten Stand erfahren werden. Der Anschluss an globale Datenbanken trägt dazu bei, dass die Teilhabe an weltweiter Kommunikation möglich ist. Datenbanken enthalten reichhaltige Sammlungen von Materialien, Adressen und sind auf Aktualisierung eingestellt.

Die elektronischen Medien sind sowohl Arbeitsmittel also auch Instrumente für die Lösung von Aufgaben sowie für die Festigung des erworbenen Wissens. Die Lehrenden können durch die eingesetzten Medien Rückschlüsse über den Unterrichtsverlauf ziehen und mit verschiedenen Programmen unterschiedliche Lernarten unterstützen. Im Sprachunterricht können z.B. Begriffslernen, Regellernen, sprachliche Assoziationen geübt werden. Viele Programme weisen ein hohes Maß an Flexibilität auf, sodass sie auf Eingaben des Nutzers interaktiv reagieren. Manche Programme ermöglichen eine lineare Darstellungsform der Inhalte, so dass z.B. ein Text auf den anderen folgt, manchmal von einem Bild unterbrochen und dann ist dieses Programm als Präsentations- und Visualisierungssoftware im Unterricht entsprechend einsetzbar. Auch Programme deren Inhalte und Präsentationsformen Aufforderungscharakter haben, fordern die Lerner auf, Inhalte zu wiederholen oder nach vorgegebenen Zielen zu bearbeiten. Diese Programme können Lerner mit unterschiedlichen Interessen benutzen und eignen sich zu Projektarbeiten.

Medien werden von Menschen erzeugt und damit schließt sich eine moderne Einschätzung der Medien an die bereits in der herkömmlichen Bildungstradition hervorgebrachte Bedeutung an, dass jede Bildungstätigkeit des Menschen eine mediale Seite hat und ein Medium der Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen ist, wobei Sprache, Gespräch, Erziehung Unterricht, Internet dazu zählen. Aus didaktischer Perspektive gilt, dass es um eine Interaktion von Mensch und Medium geht, sodass die Medien nicht nur eine technische, soziale Dimension haben, sondern auch eine personale.

Die elektronischen Medien unterstützen vorwiegend das Lernen, weniger das Lehren. Dem Lernenden wird mehr Zeit für das Suchen, für das explorative Lernen und Vergleichen zugestanden. Das ist ein instrumentell begründeter Arbeitsprozess, wobei die Aufgaben zur Lösung der Arbeit an Konzepten zur Entstehung neuer Ideen und neuer Kommunikationsformen und zur Strukturierung von Erfahrungen und Wissen dienen.

Durch die elektronischen Medien wird das praktische Lernen begünstigt, das zu Handlungskompetenzen führt und von den Interessen der Lernenden geleitet

sind. Jürgen Habermas (1973) hat Interesse und Handeln aus einer lebensweltlichen Perspektive analysiert und dabei drei Aspekte unterstrichen. Das technische Interesse und das entsprechende Handeln führen dazu Ideen und Objekte zu beherrschen, wobei das Handeln dem Verhalten gleichzusetzen ist. Der zweite Aspekt betrifft das praktische Interesse und das entsprechende Handeln und dient dem Verstehen der Ideen und der sozialen Wirklichkeit und zielt auf Verständigung ab. Wichtig ist, dass die Handelnden ihre Fähigkeiten, ihr Wissen und ihre Interessen in die Arbeit einbringen. Der dritte Aspekt ist an das emanzipatorische Interesse und Handeln orientiert und zielt darauf ab Kommunikation und Interaktion zu ermöglichen, damit die Handelnden über die Inhalte ihrer Arbeit, über sich selbst miteinander reden. Diese Aspekte hat Habermas in einem weiteren Kontext analysiert, welcher sich auf unterschiedliche Situationen bezieht und nicht nur die an Bildung gebundenen Phänomene betreffen. Wenn man jedoch die Komplexität des Phänomens Fremdsprachenerlernen und die einzelnen Fähigkeiten zu strukturieren versucht, Beobachtungen von Unterricht, der sich auf elektronische Mitteln stützt, entwickeln möchte, dann sind gründlich aufbereitete Unterrichtsdokumentationen ei wie z.B. Brash/ Pfeil (2017), Roche (2008) und Rösler/Würffel (2017) ein gutes Hilfsmittel.

Habermas Forschungen gehen auf die Funktionen und Auswirkungen der Medien in der Gesellschaft zurück, die zu einer Reihe von Erkenntnissen geführt haben, die auf die Mediendidaktik zurückgreifen können.

Medienkompetenz ich auch an die technische Fähigkeit mit Medien umzugehen gebunden. Die Möglichkeit mit und in den elektronischen Medien zu lehren bzw. zu lernen, haben nicht alle Menschen. Das hängt nicht nur von wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Faktoren ab, sondern auch von den persönlichen Interessen und Fähigkeiten eines Einzelnen. Es wird immer häufiger von einer neuen Gesellschaft gesprochen, die Medienkundige und Nichtkundige unterscheidet. Bildung durch technologische Unterstützung setzt mediendidaktische Kenntnisse über Theorien und Modelle didaktischen Handelns voraus, was viel mehr bedeutet als nur technisch -instrumentelle Fähigkeiten wie Handhabung, Bedienung von Medien, Fähigkeiten im Programmieren von Webseiten, Verknüpfen und Speichern von Lehrmaterialien, sich in einem Informationsportal bewegen zu können. Medienkompetenz bedeutet Fertigkeiten und Fähigkeiten erwerben in Bezug auf die Orientierung in virtuellen Umgebungen, Bedienung von Suchmaschinen, Kenntnis von Bildungsservern, Wissen über Strukturen von Datenbanken usw. Dieses wird nicht leicht erworben, mindestens

nicht in jedem Alter, sodass ein Fremdsprachenlehrender nicht immer leicht zurechtkommen kann, wenn ihm Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten, wie man Unterrichtsmethoden mit neuen Technologien in den herkömmlichen Unterricht integrieren kann, fehlen, wenn er über sein Fachwissen hinaus auch medienfunktionales Wissen beherrschen muss. Für ihn kann es schwierig sein, verschiedene Programme in den Unterricht einbeziehen zu müssen, um den Lernern zu verdeutlichen, wie man neue Applikationen anwenden kann, eine Software, die das kontrollierte Arbeiten in Netzwerken ermöglicht. Ein Demo-Modus, ein Supervisionsmodus, ein Remote -Control -Modus, ein Sperrmodus können einem weniger erfahrenen Lehrenden und Lernenden Schwierigkeiten bereiten. Eben darum entscheiden sich die Nicht- Profis für einen weniger schwierigen Umgang mit den elektronischen Medien, was im Folgenden gezeigt wird.

4. Integration der elektronischen Medien im Unterricht

In der Fachliteratur (Rolff / Schnoor 1998) werden drei Aspekte geklärt, die die Integrationsarbeit der Medien in den Unterricht betreffen. Die Adaption, die Assimilation und die eigentliche Integration sind handlungsorientierte Konzepte, die sich in der Unterrichtspraxis bewährt haben. Diese dienen als Stützpunkte in einem medienbasierten Lernprozess. Am Anfang wird die Fragestellung entwickelt, dann werden Schlüsselbegriffe formuliert, anschließend kommt die Informationsrecherche und die Bewertung der Ergebnisse. Schließlich kann die Arbeit erstellt und danach präsentiert werden. Das sind auch die Etappen des wissenschaftlichen Schreibens im herkömmlichen Unterricht.

Das adaptive Konzept in der medienbasierten Arbeit betrifft in der Regal buch- und textorientierte Einrichtungen. Die Neuerungen aus der modernen Medienwelt werden eher misstrauisch betrachtet und oft nur sporadisch zugelassen. Der Einsatz der modernen Medien wird den herkömmlichen Unterrichtssequenzen angepasst und somit wird das technologisch Neue nur als Mittel einer informationstechnischen Alphabetisierung benutzt.

Das assimilatorische Konzept zeigt, dass einzelne Lehrende auf unterschiedliche Weise versuchen, die modernen Medien in den Unterricht einzubeziehen. Es ist das, was unser online Unterricht jetzt, hierzulande macht. Die Motivation dafür kann vielseitig sein, denn die Lehrenden versuchen interessierte und mit elektronischen Medien erfahrenere Lernende für die Medienarbeit weiter

zu begeistern, sodass diese die Medien situativ benutzen, etwa um Inhalte zu erläutern, ausgewählte Themen zu visualisieren, Materialien für ihre Arbeiten weiter recherchieren.

Das integrative Konzept geht von den heutigen veränderten Umweltsituationen aus und betrachtet sie als Elemente, die mit weiteren Entwicklungschancen verbunden sind. Die Lehrenden und Lernenden interagieren, sodass sie eine Vielzahl von Informationen von außen holen und damit ihre Leistungsfähigkeit erhöhen. Dabei sehen sie darauf, dass sie ihre Fähigkeiten ständig differenzieren und damit in gewisser Weise sich autonom entwickeln. Das geschieht aber nach einer zeitaufwändigen Arbeit und ist eher für erfahrene Lernende gedacht.

5. Neue Lernumgebungen im Umgang mit den elektronischen Medien

In der aktuellen Bildungsdiskussion wird der Arbeit mit modernen Medien eine immer größere Bedeutung zugesprochen, im Besonderen unter dem Aspekt der Vermittlung von Kenntnissen im Lehr- und Lernprozess. Heutzutage greift die Digitalisierung in allen Bereichen um so wie Nele McElvany et al. (2018) zeigen, wobei Vorteile und Herausforderungen, Stärken und Schwächen der Digitalisierung analysiert werden.

Die Informationsgesellschaft hat mit ihren elektronischen Medien Veränderungen in allen Bereichen des Alltagslebens bewirkt. Die Art wie Menschen Informationen austauschen, mit welchen Medien sie umgehen, prägt eine Gesellschaft, ihren Kulturbereich und ihre Bildung in erheblichem Ausmaß. Das unterstreichen auch Isabell van Ackeren et al (2018) in ihrem Sammelband, in dem die Medienwelt in ihrer Interdisziplinarität analysiert wird. Die Ausbreitung der elektronischen Medien hat in den letzten Jahrzehnten zweifellos das Leben der Menschen nicht nur geändert sondern auch verändert. In letzter Zeit ist das Wissen explodiert und ein Wandlungsprozess großer Ausmaße dringt mit dem Internet in den Alltag vor. Viele neue Informationen werden jedermann verfügbar. Dafür muss man dazulernen, denn auch der beste Computer, der über Generationen hinweg immer erfolgreicher wurde, kann nicht im Handumdrehen den Menschen ersetzen, laut der Meinung mancher Soziologen und Zukunftsforscher. „Vom blinden Fortschrittsglauben kann jedoch keine Rede sein. […] von technologischem Fortschrittsoptimismus und tiefer Skepsis in bezug auf die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft“ ist die Rede (Zänker 2001a, 24).

Wenn vom Einsatz moderner Medien im Unterricht die Rede ist, so ist zu unterscheiden zwischen offline und online Lernhilfen. Es geht also im ersten Fall um Lernhilfen, die am Computer eingesetzt werden können, ohne dass ein Zugriff auf das Internet erforderlich ist. Diesbezüglich wurde von vielen Verlagen Lernsoftware für den Fremdsprachenunterricht angeboten. Es handelt sich um verschiedene Sprachübungen, ja sogar ganze Sprachkurse, und Trainingsprogramme, drill and practice- Programme, die themenbezogen sind. Diese Materialien sind leicht zugänglich, erfordern nicht besondere professionelle Medienkompetenzen. Es ist aber fraglich, welcher didaktische Nutzen mit solchen Programmen zu ziehen ist, weil damit nicht neues Wissen vermittelt wird, sondern schon erworbenes Wissen eingeübt. Einen größerer Nutzen bringen die multimedialen Materialien zu landeskundlichen Themen mit Texten, Bild- und Tonmaterialien, die auf einem einzigen Datenträger vereint sind und sowohl zum Selbststudium als auch zur weiteren Vorbereitung des Unterrichts geeignet sind (vgl. Neumann 2015).

Die online-Lernhilfen bieten durch das Internet die aktuellsten Informationsmöglichkeiten, wobei sie funktionale, didaktische und pädagogische Medienkompetenzen, technisch-instrumentelle Fähigkeiten voraussetzen. Die Integration der neuen Technologien in den herkömmlichen Unterricht setzt Wissen voraus, wann der auf Druckmedien basierte Unterricht durch den webbasierten ersetzt werden sollte.

Es ist allgemein bekannt, dass die neuen Medien auf die jungen Leute eine große Anziehungskraft ausüben, sodass diese geschickter damit umgehen als die älteren Lehrenden. Doch das bedeutet nicht, dass die jungen Lernenden wissen, wie sie die Möglichkeiten, die ihnen die elektronischen Medien bieten, für ihre Bildung nutzbar machen können.

Die Menschheit wird im Allgemeinen immer erfolgreicher im Lernprozess mit jeder Generation, wie Zänker in seinem unterhaltsamen Buch zeigt (2001b), in dem er ein einfaches Rezept gibt: Selbstkritik und Humor helfen am besten gegen Dummheit.

Der Unterricht muss dazu beitragen, den Wandel zur Informationsgesellschaft als Chance zu begreifen und zu nutzen. Die neue Technologie hat tatsächlich das Leben der Menschen umgeformt, ihre Umwelt ist reicher geworden, ihre Ansprüche sind gestiegen, jedoch garantiert Internetsurfen allein noch keinen Erfolg, obwohl jeder mit jedem jederzeit Daten, Informationen austauschen kann. Es kommt darauf an, wie jeder die Informationen weiter bearbeitet.

In einem halben Jahrhundert ist der Mensch in den Zustand intensiver Mediennutzung übergegangen, d.h. aus dem Zeitalter der gedruckten Information ins elektronische Zeitalter.

Im 21. Jahrhundert hat sich der Fortschrittsidee gegenüber eine unterschiedliche Haltung durchgesetzt. Einerseits spricht man von Optimismus, andererseits von Skepsis in Bezug auf die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft, denn die Menschheit wird immer mehr hin und her gerissen zwischen Individualismus, Egoismus und Geselligkeit. Der Mensch, als soziales Wesen, hat den Hang zur Geselligkeit, er braucht die Hilfe seiner Mitmenschen trotz neuen Technologien in allen Lebensbereichen. Die Menschen leben jetzt in einem Zustand „ungeselliger Geselligkeit", laut einiger Meinungsforscher (Zänker 2001a, 25), sie unterliegen immer mehr einem überindividuellen Lernprozess in der Bewältigung des Alltags, ohne sich von ihrem Sessel vor dem Bildschirm zu erheben, wobei sie mit einem Knopfdruck alle Informationen bekommen, die sie brauchen. Es gilt immer noch eine weitverbreitete Einstellung, die den Fortschritt betrifft und zwar die, die nur seine Vorteile beachtet. Der technologische Fortschritt bestimmt zwar den Gang der Dinge, aber er muss nicht nur mit Zuversicht, sondern auch mit Beklommenheit beurteilt werden. Die elektronischen Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten haben zwar das tägliche Dasein des Menschen verwandelt, ihr Leben, ihre Arbeit und Lernweisen in neue Bahnen gebracht, aber der Mensch kann leicht zum Opfer der, über ihn einstürzenden, Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten werden. Zwar ist die Möglichkeit, die die bunte Medienwelt eröffnet faszinierend, denn man braucht nicht mehr Informationen mühsam zu sammeln, denn in Sekundenschnelle schafft der Bildschirm aus unsichtbaren Datenströmen genau das, was man braucht: Texte, Bilder, Töne, Ereignisse können herbeigerufen werden. Das Umschalten auf bequeme elektronische Kommunikationsmittel bewirkt aber eine Erschlaffung der Lesebereitschaft der jungen Generation. Eben darum ist es notwendig, dass die elektronischen Medien im Unterricht ihren Platz finden und theoretisch- und fertigkeitbezogenen Anforderungen gerecht werden.

Wie der Umgang mit den neuen Medien sich auf das Schreiben im Unterrichtsgeschehen auswirkt, soll im Folgenden gezeigt werden.

Die einzelnen Schritte in der Vorbereitung einer effizienten Medienarbeit am Beispiel schriftbasierter Kommunikationsformen im Unterricht (vgl. Dürscheid 1999, 17-30) sollten keinen absoluten normativen Charakter haben, sodass die Lehrenden situativ einzelne Schritte ergänzen und verändern können. Allerdings ist zu bedenken, dass die Originaldokumente aus dem Internet nicht immer dem Niveau der Lernenden angepasst sind, sodass die Lehrenden die Materialien

didaktisch aufbereiten müssen. In der Analyse der schriftlichen Kommunikation gibt Dürscheid mehrere Schritte vor, die die Lehrenden befolgen sollten. Zuerst ist eine Analyse der formalen Angaben notwendig, d.h. die Bestimmung der Inhalte je nach Sprachniveau, Interessen, Allgemeinwissen der Lernenden mit ihrem entsprechenden Handlungsvermögen, was darauf abzielt eine Interaktion in der Kommunikation möglichst flexibel zu gestalten. Der zweite Schritt betrifft eine Analyse der Lebenswelt der Lernenden, in der ihre Fähigkeiten, Bedürfnisse selbstständig in Auseinandersetzung mit einem Thema neue Kenntnisse zu erwerben, gezeigt wird. Sachkompetenz, Selbstkompetenz, Sozialkompetenz Lernerautonomie und Distanzüberbrückung betreffen diesen Schritt. Der dritte Schritt zeigt die aktive, konkrete Beteiligung der Lernenden, fordert das handelnde, forschende Lernen. Der vierte Schritt betrifft die Evaluation. Hier zeigen sich die Grenzen der traditionellen produkt- bzw. ergebnisorientierten Leistungsmessung. Die Bewertung, die von der Integration der technologischen Medien ausgeht, muss die Prozessaktivität in den Vordergrund rücken d.h. die kompetente Benutzung der Medien in der Sammlung der Informationen, die kritische Analyse der Inhalte, die Bearbeitung der Erkenntnisse.

5.1. Mediengestütztes Wissen erwerben

Bei der Analyse der elektronischen Medien im Unterricht geht es um mehrere Aspekte: Einerseits sollen Medien und Kommunikationstechnologien als Unterrichtselement erfassbar und erfahrbar gemacht werden, andererseits sollten sie als Unterrichtsmittel bezogen auf den Unterricht didaktisch aufbereitet werden, wie Becker-Mrotzek (2007, 10-13) in den Kapiteln „Konkrete Einsatzmöglichkeiten" und „Schreiben mit PC" seiner Arbeit zeigt. In welchen Bereichen des Unterrichts können die Lernenden den Computer als Lehrmittel, als Werkzeug und als Kommunikationsmittel nutzen? Die Frage stellt Becker-Mrotzek (2004, 3) und die Antwort darauf ist nicht nur an die Funktionen des Computers gebunden, sondern auch an die Medienkompetenz der Lehrenden und Lernenden. Wie Lehrende unter den sich verändernden medialen Bedingungen gut unterrichten sollen, wie lassen sich die elektronischen Medien einsetzen, wie entwickelt sich der Unterricht im Allgemeinen im Zeichen der Digitalisierung sind Fragen, auf die Psychologen und Didaktiker antworten (vgl. Muuβ-Merholz 2019).

Manche Fachleute prognostizieren sogar das Verschwinden des Klassenzimmers und das Entstehen von virtuellen Schulräumen, in denen weniger das relevante Wissen selbst, sondern vielmehr die Beschaffung und Nutzung von

Wissen vermittelt werden sollten. Selbst eine direkte Vernetzung von Computern mit dem menschlichen Hirn ist im Bereich des möglichen Wissens denkbar. So könnten dann beispielsweise Fremdsprachen statt gelernt, überspielt werden. Medientheoretiker gehen so weit und erklären, dass Mensch und Maschine zu einer neuen Einheit verschmelzen könnte, deren Folge für die Gesellschaft sich jeder selbst ausdenken kann. Wie auch immer man diese Idee ethisch-moralisch bewerten mag, muss man davon ausgehen, dass der Mensch den, ihm von der Evolution vorgegebenen, Weg im 21. Jahrhundert verlassen wird, wenn künstliche Wirklichkeit in einiger Zeit zum Alltag gehören könnte.

Die neue Technologie könnte unser Leben verändern und schwer vorstellbare Kommunikationsformen zwischen Mensch und Computer auftreten lassen, wie der Literaturwisssenschaftler und Zukunftsforscher Bernd Flessner (1998, 75) zu beweisen versucht.

Um mit den neuen Medien umgehen zu können, sind bestimmte Kompetenzen nötig, die im Informationszeitalter von der jungen Generation, die in die Computerwelt aufgewachsen ist, gefördert werden (vgl. Janke und Niehues 1996). Trotzdem begegnen vielen Leuten der, von der Elektronik beherrschten, Realität und dem heute immer mehr geforderten, selbstständigen, kreativen Handeln und unternehmerischem Denken mit Reserven.

Unterricht und Ausbildung sind vorwiegend an das Jugendalter gebunden. Jugendforscher bezeichnen die heutige Generation der 16 bis 29 -Jährigen als „Generation X“. Das ist übrigens auch der Romantitel eines jungen Kanadier, der das Lebensgefühl seiner Generation widerspiegelt (vgl. Coupland 1992). Der Roman handelt von drei jungen Leuten, die einander Geschichten erzählen, die eindrücklich die emotionale Befindlichkeit einer Generation offenlegen, ihre Einstellungen, Denkweisen, Lebensformen und die multimedialen Kommunikationsformen, die der jungen Generation eigen sind.

5.2. Neue Formen des Lernens

Die Integration der elektronischen Medien in den Unterricht ist nicht immer und überall leicht durchführbar, weil es oft einer didaktischen Medienkompetenz fehlt, um die Arbeit mit den neuen Medien zu einem Schwerpunkt des Lehr -und Lernprozess zu machen. Die Technologie an sich ist nicht immer das Problem, weil es nicht bloß um den Umgang mit der Technik geht, sondern weil oft neben dem immer noch vorherrschenden Frontalunterricht, durch die neuen Medien Formen von interaktivem Unterricht und selbstgesteuerten Lernformen auftreten, so dass

die Rolle des Lehrenden eine andere geworden ist. Dort, wo Unterricht human, kreativ, flexibel verläuft, kann die Computertechnologie nicht zum Problem werden. Praktische Unterrichtsszenarien im Sinne des Einsatzes digitaler Medien in der Schule sind im Praxishandbuch von Hofer und Kauffmann (2019, 161) vorgelegt. Hier wird die Rolle des Lehrenden hervorgehoben, wie dieser einen „lerner- und produktorientierten" Unterricht gestaltet. Der Lehrende hat neben seiner klassischen Funktion auch die des Moderators, des Beraters, des Vermittlers. Auch Lernende können diese Funktionen übernehmen, denn im Unterricht geht es um die Vermittlung von Informationen, Kenntnissen, Arbeitsweisen, wobei der Begriff Vermittlung einen neuen Sinn bekommt. Es werden nicht mehr Inhalte und Lehrstoff vermittelt, also weitergegeben, sondern „Vermitteln" erhält im interaktiven und kommunikativen Zusammenhang des gemeinsamen Lehrens und Lernens die Bedeutung von „Mediation" (Kron und Sofos 2003, 17). Dieser Begriff stammt aus der Pädagogik und kann neu definiert werden, sodass Lehrende und Lernende Mediatoren werden, d.h. sie machen etwas gemeinsam, sie unterstützen sich gegenseitig bei der Arbeit und lassen die Lehr- und Lernprozesse individuell bedeutsam werden. Das bedeutet, dass die neuen Formen des Lernens gelernt und die traditionellen Formen ergänzt werden müssen, weil sie sich aus der Lebenserfahrung der Lernenden und aus deren neuen Lernbedingungen ergeben. Alle, die am Lehr- und Lernprozess beteiligt sind, müssen lernen, die neuen Lernbedingungen zu erkennen und mit ihnen richtig umzugehen.

In Bezug auf die Arbeit mit der neuen Technologie entstehen spezifische Arbeitsformen, in denen aktuelle Informationen abgeholt werden, wobei die Mediatoren sich eigenständig Wissen aneignen und erweitern. Dabei kann das Wissen in Form austauschbarer Module aufbereitet sein und die Mediatoren tauschen sich über die Inhalte und deren praktischen Anwendungen aus. Sie können auf zusätzliche Materialien zugreifen, die in Form von virtuellen Bibliotheken, von Datenbanken gestaltet sind und die Lernenden nutzen somit verschiedene Dokumente, erstellen weitere Fragen und probieren das angeeignete Wissen direkt in ihrer Arbeit mit anderen aus. Durch ein Feedback werden mit Hilfe von verschiedenen Programmen Schwachstellen in der Darbietung der Informationen ersichtlich gemacht, sodass der ganze Lehr- und Lernprozess optimiert werden kann. In der medienspezifischen Darbietungsform der Inhalte entstehen auch neue Verantwortungen der Teilnehmer am Lehr- und Lernprozess. Es treten vielfältige Lernmöglichkeiten auf, denn es ist nicht mehr ausreichend, dass die Lernenden das erworbene Wissen erfolgreich anwenden, sondern sie müssen ihr Wissen ständig aktualisieren und über die neuen

Kommunikationsformen überprüfen und ergänzen. Die Übertragung der Informationen bringt den Vorteil, dass z.B. im Bereich der audiovisuellen Medien die Speicherung von Daten komprimiert wird und ihre Wiedergabe erhöht wird. Technisch können so Daten von Texten, Bildern oder Tönen gleichzeitig bearbeitet werden. Damit eröffnen sich neue Möglichkeiten, die für vielfältige Zwecke genutzt werden können. Diese Entwicklung ist von großer mediendidaktischer Bedeutung, denn es erhöht sich die Geschwindigkeit des Informationsflusses und Austausches zwischen den Lernenden.

5.3. Herausforderungen zum Lernen mit elektronischen Medien

Wie können Lehrende die Medien für die Bildung besser nutzen? Wie können sie die Bildung einsetzen, um die Medien besser zu beherrschen?

Die Vorteile des Einsatzes technischer Medien im Unterricht sind nicht zu bestreiten, aber kein Computer sollte im Unterricht verwendet werden, wenn der Lehrende nicht die Aufmerksamkeit darauf lenken will, wie dieses Medium die Sinne anregt oder abstumpft, wie es das selbstständige Denken ausweitet oder begrenzt.

In den vergangenen fünf Jahrzehnten hat sich der Begriff „computer assisted language learning" (CALL) durchgesetzt und zwar in der Diskussion um einen Unterricht, der Computer als Medium im Unterricht einbezieht (vgl. Wolf 1998). Damit verbunden sind weitere Erwartungen einer Umgestaltung des Unterrichts und dessen Besserung. Das betrifft auch das Recherchieren, das Erfassen und Einordnen, die Gliederung und Strukturierun der Informationen (vgl. Borrmann und Gerdzen 2001). Oft sind jedoch diese Erwartungen beschränkt, wenn es um die Arbeit innerhalb eines sogenannten programmierten Unterrichts geht, oder wenn es um die Benutzung der technologischen Medien geht, die gebunden ist an die mögliche soziale Isolierung der Lernenden am Computer. Es sollte nicht außer Acht bleiben, dass Unterricht in erster Linie Kooperation, Sprachverhalten, soziales Verhalten erfordert.

Der Computer kann sowohl als Schreibmaschine als auch als Lehr-und Lernwerkzeug eingesetzt werden. In einem Selbstlernprogramm sind Anregungen, Lernhilfen als Elemente der Verstärkung der Motivation eingebaut. Die Aufgabenstellungen, die die Lehrenden geben, sind in den meisten Fällen konventioneller Art und sie beziehen sich auf die Vorbereitung eines beschränken Lehrstoffes, auf den Erwerb von Fertigkeiten für die Weiterarbeit an einem Text,

auf Wiederholungen grundlegender Elemente der grammatischen Richtigkeit (vgl. Becker -Mrotzek und Schindler 2007, 21)

Die Arbeit mit den elektronischen Medien wird durch Angaben der Lernziele, durch Vorgaben von Arbeitsschritten und Eingrenzungen der jeweiligen Themen bestimmt. Im Lernprozess, der auf interaktive Kommunikation beruht, tritt das Lehren zurück, die Mitarbeit aller am Lernprozess Beteiligten muss vorantreten. Es sollen Lernumgebungen angeboten werden, in denen der Lernende nach eigenen Lösungen der Aufgabenstellungen suchen kann.

6. Fazit

Die Hauptfunktion des Computers im fremdsprachlichen Lernprozess ist die Vermittlung von Informationen und die Herausforderung zum kulturellen Handeln. Der Computer ist ein Arbeitsinstrument und soll kein Selbstzweck werden. Eine wichtige Rolle spielt dabei der Lehrende, der sich, vor der Arbeit mit dem Computer und Internet im Unterricht, Fragen stellen muss, die fachspezifische Inhalte betreffen, die den Lernenden angeboten werden. Auch Fragen, die Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen betreffen, gehören dazu, sowie auch die Formel und die Präsentation der Informationen, ihre Bearbeitung und Beurteilung, Aspekte die mit den Methoden der Aufbereitung der Materialien zusammenhängen und die Bezüge des dargebotenen Materials zum Alltag der Lernenden. Diese Fragen sprechen für die Erfahrung und die Professionalität der Lehrenden, die in ihrem Unterricht sowohl die traditionellen Arbeitsformen als auch die elektronischen Medien einbauen müssen, um den Lernenden behilflich zu sein.

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Teaching Romanian for medical foreign students with the help of Interactive methods

Réka KUTASI[1]

The present study aims to highlight the importance of engaging speaking activities as a primary method for teaching Romanian as a foreign language to overseas students. The results are strengthened by a questionnaire applied to students from the Faculty of Medicine and Dental Medicine in English. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face classes were replaced by online ones which gave us, teachers, the possibility to use modern technology throughout our courses. The diversity of the topics included in the curriculum helped teachers to involve foreign students in different types of activities, such as speaking, interacting with their peers in order to develop elementary communication skills, but also new vocabulary learning. Even if students came from different countries and cultures, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Israel, Syria or even Ghana, they all learned Romanian to be able to interact mainly with their colleagues or people they met in their day-to-day life.

Keywords: *Romanian classes, cultural differences, foreign language students*

1. Introduction

Romania, as part of the European Union, has attracted many foreign students, in the last couple of years. Students who decide to study in a foreign country are always looking for new challenges in terms of education, travelling, personal development, etc.

The high quality of education offered by Romanian higher education institutions is appreciated all over the world. This is constantly being increased and developed by adapting the learning content to the needs of society. The National Institute of Statistics Romania performed a survey regarding the number of international students enrolled in Bachelor programs in Romania from 2014 to

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2020. According to the report published in July 2021 there is a 25 percent growth in the number of foreign students who started their studies in a Romanian Higher Education Institution (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1098620/international-students-romania/).

The "George Emil Palade" University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures is a multicultural university where students can study Medicine and Dentistry in three different languages: Romanian, Hungarian and English. If in the past medical education was offered only in Romanian and Hungarian languages, today, to align the university to the European standards, students have the opportunity to fulfil their studies in English as well.

Included in the curriculum, foreign language classes are compulsory for all the students who are enrolled at an educational institution. Students who study at the Romanian or Hungarian sections can choose among English, French or German classes while foreign students, who study in English, are required to learn Romanian as a foreign language (it is the official language of the country).

As a university that shapes students to become medical professionals, it is of high demand for learners to speak the language of the country. Romanian classes take place in the first two years of study while in the third year, to be able to take part in practical activities, students are required to sit and pass a Romanian exam. More, to help students master the language of the country, optional Romanian classes have been included in the curriculum for students from the third year of study.

Teaching at the George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures is a real challenge. Students from different countries choose to complete their studies at this university, either by studying Medicine or Dentistry in English. As students come from different countries foreign language teachers need to adapt their classes (e.g. materials, methodology) to obtain equal performance from each of them. Teaching is not teacher-centred, where the teacher is seen as a God/Goddess, as he/she knows everything, but student-centred, putting a high emphasis on students' needs, to develop their cognitive skills. The increase in the social, cultural and ethnic heterogeneity can also be observed in the classroom which denotes the requirement to cope with the different situations of diversity that may arise in educational organizations.

2. Foreign students in Romania

Being a medical student in a foreign country is a real challenge. Having arrived in a foreign place and attending classes where people speak different languages is

something students have to get used to. There are two reasons why it is difficult to be a foreign student:

- you are taught in a language which is not your mother-tongue;
- you have to learn the language of the country to succeed in what you have proposed/planned.

Besides having to cope with learning a foreign language, students are required to learn Romanian as a foreign language, a language most of them have never come into contact with before. Hence, the need for attractive and operative teaching methods and activities is required to develop their learning/linguistic skills that will help them to easily acquire the Romanian language. The desire to learn Romanian as a foreign language becomes even greater due to students' need of being accepted and integrated in the community where they live and study (Nechifor and Borca 2020, 291).

To familiarize foreign students with the academic atmosphere (and not only) of the host university, university staff together with senior-student volunteers decided to organize the so-called *Freshers' week*. Thus, upon their arrival, students are introduced to the culture of our country with the possibility to learn about its places, architecture, and specific cuisine. More, they can meet and get to know each other, while being acquainted with the university and its surrounding as well as the classrooms and laboratories where the courses will be held. Unfortunately, the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year was an unusual one, as the *Freshers' week* could not be organized because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Romanian classes

We often hear teachers say "*there are students from my class/group with learning difficulties*" or "*students do not care about the course I teach*". According to Westwood (2008, 2) phrases like "*learning difficulties*" are used to describe students who do not achieve the expected learning outcome. The didactic process is an intricate one having interlocutors with different cultural identities and different expectations. Thus, foreign students who are accustomed to diverse educational systems and teaching styles have various learning expectations. We are often told, "*In my country, these things are taught differently*."

Romanian classes within the George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures are organized efficiently and practically. To achieve the best goals with their students, teachers need to take into consideration their expectations, needs and learning styles. Thus, Romanian classes

are held within a friendly environment with small groups of students (7 to 14) where the teacher has the opportunity to motivate his/her learners and he/she has the role of a partner rather than that of a master. The syllabus is designed to reflect diversity in the classroom. From reading and speaking tasks to grammar exercises to enhance students' communication skills, Romanian lessons are interactive and student-centred. A great emphasis has been put on communication, vocabulary, cultural issues and grammar rather than on pure reading lessons. M. Byram (1997, 32) suggests that foreign language teachers should develop students' intercultural communication competence. The teacher is the 'host' while the students are the 'visitors'. They need to overcome this language barrier to acquire intercultural communication competence and be able to learn the language of their new home.

4. Research Method

To have a piece of clear evidence on what to emphasize when teaching Romanian to foreign students, a survey has been conducted among the students from the Faculty of Medicine and Dental Medicine in English to make correlations between the syllabus and students' needs. The survey encompassed general questions such as "How did you find out about our university?" but also questions regarding Romanian lessons and the difficulties students may experience while learning the language.

The platform that was used for the survey is Survey Planet (https://surveyplanet.com) a tool utilized by universities and corporations worldwide. The instrument allowed us to create a free survey consisting of 13 questions and offered numerous free tools to share with our students but also to analyse their responses. The survey took place in November 2020 by observing the GDPR. It helped us strengthen the hypothesis from which we started teaching the Romanian language to foreign students, more precisely that speaking tasks (dialogue, picture description etc.) are seen as interactive methods used in teaching a foreign language. There is no need for students to learn the vocabulary automatically, but by taking part in speaking tasks regularly they learn the terminology on the go. Thus, during this teaching process, the teacher is seen as a model, an organizer, an advisor but also a partner with whom students can communicate.

Eighty-eight students accepted to fill out the questionnaire, 46 males (52,3%) and 42 female respondents (47.7%). Out of the total number of students, 78 were from the Faculty of Medicine and 10 from the Faculty of Dental Medicine. The low number of responses from the later faculty can be explained as a result of the

higher number of students at the Medicine study program. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are also reflected upon students' mood and willingness to cooperate and take part in different studies. It can also be explained as a psychological effect, thus, students need and expect motivation from their teachers when required to fulfil a certain task.

5. Survey results

The first two questions included in the questionnaire had the intention of finding out more about students' preferences for Romanian Higher Education Institutions and their way of searching for the best institution to study at. Being asked how they have found out about our university, the great majority of our students, more exactly, 46,6%, stated that they learned about the university while navigating on the internet. 44,3% stated that their friends (44,3%), who were already students at our university, had a significant influence on convincing them to attend the courses of our institution. More, students were motivated by the low tuition fee, but also by academic reasons.

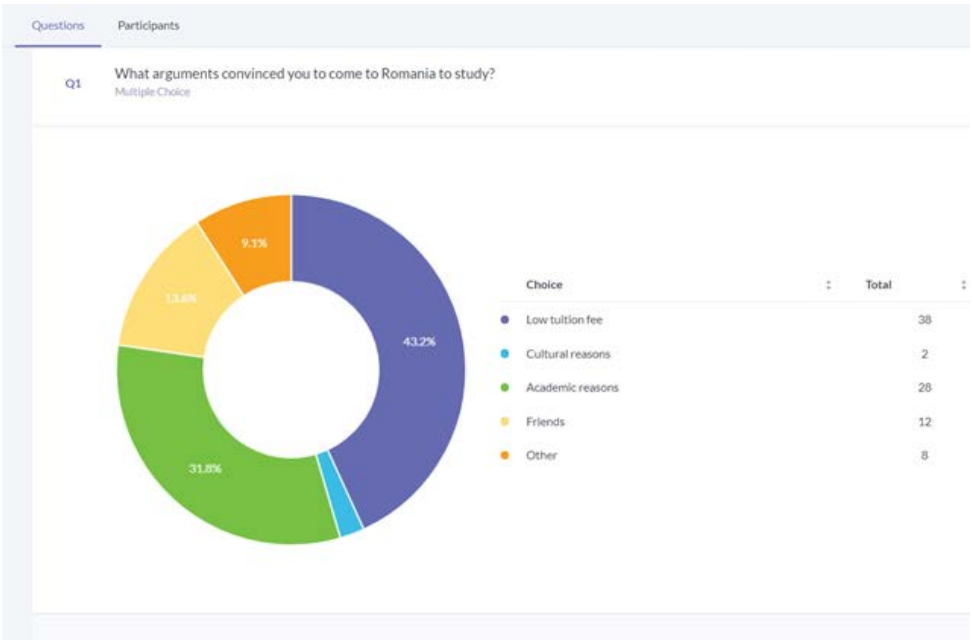

Figure 1. Question 1. What arguments convinced you to come to Romania to study?

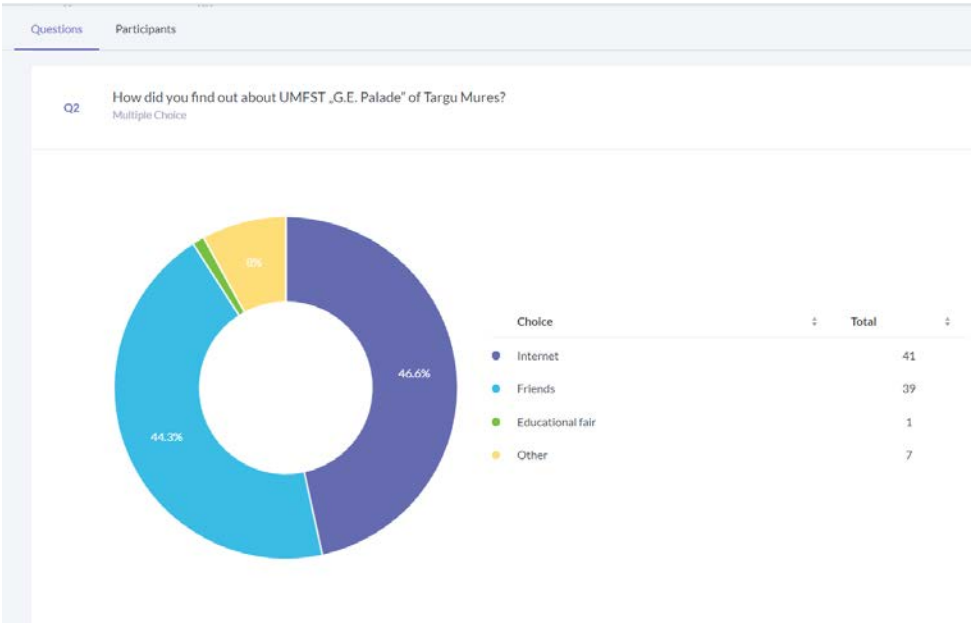

Figure 2. Question 2. How did you find out about "George Emil Palade" UMPhST from Târgu Mures?

Students were already familiar with the fact that they will have to learn Romanian as a foreign language, as starting from the third year of study, they need to interact with patients as part of their practical activities held at different hospitals from Mure; county. Being a Romance language, learning Romanian by most of our students represented a problem at first. The most difficult thing in learning the language seemed to be the grammar, according to 57% of the students, followed by the vocabulary by 18,6%, while only 12,8% of students believe that pronunciation is difficult.

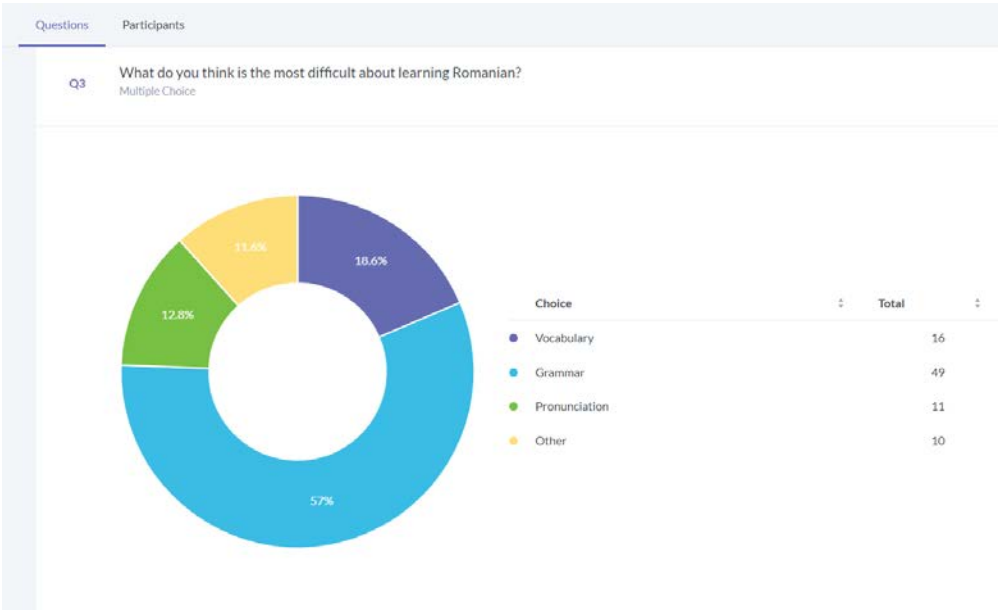

Figure 3. Question 3. What do you think is the most difficult about learning Romanian?

Most of the Romanian lessons were designed on communication activities through which students could learn vocabulary and grammar rules by doing attractive exercises and not by simply learning them by heart. Communication among students in the online environment represented the very challenge of these days, as it could hardly replace the face-to-face / on site communication. That's why, the online platform (Blackboard), with its function of "Breakout rooms" enabled teachers to replicate real-life communication (speaking activities based on images of different medical situations). These exercises help medical students to get acquainted with medical terminology, to have a conversation with their colleagues or with hospitalized patients. More, they can learn the vocabulary with the help of an attractive and easy method. The experience gained during the years made me, as a teacher, give more significant importance to communication activities which trigger, without a doubt, the possibility for students to learn vocabulary and grammar rules.

It is known that learning a foreign language takes time, a lot of effort and, more importantly, practice. The rapid development of the Internet has had a great impact on language teaching and learning (Wu, 2012: 521). This change has significantly helped both teachers and students. Nowadays, the Internet is one of the most stimulating, powerful technologies that play a vital role in one's personal and professional life. It is also an unlimited source of information for language

teaching. Foreign students have always been encouraged to use different online resources to enhance their Romanian language knowledge. Students reported using mainly online applications (43,2%) as shown in Figure 5, Romanian books (18,2%), but they also watched Romanian movies (6,8%). More, 17% of the students engaged in conversations with their Romanian friends. This low percentage may result from the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

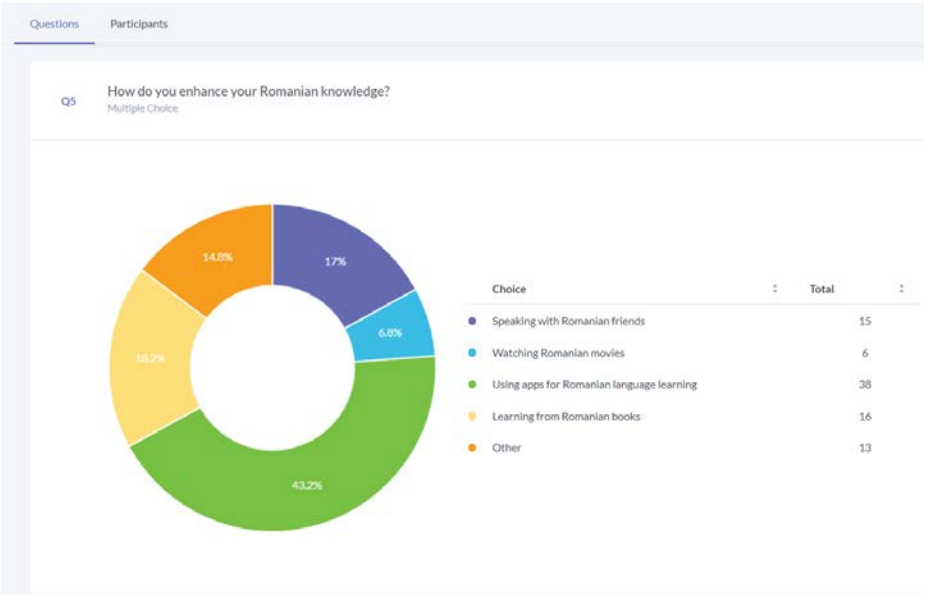

Figure 4. Question 5. How do you enhance your Romanian knowledge?

The above chart speaks for itself. More and more students started to use different apps for Romanian language learning, group work was easier to perform as Blackboard, the platform used by the university allowed the teacher to split the class into groups.

Conversation tasks were used to enhance students' pronunciation and to practice different types of dialogues. I selected some answers given by students for Question 6 from the questionnaire *"What do you think is the best method to learn Romanian? Motivate your answer?"*

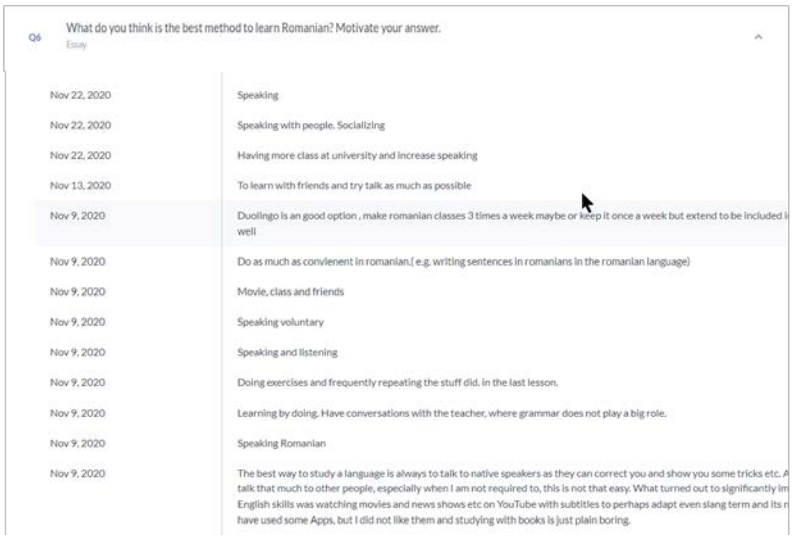

Figure 5. Question 6. What do you think is the best method to learn Romanian? Motivate your answer.

According to Penny Ur (1996, 120) the most essential skill with regard to daily communication is speaking. Darasawang (2007, 201) highlighted that a person learns a foreign language to communicate, to study abroad and/or to conduct a business. In Romania, it is essential for foreign medical students to communicate and be competent in the Romanian language in order to be able to interact with patients from hospitals or dental practices where they will perform their practical activities. Thus, speaking activities are included and considered to be the most effective and essential tasks for students to carry out throughout Romanian classes. What has been observed during the years is that students are sometimes afraid of speaking as a result of foreign language speaking anxiety which can have a negative impact on their learning process (Alnahidh and Altalhab 2020, 55). There are three major factors that can influence foreign language speaking anxiety: communication fear, fear of negative assessment and fear of failing the exam (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127). More, what the questionnaire revealed is that students are afraid of not being laughed at by their peers. In order to avoid these incidents, during speaking classes, we have motivated all our students to speak. Even if they had to describe a picture individually or in a group all the students had to speak at least once. Additionally, a great emphasis has been put on their pronunciation.

Feedback was instantly given, students were promptly corrected thus, having the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Error correction was made in a subtle way either by asking students if they are sure that the answer that they have given is the correct one (self-correction) or by non-verbal ways of correction (gestures, mimicry, crossed finger).

The teacher can be an influential factor in motivating students to speak. The foreign language professor should not only educate his/her students, but also create a pleasant atmosphere in the class and a good relationship with the students in order to motivate them and make them confident (Latha and Ramesh 2012, 5) Our students have come to the conclusion that practice makes them perfect as it can be observed in Figure 6.

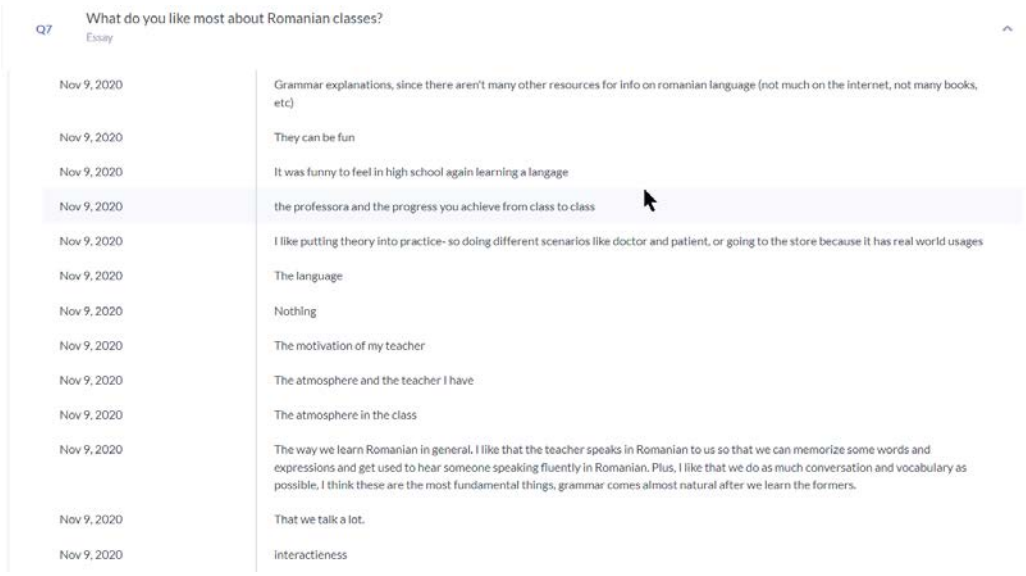

Figure 6. Question 7. What do you like most about Romanian classes*?*

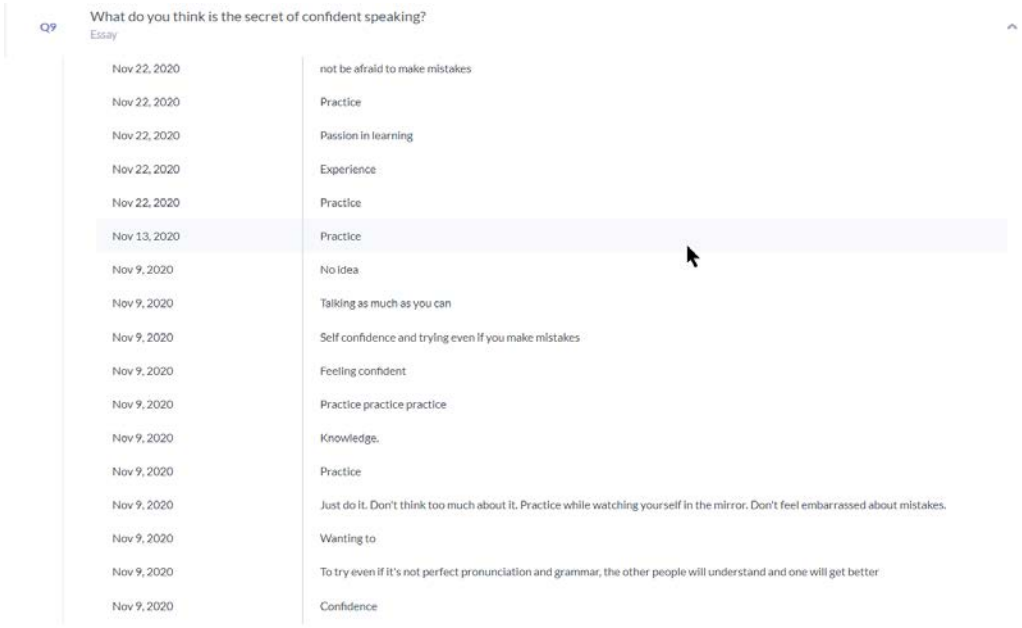

Figure 7. Question 9. What do you think is the secret of confident speaking?

6. Conclusions

Teaching Romanian language to foreign students of different cultures is a real challenge for teachers. In order to meet students' needs they have to adapt their teaching style, the materials and methods they use in line with their necessities. Teaching Romanian as a foreign language to students who already study in a foreign language requires a lot of effort and willingness to design attractive teaching materials that can be used to develop their communicative competence through the use of innovative teaching methods.

The study revealed foreign students' expectations and their level of satisfaction when it comes to learning Romanian as a foreign language. More, their answers can be regarded as recommendations for foreign language teachers. A teacher should create a friendly teaching environment and should encourage learners to practice speaking the language they would like to learn for their own knowledge and not for the sake of just passing a test or an exam (Alnahidh and Altalhab 2020, 58).

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