

# Volume 4 Issue 1

Spring 2022

ICC Conference Special

ISSN 2747-9862

ICC Journal



 **ICC**  
the international language association

**ICC JOURNAL ISSN 2747-9862**

**Volume 4 Issue 1 Spring 2022**

## **CONTENTS**

<b>From the Editor:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EUROLTA News - Myriam Fischer Callus:</b> Interviews with Ukrainian refugee teachers	<b>4</b>
<b>KEYNOTE</b>	
<b>Eva Túnez Salvador &amp; Janina Neumann:</b> How to start building your brand identity internationally	<b>7</b>
<b>Zhaoming Wang</b> The Application of Communication Accommodation Theory in Intercultural Communication	<b>9</b>
<b>ICC CONFERENCE March 9<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Robert Gibson:</b> Navigating Cultures in a Winds of Change VUCA World	<b>19</b>
<b>Anna Soltyska:</b> New technologies in classroom assessment: a necessary evil or window of opportunity?	<b>21</b>
<b>Poppy Skarli and Rob Williams :</b> How to empower and engage students in an online course: Case CATAPULT MOOC	<b>25</b>
<b>Marijana Prodanovic:</b> How Motivating is an Online Language Environment? Examining the Role of Learning Apps	<b>27</b>
<b>Aleksandra Makowska:</b> Online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic - the students' perspective	<b>31</b>
<b>Philip Cronin:</b> EUROLTA – A chance to reflect and refresh	<b>34</b>
<b>Barry Tomalin:</b> Language Lasts Longer but Culture is Quicker	<b>36</b>
<b>WEBINARS</b>	
<b>Andy Cowle:</b> Turning a New Page: Why Students Don't Like Reading and How to Change It!	<b>39</b>
<b>Richard Lewis:</b> The Earth is Round, the Ocean is Flat, Culture is Triangular: Why 70% of Mergers & Acquisitions fail.	<b>45</b>
<b>Oonagh Aitken:</b> The EU Lifelong Learning Platform and the added value to its members	<b>50</b>
<b>TEACHING TIPS AND TRICKS.</b>	
<b>Barry Tomalin:</b> Engaging language students through culture	<b>54</b>
<b>REVIEWS</b>	
Migration, Multiculturalism and Education Latisha Mary, Ann-Birte Krüger and Andrea S Young	<b>59</b>

## From the Editor

Welcome to our Spring issue of 2022. This issue is especially devoted to our ICC-Annual Conference held online on March 9<sup>th</sup>. You can read summaries of all the talks here and, of course, view the recordings at [www.icc-languages.eu/conferences](http://www.icc-languages.eu/conferences).

Refugees and the 'military operation' in Ukraine have pre-occupied us all this year and I am really grateful to Myriam Callus for providing interviews with two Ukrainian teachers, now refugees, who are following the EUOLTA language teacher training course. You can read their interviews in Euroлта News.

Our keynotes this month are *How to Start Building your Brand Identity Internationally* with Eva Túnez Salvador and Janina Neumann and *The Application of Communication Accommodation Theory in Intercultural Communication* by Zhaoming Wang.

As always, we have summaries of our ICC webinars by Andy Cowle on the importance of extensive reading (got me doing my 30 minutes a day extensive reading for pleasure), Richard Lewis on why 70% of international mergers and acquisitions go wrong because of cultural misunderstandings and Oonagh Aitken on The EU Lifelong Learning Platform and the workings of Erasmus+, the EU educational project grant. Really useful insights and I learned that our Chair, Ellinor Haase, was a member of the original organising committee of the Lifelong Learning Platform.

I've contributed to this issue's Tips and Tricks on cultural training, presenting the lesson plans I used in my ICC Conference talk. Six useful and practical lesson plans for classroom use, at least, I think so!

Our review of *Migration, Multilingualism and Education* praises a powerful examination of the role of teachers in engaging language students by recognising their own languages and cultural backgrounds and stressing how avoiding 'othering' of students' heritage language and cultures actually improves their overall commitment and education results. A very worthwhile and inspiring read.

That's it from me. Delighted to hear from you and to print your articles as keynotes or teaching tips in ICC Journal. We are here for you as practising teachers. Enjoy this issue and feel free to recommend it to your friends and colleagues. Get in touch with me direct at [barrytomalin@aol.com](mailto:barrytomalin@aol.com).

Till next time. . .

Barry

Barry Tomalin

Editor ICC Journal

# **UKRAINIAN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS JOIN THE EUROLTA PROGRAMME**

## **Myriam Callus**

This is an extremely difficult time for Ukrainians who had to leave their homes and move abroad for safety, many having to abandon their studies or their professions, at least for the time being. As a sign of solidarity with the Ukrainian people, the ICC has offered two free places on its online teacher training course. EUROLTA, the European Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults is an international certificate enabling participants to start a career in language teaching. We are also developing a special EUROLTA Course for teaching refugees. Ukrainian refugees are admitted to EUROLTA free of charge.

To get a feeling for what it is like to be a refugee from Ukraine, we interviewed our first two Ukrainian course members, Nataly Pidluzha and Diana Kopylova on their backgrounds, their professions and their aspirations. Here's what they said.

## **Nataly Pidluznha**

I am 33 years old, I'm married and have 2 kids. I am a logistics specialist and my hobbies are learning English and sport.

I am from a village located near Kyiv but as the war advanced on our capital I fled to Germany and we are living in Hattingen in North-Rhine Westphalia. I have a bachelor's degree in automatic computer systems. In Ukraine I was employed as a logistics specialist.

Since I was a child I have dreamt of being a teacher but different circumstances did not let me choose that profession. I hope that after my finishing this course I will have confidence in pursuing a teaching career and have learned some great tools in how to be a really good teacher. My aim is to teach English. English is my passion and all my leisure time I spent learning English. Right now, it is hard for me because I have no one who can speak in English in my surroundings. For me the most important quality of a good language teacher is to offer friendship and guidance to all your students.

I dream that the nightmare of what is happening right now in Ukraine will stop soon and I will be able to hug my husband. I am optimistic about Ukraine. I believe we will achieve victory. Ukraine is a strong nation and we can get through even this horrible war.

**Diana Kopylova:**

I am 17 years old and from Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city. I lived and studied there till the war started. In Ukraine, I was a first-year student at the Polytechnic University and was studying "Applied and Computer Linguistics". I have always been interested in languages and as of now I know five. I am bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian and am at intermediate level in English and Greek, and German. So, it is no surprise that I wanted to make my hobby my career.

In the first days of the war I was lucky to go to Greece and even though I know this country, it was very hard to adapt. I spent every day reading the news and feeling bad about it. And then I found out about the EUROLTA Online course. I understood that this was a chance to make my dream come true and to get distracted from this situation.

I don't have any experience in teaching yet but it was always interesting to analyse my language teachers and think about why my classmates like some teachers and don't like others. So, I concluded that the most important qualities are patience, watchfulness, creativity, kindness, and being supportive.

I am not afraid of the future, even though I don't know what will happen tomorrow. My whole life depends on me and my decisions. The only thing I can't change is war, so, here I can only believe in the strength of my country and that the war will end soon.

If you have colleagues or students who are refugees from Ukraine or other countries give them your professional and personal support. It will help them feel more at home, develop professionally and manage better the trauma of living in these challenging times.

## **KEYNOTE 1**

### **How to start building your brand identity internationally**

#### **About the authors**

Eva Túnez Salvador is a Spanish/English translator and Janina Neumann is a German/English graphic designer. Traditionally, translation and graphic design are treated as separate parts of the marketing processes, however, how we communicate and visually present our ideas is what builds a reputation, a brand. When translation and graphic design work together, we can build a more meaningful brand. In 2020, Eva Túnez Salvador and Janina Neumann decided to make their collaboration official and created Local to Global. Local to Global is a one-stop gateway for all your cultural, linguistic, and branding requirements when exporting your products or services to other countries. [www.localtogloball.com](http://www.localtogloball.com)

The Covid-19 pandemic introduced many to the world of virtual networking and sparked many to consider taking their brand international. In this article we will share some advice on how to start building your brand identity internationally from a marketing point of view.

As with intercultural communication, it starts with self-awareness. Have you considered the characteristics of your brand identity in your domestic market?

The Kapferer Brand Identity Prism is a great tool to help you gain self-awareness of your brand. The prism is made up of six characteristics; physique, personality, culture, relationship, self-image, and reflection.

**For this exercise, write down words or phrases that come to mind when you read each of the six questions.**

1. **What are the underlying physical characteristics of your brand?**  
Try to be as descriptive as you can. Imagine that you have to describe the scene for a movie set. Some words that may help you: modern, collaborative, minimalist, colourful, quiet, noisy, open-plan, wood, brick.
2. **How would you describe the character of your brand?**  
Try to avoid words like friendly, as most brands would describe themselves like this but this doesn't make them identifiable. Some words that may help you: brave, quiet, loud, shy, chatty, easy-going, sensible, funny, generous, wise, polite, serious.
3. **How would you describe your culture and the values of the country/area from which your brand originates from, and its demographic?**  
Some words that may help you: direct, egalitarian, relaxed with time, collaborative, consensual, long-term vision, restrained.
4. **How would you describe the relationship between your brand and its audience?**  
Some words that may help you: friendship, uncommitted, indirect, open, playful, mature, easy-going, practical.
5. **How does the audience of your brand see themselves?**  
Some words that may help you: tidy, analytical, collaborative, hopeful, critical, sensible, shy, brave.

**6. How does the brand (or you) perceive its audience?**

Some words that may help you: fearful, adventurous, supportive, steadfast, assertive.

**Can you identify any words that have been repeated at least three times?**

These words could become the core pillars of your brand.

The core pillars of your brand are what sets your brand apart from other brands. When you start building your brand identity internationally, your core pillars do not change, but the way you communicate them may do depending on your chosen market.

Before we think about communicating your core pillars in your new market, we need to think of how you are communicating them in your domestic market.

Google study, [Zero Moment of Truth](#), found that, on average, a buyer needs seven hours of interaction across eleven touchpoints in four locations. 7, 11, 4 are the magic numbers.

**Are you achieving your magic numbers in your domestic market and are they supporting your core pillars?**

Draw three columns and title the columns; touchpoint, location, interaction time. Now fill out the table. A touchpoint is any marketing asset that you have.

Here are some examples:

- website, online, 50 seconds
- eBook, online, 20 minutes

**Now think about the cultural differences between your domestic and your new market.** What would be the best way to communicate your core pillars? Do you need to adapt your touchpoints?

**Once you have completed the Kapferer Brand Identity Prism and the magic numbers for your domestic and new market, show them to someone who has experience of your new market and ask them for feedback.**

Congratulations! You have started to build your brand identity for an international audience. This may only be the beginning of your international journey, but getting it right would lead to making a better and quicker impact in your chosen market and in any subsequent ones. We hope you enjoyed this exercise!



## KEYNOTE 2

### **The Application of Communication Accommodation Theory in Intercultural Communication**

**Zhaoming Wang**

#### **Introduction**

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) has been broadly studied in the field of interpersonal communication. However, less focus has been given to its role in the field of intercultural communication. This article reviews the communication accommodation theory in the context of intercultural communication and its relation to intercultural competence training. As suggested by some key findings from Wang's study (2018), to accommodate one's speech or behaviour are the key for successful native and non-native speakers' interaction. Especially for the native speakers, to mindfully accommodate their speech could compensate for their lack of "international English". In the end, it calls for more studies on the CAT application and assessment in the intercultural training of the future.

#### **Background—Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)**

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) initially termed as speech accommodation theory (SAT) was introduced by Giles (1973) in the field of language adjustment. The concept of communication accommodation is that people adjust their speech or the way they communicate according to different people, about different topics and in different contexts (Gallois & Giles, 2015). However, Giles (1973) argued that such adjustment/accommodation is not only determined by the context, but also shows our attitude towards one or more conversational partners. Such an attitude could be like, dislike, admiration or disdain. In the initial formulation of SAT, Giles (1973) noted that there are three types of accommodation. People may converge—make their speech more like that of the partner, such as switching to the partner's language, speaking style, accent or non-verbal communication. They may also diverge—make their speech more different from the partner. And lastly there is maintenance, which means people do not make any changes in their communication (Gallois & Giles, 2015). According to Giles (1973), convergence is taken as sign of liking whereas divergence and maintenance is dislike.

In its initial formulation, CAT was used in the context of interpersonal communication as it explores the relationship between people and their motivation to show friendliness and admiration or the opposite (Soliz & Giles, 2014). The theory was then broadened in the intergroup context—the interaction between people with different social identities (e.g., different ethnic groups, gender, professions etc.). Taking the example of gender, men and women often communicate using speech patterns of their own gender in order to show liking for each other. For example, men use a deeper pitch and more assertive gestures, whereas women soften and raise their pitch and use less assertive communication (Gallois & Giles, 2015). In terms of intergroup or interethnic communication, CAT seems to be highly appropriate to use in the field of intercultural communication. Back in 1973, Giles was already predicting the impact of convergence and divergence in the context of English-Welsh

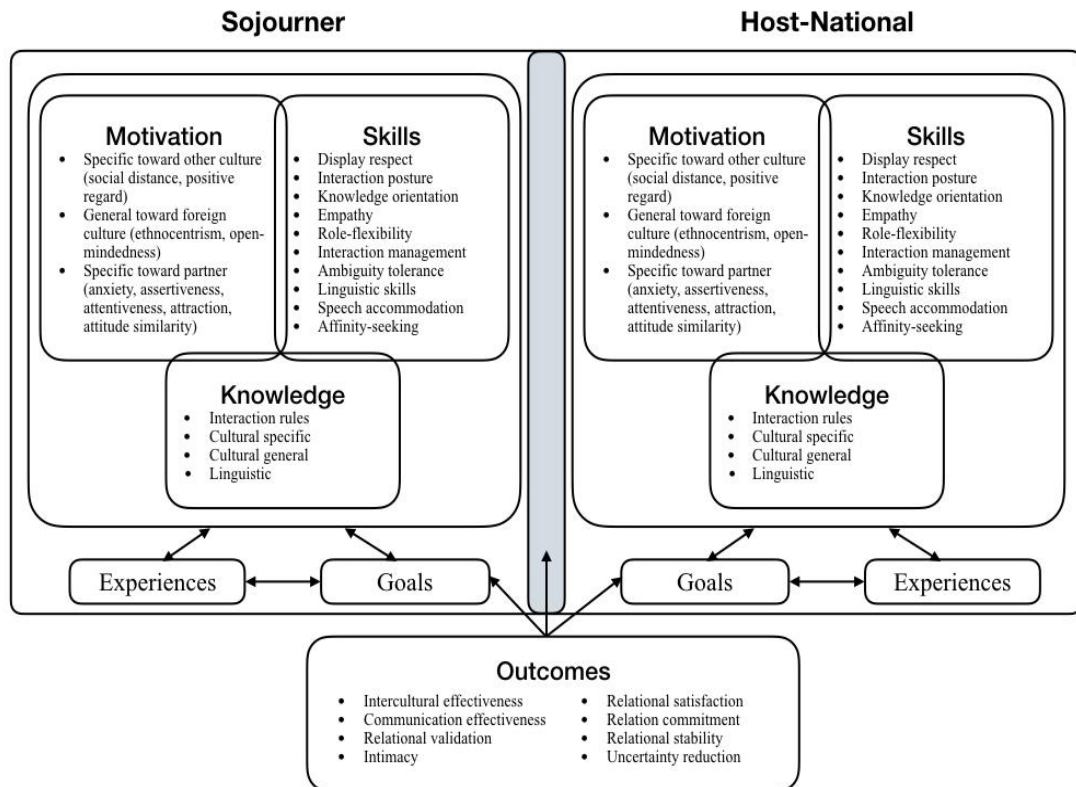
interaction. It was found that when faced with an exaggerated English accent speaker, the Welsh participants diverged their language by broadening their Welsh accents.

However, Gallois and Giles (2015) argue that the approach of CAT researchers and intercultural communication researchers is different— *“whereas the latter emphasised intercultural communication competence and short-term interactions by sojourners and immigrants, CAT researchers are more likely to concentrate on long-standing intergroup context, where communication skills are less important than intergroup attitudes”* (p.12). Having been said so, whatever short or long-term interactions are focused on, the importance of communication accommodation in intercultural communication cannot be neglected. After all, intercultural communication is a way of interpersonal communication. As Gallois and Giles pointed out, *“if we like or admire someone, we can overcome a negative intergroup history and converse with the person as an individual”* (2015, p. 6). Such positive attitudes and motivation are signalled by accommodation behaviour. Using another person’s language, style, and accent or paying attention to the person’s needs and desires in the conversation could certainly demonstrate the high intercultural competence of the speaker. That might be the key to successful intercultural communication.

### **CAT and Intercultural Competence**

The review above suggests a clear relationship between accommodation behaviour and motivation in an intercultural interaction. In fact, communication accommodation or speech accommodation is one of the key characteristics of intercultural competence. However, it is often neglected by the literature. It is known that as communicator motivation increases, the intercultural competence increases (Spitzberg, 2000). A positive attitude and accommodating behaviour such as using similar words, mimicking each other’s gestures or intonation suggests a more developed intercultural competence, which leads to a more successful intercultural interaction compared with people who do not accommodate their behaviour.

Another area where CAT is often neglected by the literature is that actually it is one of the key skills of ICC. Since the 1950s it is broadly accepted that the core components of intercultural competence are: motivation (affective, emotion), knowledge (cognitive), and skills (behavioural) (Bloom, 1956; Havighurst, 1957). The intercultural competence model proposed by Imahori and Langigan (1989) clearly points out the key elements in each component. Within the skills component, apart from other key skills such as displaying respect, interaction posture, ambiguity tolerance, linguistic skills etc, speech accommodation is also listed as one of the core skills for both sojourner and host-national (see details in **Figure 1** below).



**Figure 1.** Relational Model of Intercultural Competence

Source: Adapted visualization by Spitzberg & Changnon (2009) from

Imahori & Lanigan (1989), after Spitzberg & Cupach (1984)

## The Application of CAT in Intercultural Training

Now it is clear that communication accommodation plays an important role in intercultural communication, especially as an indicator of one's motivation and skill during interaction. How it could be applied in intercultural training is the next question. In fact, it is of particular importance for native speakers during intercultural communication. According to Wang's (2018) study, it points out that non-native speakers have more difficulties when they communicate with native speakers. Even if native speakers speak slowly, it still does not help. It turns out that the English of native speakers is more local with the use of informal terms or slang, whereas the English that international students speak is simpler or more "international". It seems to the native speakers that the more they accommodate their English, the easier it is for the non-native speakers to understand. Eventually that leads to a more effective and successful intercultural communication. To achieve this, one of the problems is the native speakers lack of the knowledge of "international English". But how can they change to "simpler English" without knowing what it is like? Therefore, for the intercultural training especially of native speakers, it is important to let them know the linguistic differences between them and non-native speakers.

However, currently it seems that there is still a gap in the literature on the training of the use of “international English” for native speakers.

Having mentioned this, one interesting result from Wang’s study (2018) suggests that through proper intercultural training, some of the native speakers could actually develop communication accommodation skills without having any linguistic instruction in “international English” or the knowledge of CAT itself during the training. Her study shows that half of the participants (native English speakers) from the one-term-long intercultural course reported that they could accommodate their English depending on the situation. For example, one participant said she would use “*less British English*” not only in the way of “*intonation and speed, but also the words that I’m using and the cultural references embedded*”. She gave an example of the use of filler word “*like*” such as in the sentence “*I was like ‘I actually got this’*”. To her, the use of filler word “*like*” was “*impeding the flow of the conversation*”. It is all right to use in informal conversation with other native speakers as “*native speakers wouldn’t have any trouble and they’d just block it out*”. But in the intercultural setting, there will be somebody “*who is working hard to understand*”.

Although the sample size of the native speakers involved was quite small for Wang’s study (2018), it still indicates the interdependence of each component of ICC and how they function together in developing ICC. Even though the CAT was not covered in the training, half of the trained native speakers still developed awareness to accommodate their speech to the intercultural setting. They could simplify the words they used, slow their speed and be more careful to choose the topic to discuss. Such mindfulness or awareness, the motivation to communicate and establish relationships, as well as the skill of being flexible could compensate for their lack of the knowledge of CAT. They were just doing the communication accommodation without knowing the actual terms.

## Conclusion

This article points out one key element in ICC which is often neglected by the literature in intercultural communication—communication accommodation. Although CAT is broadly studied in the interpersonal communication or linguistic context, communication accommodation behaviour is also a key factor for one’s intercultural competence, especially indicating one’s motivation and skills. For native speakers, with the absence of knowledge about “international English” or “world English”, mindfully accommodating their speech is the key to efficient intercultural communication. However, given the lack of research literature on native speaker’s intercultural competence, there are few studies focused on the application of communication accommodation in this context. Although communication accommodation is regarded as one of the key skills in intercultural competence in the Relational Model proposed by Imahori & Lanigan (1989), more studies are needed on how to apply communication accommodation in intercultural training, how to assess it, and how effective this skill will be in actual ELF interaction.

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## THE ICC-LANGUAGES CONFERENCE 2022

### Online ICC AGM and Conference Programme

#### *Winds of change – teaching and learning languages in a changing environment*

On Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022

<p>10.15 – 11:15 Plenary</p>	<p>Robert Gibson</p> <p><b>Presentation title:</b> Navigating Cultures in a Winds of Change VUCA World</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b> We live in a world of increasing Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). Globalization means that more people than ever before in human history are coming into contact with cultures other than their own. Technology has enabled a new level of global hyperconnectivity. People are able to travel further, faster and more easily than in the past, the labour force is more mobile and diverse and there are unprecedented numbers of people trying to escape from poverty, conflicts and natural disasters. These megatrends create an increased demand for language and intercultural skills. This presentation will look at the need for global competence in the workplace and explore practical ways of helping people to navigate cultures for positive effect. It is based on the presenter's extensive experience of providing a wide range of intercultural services for individuals, teams and organizations in a large multinational engineering company.</p> <p><b>Bio:</b> Robert Gibson has 30 years' experience of global competence development in business and education. Originally a language teacher, he was responsible for intercultural training at Siemens AG from 2000 – 2018 and is an Adjunct Professor at the Business School of the University of Bologna. His latest book <i>Bridge the Culture Gaps – A toolkit for effective collaboration in the diverse, global workplace</i> was published by Nicholas Brealey in 2021.</p>
<p>11.15 - 12:00 Session 1</p>	<p>Anna Soltyska University Language Centre, Ruhr University Bochum (Germany)</p> <p><b>Presentation title:</b> New technologies in classroom assessment: a necessary evil or window of opportunity?</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b> New technologies are here to stay, with regard not only to how foreign languages are taught and learnt, but also how they are assessed. With an accelerated trend towards moving some educational processes online, practitioners and researchers alike are pondering the questions of validity and reliability of assessment procedures in new digital contexts. This presentation aims to collate questions and dilemmas related to assessment of language skills that teachers in various areas of education have been facing since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges and possible ways of addressing them will be used as a springboard for revising current approaches to testing and making assessment an integral part of 21<sup>st</sup> century media-based language learning. The talk will end with some practical tips on designing online assessment procedures that teachers may wish to implement in their diverse</p>

	<p>teaching settings.</p> <p><b>Bio:</b> Lecturer in English for Academic and Specific Purposes at the University Language Centre of the Ruhr-University in Bochum (Germany). Active in the language teaching and testing industry since 2000. As a teacher trainer and presenter has held workshops and spoken at conferences worldwide, including Great Britain, Egypt, Finland, Poland, Russia and most recently Azerbaijan. The convenor of the working group “Language centres against academic misconduct” to promote awareness of academic integrity and non-cheating culture in educational contexts in Germany and beyond.</p>
<p>12:00 – 12.45 Session 2</p>	<p>Poppy Skarli and Rob Williams Turku University of Applied Sciences Senior Lecturer in English, University of Westminster, London</p> <p><b>Presentation Title:</b> How to empower and engage students in an online course: Case CATAPULT MOOC</p> <p><b>Outline:</b> Teaching online has become the norm since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. Course design, materials, methodologies had to be adapted to meet the needs of the new circumstances. One of the greatest challenges of teaching languages online is how to empower and engage the students. This workshop will present the case of the CATAPULT MOOC, a course entitled “Teaching LSPs”; provide concrete examples and good practices of student engagement, in particular the use of Teaching Assistants; and discuss how the lessons learnt from the CATAPULT MOOC can be applied in your teaching.</p> <p><b>Bio:</b> MA in International Education, Senior Lecturer in English at Turku University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Business. Poppy has been teaching English in three different countries and across a range of educational institutions. Since 2001, she has been teaching English Communication Skills at Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Since 2014, she has been involved in creating MOOCs in Erasmus+ projects such as CoMoViWo (Communication in Mobile and Virtual Work) and CATAPULT (Computer-Assisted Language and Platforms to Upskill LSP teachers).</p>
<p>13.45– 14.30 Session 3</p>	<p>Marijana Prodanovic Associate Professor (ELT) at Belgrade University</p> <p><b>Presentation Title:</b> How Motivating is an Online Language Environment? Examining the Role of Learning Apps</p> <p><b>Outline:</b> In the unseen era education systems around the globe are witnessing nowadays, the era in which our daily choices depend on the Covid 19-related measures, this paper aims to address the notion of motivation in an online language environment. Relying on corpora illustrating the activities conducted with the support of online-based applications, it reports on the extent to which such activities influence the language learning atmosphere and students’ motivation. Questions related to what could motivate language learners have been at the heart of EFL- related research for decades. No matter whether we examine extrinsic, intrinsic factors, i.e., integrative, or instrumental motivation – one cannot ignore a direct link between motivation, on the one hand, and classroom atmosphere and language learning outcomes, on the other. Given the current needs, including not only our introduction to the most up-to-date technologies, but also their active usage, as well as reflection on their benefits and</p>

	<p>drawbacks, it seems that providing our students with motivating enough activities has become a two-fold task.</p> <p>Despite the hurdles one may come across along the language teaching-learning path, this paper concludes that carefully selected and duly planned and paced activities supported by online applications can play a significant role in improving the classroom atmosphere and enhancing students' motivation.</p> <p><b>Bio:</b> Ms Prodanović obtained her PhD (2015) degree (English Language and Linguistics) at the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade University. The very same year, she became an assistant professor – and climbed to an associate professorship in 2020.</p> <p>Prodanović has been teaching English at university level since 2012 (ESP, EAP, ELT, Pragmatics, Communication). She occupied the position of Singidunum University (Belgrade, Serbia) English Department Head 2016-2021. As of 2021 – she has held the position of the Dean of the Faculty of Philology, Sinergija University.</p> <p>Her fields of interest include but are not limited to: (Sub-) Branches of Micro-linguistics, as well as Intercultural Pragmatics, and emerging issues in ELT – she has addressed them in a number of scientific papers and three coursebooks.</p> <p>Prodanović has actively participated in international projects and pursuits and (co-) organised around 50 conferences, round tables and workshops – focused on current issues and trends in ELT/ESP/EAP, as well as language schools, aimed at encouraging multilingualism in the country (region). It is also worthy of note that she is a member of the Foreign Languages and Literature Association of the Serbia Board (2016- to date), as well as co-editor in-chief of SingiLogos journal.</p>
<p>14.30 – 15.15 Session 4</p>	<p>Aleksandra Beata Makowska University Assistant Lecturer at University of Łódź, Department of Specialised Languages and Intercultural</p> <p><b>Presentation title:</b> Online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic - the students' perspective</p> <p><b>Outline: (max 300 words):</b> The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the educational reality worldwide. Suddenly, 93,100 university teachers and about 1.2 million university students in Poland were faced with the challenges of distance learning and teaching. Along with other changes, assessment of students' knowledge had to be adapted to the new conditions in order to maintain the continuity of the educational process.</p> <p>The aim of the study is to discuss the students' perception of online assessment procedures conducted at the University of Łódź during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis is based on an anonymous survey conducted among students of Linguistics of Business and Linguistics in Specialised Communication. The questionnaire shows students' opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of online assessment, ways to solve the existing problems, issues connected with fairness and fraudulent practices, technical problems that might affect the outcome or their preferences concerning future forms of knowledge assessment. Its results are contrasted with the teacher's experiences and difficulties that appeared while preparing and conducting remote tests measuring students' progress.</p> <p><b>Bio details: (200 words max):</b></p>



	<p>Aleksandra Beata Makowska holds a Ph.D. degree in linguistics. She also holds an MA in Specialised Translation from the University of Łódź, an MA in Marketing and Management from Wyższa Szkoła Kupiecka and an MBA from IFAM in Paris, France. During her PhD studies, she received a scholarship from Zürcher Hochschule der Angewandten Wissenschaften, IUED Institut für Übersetzen und Dolmetschen in Winterthur in Switzerland. Currently, she teaches Business and Legal English at the University of Łódź as well as advanced English and basic German. Her research interests include EAP, ESP, teaching business and technical jargon, specialised translation, technical and business communication.</p>
<p>15.30 - 16:15 Session 5</p>	<p>Philip Cronin Teacher of English</p> <p><b>Presentation Title:</b> EUROLTA – A chance to reflect and refresh</p> <p><b>Outline:</b> This talk will give an overview of Euroлта and its different elements, as well as the motivations of myself and my colleagues for undertaking the course. We will look at key questions, such as "What have I learned from the course?" and "How has the course made me a better teacher?".</p> <p>The Euroлта offers a wide range of topics, all related to language teaching and learning. The course is ideally suited to those with little or no teaching background, as well as more experienced teachers. Typical areas of study are the learner in language education, the CEFR and its implications, as well as effective ways of teaching the four language skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. The home assignments and learner diary entries which follow each module give us the opportunity in private to analyse and evaluate different teaching and learning concepts.</p> <p>Central to the Euroлта course is the micro-peer teaching, which each participant carries out a number of times during the course. The talk will also address the merits of this and how critical feedback from the instructors and our colleagues has facilitated our development as teachers.</p> <p><b>Bio:</b> I am a teacher of English at the Volkshochschulen (adult education centre) in Berlin. I am a university graduate, as well as a CELTA holder and have been teaching for over ten years within a wide range of ages and levels.</p>
<p>16.15 – 17.00 Session 7</p>	<p>Barry Tomalin Editor, ICC Journal,</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Language Lasts Longer but Culture is Quicker</p> <p><b>Outline:</b> One of the fastest ways to get students engaged and motivated in foreign language learning is to explore their cultural and personal interests, not just to learn about the culture of the language they are learning.</p> <p><b>The presentation will explore three things.</b></p> <p><b>1. The new paradigm</b> 'The Winds of Change' emphasises that we are one species on one planet, with diversity of expression and behaviour depending on where we live. Our job as</p>

teachers is to find the common ground between us. This means talking less about cultural differences but finding commonalities between our ways of communicating and adapting where necessary to the target language.

### **2. Culture is quicker.**

Getting students interested in the culture, especially in relation to their own interests is a fast way to motivate language learning. The presentation demonstrates activities to achieve this.

### **3. Student engagement**

Presents regular short intercultural cultural activities to stimulate learning the target language.

**The message:** We are all part of one planet, one species, one culture. Let's focus on finding the common ground.

**Bio:** Barry is a lecturer in intercultural studies and Public Diplomacy at the Global Institute for Diplomacy and has published over 30 books including 'Cultural Awareness', 'World Business Cultures- a Handbook' and, 'Cross-Cultural Communication, Theory and Practice'. He is Founder and Director of the Business Cultural Trainers Certificate at International House London, an intensive programme, training teachers to research, plan, market and deliver intercultural training in business and other organisations. Barry was Editor of BBC English by Radio and Television in the BBC World Service and has worked in over 60 countries worldwide with the British Council and other organisations.

## Navigating Cultures in a VUCA World

### Robert Gibson

**NOTE:** You can access the recording of Robert's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Robert Gibson.

#### Theme

We live in a world of increasing Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). Globalisation means that more people than ever before in human history are coming into contact with cultures other than their own. Technology has enabled a new level of global hyperconnectivity; people are able to travel further, faster and more easily than in the past, the labour force is more mobile and diverse and there are unprecedented numbers of people trying to escape from poverty, conflicts and natural disasters.

These megatrends create an increased demand for language and intercultural skills. This presentation looked at the need for global competence in the workplace and explore practical ways of helping people to navigate cultures for positive effect. It is based on the presenter's extensive experience of providing a wide range of intercultural services for individuals, teams and organisations in a large multinational engineering company.

#### Bio

Robert Gibson has 30 years' experience of global competence development in business and education. Originally a language teacher, he was responsible for intercultural training at Siemens AG from 2000 - 2018 and is an Adjunct Professor at the Business School of the University of Bologna. He was Vice-President of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR Europa) and a founding member of SIETAR Deutschland. He is an established author and has published six books and written over 70 articles for *Business Spotlight* magazine.

#### Presentation

According to the saying 'When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others windmills'. The business world talks about coping with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). Whichever image you prefer it is clear that language skills and intercultural competence are essential if you are to be successful in this world of change. This presentation, which focused on culture, addressed three questions:

1. Why is culture important?
2. What are the key cultural differences?
3. How can we deal with them?

#### Why is culture important?

The megatrend driving international business is the increased pace of globalisation. This doesn't mean that everyone is becoming the same but rather that there is an unprecedented degree of connectivity. Intercultural competence is needed at individual, team and organisational levels. It involves overcoming cultural barriers and building constructive relationships with partners from different cultures for mutual benefit.

Target groups for intercultural training include business travellers on trips for several days as well as those on project assignments for several months or delegations for several years. Increasingly, support is needed for diverse global teams collaborating from dispersed sites virtually. The impact of culture for businesses is arguably even greater when it comes to international joint ventures, cross-border mergers and global organisational development or change management. Those involved in global strategies, sales and marketing and product management also need to be able to cope effectively with intercultural differences.

### **What are the key cultural differences?**

A useful working definition of culture is a shared system of attitudes, values, meanings, beliefs and behaviour. It is necessary to go beyond looking at national culture to understand other types of culture which can have as much, or more, influence on behaviour and organisations. These include work cultures (e.g. professional, functional, corporate and team cultures and other aspects of diversity (e.g. generation, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability as well as race and ethnicity).

Some of the key cultural factors that need to be considered are attitudes to communication style, space (private/public), group versus individual, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, rules and time.

### **How can we deal with them?**

Intercultural competence development is a life-long process. Different levels of intercultural competence are accepting, understanding, adapting, functioning and bridging.

A useful model for thinking about collaboration across cultures is cultural bridging. The starting point is scanning your own multiple cultural identities and then those of the individuals, teams or organisations you are working with. The next step is to identify not only differences but also similarities and then agreeing on common targets or a vision before the final stage of implementation. The situation you are dealing with (e.g. negotiation, project, merger) needs to be taken into account as does the context (e.g. boom, recession, pandemic).

Intercultural training needs to reflect the topic (e.g. culture-specific or culture-general) as well as the target group and their function. Ideally it should be integrated into other forms of training. Toolkits or learning ecosystems which are co-created by those involved help to ensure that learning and development is relevant to specific needs and has maximum impact.

One example of a toolkit is Gibson (2021) which aims to provide business people with a practical guide to working in diverse, global teams. It covers many different types of culture including national culture, connects culture, diversity and neuroscience, addresses the needs of all team members including leaders, is based on authentic business cases, is interactive and is written in clear international English.

Gibson, R. (2021) *Bridge the Culture Gaps – A toolkit for effective collaboration in the diverse, global workplace*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

## **New Technologies in Classroom Assessment: A necessary evil or window of opportunity?**

**Anna Soltyska**

**NOTE:** You can access the recording of Anna's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Anna Soltyska.

### **Bio details**

Anna lectures in English for Special and Academic Purposes at the Ruhr University Bochum in Germany. Her research interests are in language learning assessment with particular reference to academic integrity and assessment literacy among various stakeholders. She is convenor of the working group on language centres and academic misconduct and is active in the IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) Testing, Evaluation and Assessment SIG (Special Interest Group). On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 Anna delivered an ICC-Languages webinar entitled *From cheating to e-cheating in language assessment: (How) should we care?* You can watch the recording in ICC-Languages/WEBINARS and **scroll down** until you find Anna Soltyska MA and **click on** *watch the recording*.

### **Presentation**

The focus of this presentation is how the use of technology for classroom assessment can affect accuracy. The goal of testing is to measure exactly what the given test intends to measure. So, accuracy matters. If we fail to achieve accuracy testing is pointless. The two main causes for inaccuracy in testing are test content and techniques and a lack of reliability. This presentation examines how the use of technology in classroom assessment can impact accuracy both in a positive and negative sense and whether the unprecedented shift from testing under face-to-face conditions to technology mediated teaching, learning and testing, which we have been experiencing since 2020, is just a necessary evil we have to live with or an opportunity which we can exploit to the benefit of various stakeholders.

The onset of Covid in Spring 2020 made it obvious that we had to add new components to existing assessment methods or design new ones for classroom, university and public examinations assessment. This presentation explores digital

testing under five headings; validity, authenticity, reliability, feasibility and washback effect.

### **Validity**

Validity examines whether assessment instruments measure exactly what they are supposed to measure. In line with the concept of emergency remote teaching and emergency remote testing as opposed to online learning there was a change to an ultimate mode of delivery due to the pandemic. The aim of the change was to provide methods of instruction that were temporary and reliable though not necessarily perfect. So, there was a shift from paper-based summative testing with face-to-face interviews to online or digital portfolios and testing delivered by online media. It was quick to set up and relatively reliable and it served its purpose. But does this change still guarantee the correspondence of what the learner actually practised in online classes and what they were expected to deliver in online assessment? To analyse whether validity was still provided, it is important to consider its three areas: correspondence validity (is there a correspondence between what is taught and what is assessed?), face validity (does the physical experience of the test correspond to what it is supposed to measure?) and predictive validity (is there a correspondence between test scores and the performance of test takers?)

There are a number of threats to online test validity. One is a possible mismatch between the cognitive skills needed to complete a test and those needed to follow the course and another is assuming the learner's level of digital literacy and familiarity with online testing software and hardware. Giving students the opportunity to practise with the technology before the test is thus very important.

### **Authenticity**

Do assessment tasks online match the target language usage? Once again there are three areas to consider: linguistic authenticity (does the language in the test meet the linguistic needs of the test taker?), situational authenticity (are target language items to be tested in context or are they isolated and decontextualised?), and task-related authenticity (Is the language task authentic and related to student's context and learning goals?). It's important to know the groups you are testing and adjust the

assessment instruments to their learning goals. Furthermore, assessment organisers need to consider a number of factors to cater for highest possible degree of authenticity of their assessment procedures. Should the online assessment be live? Should it have a time limit? Should it be short and at a definite time or take place over a period of time? Is the language being tested used by an individual in real life, or is it part of a group interaction? Finally, aids and resources may be an authenticity issue. Are we testing online, on screen or still in the classroom orally or on paper? If it's an oral test, is it recorded or assessed on live delivery? We need to be open to new approaches, but make sure we pilot them before using them in tests.

### **Reliability**

Reliability raises the issue of whether the online assessment instruments are consistent and dependable. Can we assure fairness and equality of access to equipment? How does the testing environment affect the test fairness, especially if the test takers are working at home? Are the rating and scoring procedures reliable? If the results are assessed and recorded by machine, has the system itself been properly trained and tested? If learners are taking tests online from home or the office, how can we be sure that the learner and the test taker are the same person? Is the test author genuine? One of the problems with increased use of technology in testing is equipment failure and how to restore operation in a reliable way. Also, we need to be aware that some students may claim a system breakdown so that they can retake the test or gain more time to submit assignments.

The final test of reliability in a digital testing age is that of consistency of results across testing administrations, comparable groups of test takers and the test environment. The variety of actors and organisations is so great that comparisons of reliability are difficult to provide.

The key issue is how to ensure reliability through user authentication, process tracking and online checking. To achieve this, not relying only on human assessors, collecting all results in one place for ease of checking and comparison using data analysis techniques is important.

## **Feasibility**

Is the assessment procedure doable and is it economical in terms of time, personnel, and equipment? We need time for design, preparation, administration and scoring. Have we enough of the right personnel or do we need to outsource and do we have the equipment and expertise? If we need additional investment, do we have the budget required? These are important practical questions that need consideration. However, it is important not to overextend what you can do but be prepared to think long-term about building a new assessment system.

## **Washback**

What effect do current assessment procedures have on instruction? The changes to greater online learning assessment may lead to changes in how assessment takes place. Do we move from single day assessment to continuous assessment? From summative to formative and from product-oriented to process-oriented assessment? Could we consider a move from individual to collaborative performance? Should we move away from guided and supervised assessment to autonomous assessment, which is at the same time more individualised according to the learner's goals? A key issue is whether assignments permit 'no aids' or allow learners to access the Web for information and support.

The washback effect of digital assessment procedures can be beneficial, improving language use and the ability to use technology but also improving learner autonomy as well as study and time management skills.

## **Conclusion**

Online learning and digital testing offers a window of opportunity to assess and evaluate our language testing procedures and revise and reform them to fit in with advances in interhuman and machine communication. If we wish to achieve this, however, the time is now.



## **How to empower and engage students on an online course – lessons learned from the CATAPULT project.**

**Poppy Skarli & Rob Williams**

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Poppy and Rob's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Poppy Skarli.**

As teachers, we have all been facing the challenges of empowering and engaging students. The question of how to achieve this online was not new, but perhaps has been crystallised during the COVID years as all of us have had to adapt, some more willingly than others, to the new reality. The following is an account of the experiences gained through a MOOC program designed to upskill LSP teachers – those with LSP experience and those coming new to this area of education.

CATAPULT (Computer Assisted Training and Platforms to Upskill LSP Teachers) was an Erasmus + project running for 3 years from 2018 – 2021. The cornerstone of the project was a MOOC course, entitled *Teaching LSPs* led by the design team at Turku University of Applied Sciences with contributions from the partners in the project consortium. Although the project is finished, the course can still be accessed on the Course Networking (CN) platform at <https://www.thecn.com/5477863>.

While MOOCs are designed to be self-study tools, the CATAPULT group ran this as an asynchronous event. Participants could contact and receive feedback from members of the Catapult consortium in the first two iterations of the MOOC as well as from teaching assistants (TAs) in the latter two.

Points that we learned from this experience are:

A consistent framework is important for participants to have not only a sense of security but also a sense of purpose. This framework is not only seen in the progression of the programme but also in the visual appearance of the site. Much as coursebooks have a visual identity so should the MOOC. Each unit needed to have the same number of sections in it. There needed to be a similar variety of exercise and activity types. All the units progressed in levels of complexity (and time commitment required) so as to cater for each kind of user. Units started with an introduction, followed by short quiz-based activities leading to a final reflection on one's own practice. In this way, participants could follow their progress and at the same time dip in and out of units at will. The use of clear rubrics and detailed automated responses also formed a part of this.

Motivation can come from rewards. As part of charting their progress, participants could gain tokens (called Anar seeds on the CN platform) which log the amount they have engaged with the course. They could also receive badges for having completed units, and finally a certificate for completing the entire programme. The first two of these are generated automatically by the platform. To obtain the certificate, the participant needed to complete tasks that were reviewed by members of the MOOC team.

We identified 3 types of user, which corresponds to some extent to the ways in which learners engage in any teaching and learning environment. These were categorised as: Browsers – those who were just curious and dipped into some units; Testers – those who completed all or part of some units and Creators – those who saw the course through to the end (typically about 11% of those who initially enrolled). The number of Anar seeds and badges corresponded, not surprisingly, to the kind of user.

At the end of each iteration of the programme, participants were asked to feedback to us what motivated them. Over the courses, the single most popular input source was tailor-made videos. Whilst video was a favourite medium in general, those that were tailor-made gave an added factor that participants found attractive – not least because the connection to the course content was abundantly clear, whereas referring to commercially available or open-source videos meant that this had to be explained. Of the activities provided, the most popular were opportunities to post and discuss either with members of the MOOC team or with fellow participants. This was crucial in creating a sense of community, which in turn was fostered by the nature of the feedback and of the conversations.

Too often feedback can be cursory – giving praise for the sake of it, for example. This can have the effect of putting people off. Conversely, we came to understand that too much feedback can overwhelm. There are parallels with the face-to-face classroom here, but the asynchronous written form of these discussions means that you cannot negotiate misunderstandings or repair the discourse where something has been taken differently from what you intended. This leads us to the view that timely quality feedback is key to engagement and to creating a community of learning and practice. We came to develop standard guidelines on feedback for the MOOC team to ensure that feedback was suitably focused and concise. We chose the ‘hamburger model’ as the most suitable form of feedback for our particular body of participants.

It was also important for the MOOC team to consider when and how much to engage with the participants. They require different kinds of engagement at different times on the course. Responding to procedural questions is an ongoing phenomenon. Encouraging personalisation through sharing reflections, resources, and practice became key in growing the sense of community.

Perhaps one of the main takeaways from this experience is whilst it goes without saying that timely and yet frequent monitoring and interaction is key to the success of programmes such as CATAPULT, the nature of this interaction is also key. There needs to be visibility. Although online, participants respond well when they can put names to faces. The tailor-made videos showed members of the team – far more engaging than solely having a disembodied voice narrating a set of slides. That and keeping input concise. By scaffolding input and activities so that those who could only invest a short amount of time achieved a tangible result (and not only those who stayed the distance), we feel that we were able to empower a wider range of those who came to the programme in the first place.

## **How Motivating is an Online Language Environment? Examining the Role of Learning Apps**

**Marijana Prodanović**

**NOTE:** You can access the recording of Marijana's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Marijana Prodanovic.

### **New Educational Context**

The generations many of us at work nowadays are millennials or generation Z representatives. A body of research conducted over the previous decades speak in favour of the stand that these generations represent a specific challenge for teachers – given personality traits, adaptation to present-day needs, attention span, motivation, both internal and external, etc. (Schwieger & Ladwin, 2018).

What brought about some additional challenges was the unfortunate COVID-19 outbreak, which severely influenced all our teaching-learning practices. The immediate switch from traditional to online environment (hybrid or solely online) made the most striking difference between the COVID-affected and pre-COVID eras (Prodanovic & Gavranovic, 2021a). In the new, unknown and challenging context of education, students' engagement has so far proved to be one of the most difficult obstacles for teachers to overcome. In this regard, the notion of motivation, as one of the main driving forces for engagement and learning, came to the forefront of language teaching-learning discussions.

Numerous studies conducted over the previous decades confirmed that motivation strongly influences language learning processes. Factors which could directly affect the outcomes include but are not limited to – the frequency of using the target/L2 language, communication/lack of communication in authentic environment, (i.e., with native speakers), ambition/wanted output, the quality of input students are exposed to, and many others (Bailey, Almusharraf, & Hatcher & Zheng, 2017; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Prodanovic & Gavranovic, 2021).

The uncontrollable spread of digital technologies and the Internet, the developments of which we are constantly witnessing, have enabled language teachers and learners

to be exposed to the target language/-s wanted whenever they want and to the extent that they want, via e.g., digital gaming, YouTube, Netflix content, social media (Facebook, Instagram, TalkTalk, LinkedIn), language learning apps, etc.

Before the new, COVID-19 imposed era, blended and flipped classes were mainly of asynchronous character, supported by email communication, online discussion rooms, or other forms of direct messaging. The new era, however, has suddenly changed it all and we can see educational institutions around the globe relying on a number of platforms enabling synchronous student-teacher interaction (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, MS Teams, etc.). Despite being convenient, the jury is still out on whether this teaching mode is effective for students' learning engagement and motivation.

### **Study Results**

To shed some additional light on contemporary EFL teaching and learning flows and practices, with specific attention paid to students' in-class motivation, a study was conducted. It focused on the context wherein a group of 184 EFL learners from two private-sector universities/their respective language departments – one in BiH, (Bosnia and Herzegovina) the other one in Serbia, were exposed to blended language activities conducted in a classroom, and, simultaneously, supported by MS Teams platform, in the period October-December 2021. The study examined students' motivation in such an environment, as well as the correlation between their engagement in the activities supported by online learning apps and course success.

Our target group, comprising the millennials, EFL learners, was exposed to a blended language learning environment – i.e., activities conducted in a traditional classroom (in person) and via MS Teams platform, in a simultaneous mode, in the period – October 2021 – December 2021. Within the timeframe, they participated in many activities they had already been used to prior to that moment – e.g., e-book, interactive material, podcasts, video material - aimed at enhancing their receptive and productive skills. In the period observed, what was additionally introduced to their practices were regular Kahoot and Quiz-based mini-tests addressing grammar and lexicon-related chunks. Though the usage of the apps was not a novel practice to them, it was for the first time the mini tests were used on a regular basis, to review and revise the newly acquired language, but also to get more of them fully engaged. The activities were

conducted in-class and the participants, though it was not a specific requirement, mostly opted for working in pairs or in groups.

After one semester (3 months), the students were given a survey, addressing their attitudes regarding the apps-supported activities. What their answers clearly indicated is that they are fully aware of all the benefits of learning English for various purposes – travelling, business, scientific work, intercultural communication, etc. and that it is the omnipresent need to use English nowadays that strongly motivates them to learn the language. They also confirmed that they feel comfortable in the new era and online language learning environment, wherein the implementation of language learning online apps not only motivates them, and fosters their relationships with the peers, but also helps them acquire some new concepts in an easy way. Furthermore, by participating in such activities, the respondents concluded, they need less time to get prepared for all the official assessment-related activities.

## **Conclusion**

The results obtained unequivocally imply that we have all got used to the new educational environment. Other than that, the generations we work with not only accept but enjoy and benefit from the novelty. As for the examined context and the usage of online apps for in-class practice, addressing language skills, designed to follow the curriculum and the needs of the students a strong link was found in a positive correlation between their usage and students' motivation and course success.

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## **Online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic - the students' perspective**

**Aleksandra Makowska**

**NOTE:** You can access the recording of Aleksandra's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Aleksandra Makowska.

### **Setting the scene:**

The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the life and functioning of the whole educational system with 1.2 million university students and 93,100 university teachers in Poland<sup>1</sup>. Within a few days, they lost their traditional methods of acquiring and sharing knowledge. As a result, the University of Łódź, like other educational institutions, decided to shift classes to the virtual world. Along with the challenges connected with running the courses smoothly, there was also a question of fair assessment at the end of courses which had to be conducted in accordance with the programme of studies.

### **Assessment of students' progress – before and during the pandemic**

According to OECD guidelines "*Evaluation and assessment provide a basis for monitoring how effectively education is being delivered to students and for assessing the performance of systems, schools, school leaders, teachers and students, among others* (OECD, 2013: 67)". It should be conducted in a testee-friendly atmosphere with a set of well-defined assessment criteria, which facilitate students' learning (Ziółkowski, 2015). All these factors enhance self-directed learning, sense of security and motivation to study. In the process of education it is not the grade that should matter, but what they learn and experience. In addition, instant feedback is also of overriding importance, because it gives hints to students about their learning methods, and results obtained, and also motivates them to pursue knowledge.

On the other hand, synchronous online learning is a continuation of the initial ideal of asynchronous distance learning and is a manifestation of Umesao's Information Society (Krupski & Cader, 2006). Knowledge gained in the process of traditional education quickly becomes outdated and needs to be up-dated. For this reason,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C84586%2Cgus-w-ub-roku-akademickim-w-polsce-studiowalo-ponad-82-tys-cudzoziemcow.html>, 28.06.2021

information technology comes in handy in education, because e-learning has become a tool which allows for sharing the latest updates on a mass scale. At the same time, it is a shift towards student-oriented or incited learning via the computer. However, it becomes challenging at the point when the students' progress needs to be assessed, because it constitutes the weakest cog in the whole teaching machine conducted online (Krupski & Cader, 2006). The teachers might have a problem with providing the same conditions for testees. In addition, students are deprived of thorough teacher feedback, because the whole process is automated, grading systems are based on more or less interactive tests and there is no control or supervision over the process of taking the test, which allows for manipulation and cheating.

The shift from on-site face-to-face classes to entirely online distance teaching posed a formidable challenge during the outbreak of Sars-Cov-2 (Koris & Pal, 2021). Apart from the problem of the adaptation of teaching methods and materials, there were also doubts about the assessment procedures. Problems also revolved around students' honesty, teachers' technological skills and pedagogical competence.

### **Results of the study**

The study is based on a survey conducted in January 2022 among students of the second and third year of Linguistics for Business, a BA programme at UŁ and the second year students of Linguistics in Specialised Communication, an MA programme. The survey contains 16 questions: 14 multiple choice and 2 open questions concerning assessment methods used at the University of Łódź during the remote learning period in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study gives voice to the beneficiaries of the online teaching and testing solutions. Some of the findings are in alliance with the literature on the subject, despite the fact that the results come from non-specialists. The respondents express positive attitudes towards computer-based online tests. They find them quite reliable, but at the same time they openly voice their concerns about their fellow students' honesty and teachers' trust in them. Technical issues might also affect the whole education and assessment process. On the other hand, university policies should be consistent in order not to cause chaos. Finally, the construction of the test, the amount of materials covered and the limitations imposed during the test might affect the end result.



### Conclusion:

The study shows a clear need for the necessity of harmonising the use of communication platforms, test applications and storage place of the materials, because it causes confusion and chaos. Distance learning is more difficult, because it requires more effort from the participants, but some teaching methods are ineffective when conducted online. The teachers should put more trust in their students and demonstrate their understanding. In addition, they should design the tests properly with an amount of materials possible to cover. On the other hand, they should use testee-friendly applications and develop policy accordingly. In addition, the university should concentrate more on forms of formative assessment which incites critical thinking or consider oral exams rather than obligatory summative end-of-term exams which are written in programmes of studies.

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## **Euroлта – A Chance to Reflect and Refresh.**

### **Philip Cronin**

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Philip's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Philip Cronin.**

At this year's online ICC conference I had the pleasure of giving a talk about the Euroлта course which I am currently undertaking. My presentation was divided into six parts – What is Euroлта? Who Does Euroлта and Why? Course Content. How Has Euroлта Helped Me? What Next? Conclusion.

I began my talk by giving a description of the course in its current format. It is online and open to teachers of all languages with a lot, some or even no language teaching experience. Eight modules make up the course, with each module dealing with a different area related to language teaching and learning. Some examples are the CEFR, different types of learners, learning strategies and the use of authentic material. For each module there are three home assignments and a learner diary to reflect on language learning processes. The course is assessed by a portfolio of work, including fifteen home assignments, four dossiers related to language learning and teaching, as well as feedback on micro-peer teaching sessions and an evaluated longer taught lesson.

I went on to speak about my motivation and that of my colleagues for undertaking the course. The participants on the course wanted to get new insight into language teaching, refresh concepts learned some time ago, practise, reflect and receive feedback on teaching and share ideas with peers.

My next point dealt with the content of some of the individual modules in detail. I spoke particularly about learning styles (Dunn and Dunn), learning strategies (Rebecca Oxford), learner autonomy, as well as dealing with heterogeneous groups, and using authentic materials.

My next points dealt with the different home assignments for each module and the micro-peer teaching element of the course. The micro-peer teaching involves teaching a specific topic for fifteen minutes and receiving feedback from the trainer, as well as the other participants. This part of the course gave us a great insight into our teaching and allowed us to reflect on our current teaching strengths and what areas we could improve on. Written feedback was also provided by the trainer. These micro-peer teaching sessions also lead to a longer teaching session of between 60 and 90 minutes, where feedback received on previous sessions can be implemented and observed by the trainer.

I then discussed the dossiers for the Euroлта portfolio. The different possible approaches to choose from allow us to analyse and engage with different topics, such as examining placement tests, discuss how grammar is taught in textbooks, and receiving feedback from learners. One of these dossiers is to be done in a

group, which gives us the chance to discuss ideas and opinions with colleagues and to learn from them.

The benefits of the Euroлта course and what we have learned from it was my next point. The participants of the course appreciated the good structure of the sessions, the interesting discussions, the idea of bringing many different teachers from different countries together, the engagement of the teachers, as well as the self-reflection on our teaching.

On speaking about what we could do after the Euroлта course, different options included further implementation of what was learned, taken into the classroom, undertaking the Euroлта diploma, or to bringing the Euroлта course to the participants own schools and starting offering courses there.

I concluded my talk by saying how the Euroлта course allows participants to learn about the teaching practices involved with language teaching, and to open their minds to development and reflection.

## **Language Lasts Longer but Culture is Quicker**

### **Barry Tomalin**

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Barry's presentation by visiting ICC-Languages/Conferences, scrolling down and clicking on 1-day online conference 2022 and clicking on Barry Tomalin.**

### **One planet, one species, diverse expression**

The title came from a broadcast interview for an online international news agency 7D News. In the interview, Richard Lewis, leading world intercultural trainer and creator of the Lewis Model, said that learning a language could be a long process but learning about the culture of the language you are learning can be achieved more quickly and learning about the cultural background both of the students themselves and of the speakers of the language they are learning can increase student engagement with the target language.

The argument is that culture and intercultural understanding is vital to language learning success and is an essential component of the Winds of Change philosophy caused by the huge changes in attitudes and to the way we learn as a result of four key influences: globalisation, international communication through social media and advances in telecommunications, the pandemic normalising distant communication across languages and cultures, the challenge of climate change and the impact of war in the Middle East and South Asia and most recently in Europe. What we are looking for is a planetary view of learning based on the recognition that we are one species on one planet but with diverse ways of expressing ourselves.

Intercultural theory has tended to focus on differences in language and culture. The new constructivist paradigm needs to focus on our commonality. If we look at current cultural theory we need to focus on four key principles:

1. DE-emphasise difference. Emphasise common interests.
2. Don't think difference. Think diversity of expression.
3. Don't think opposition. Think empathy.
4. Don't seek submission. Think mutual adaptation.

If we teach this and show examples of how it can happen we can really achieve miracles with our international students learning other communities' languages. The key areas any language and intercultural training needs to focus on are:

- The attitudes and values of the communities speaking the languages we are learning
- How they communicate, in particular, speech, body language and in the business and diplomatic environment,
- How they behave

Additionally, the acronym RIO is important. R = How to show respect (politeness), I= How to show interest and O = how NOT to cause offence (something everyone on training courses asks me). When we talk about showing interest we are referring to things like historical success, key interests (of the student), science and discovery, national and local heroes and social and personal taboos. The more language learners can learn about these ways of building relations and showing empathy with the speakers of the language they are learning, the better will be their relationships and the stronger their engagement with learning the language.

## **Student engagement**

There is increasing research into student engagement with language learning and the difficulties language teachers face in meeting demands. Teachers face a number of restrictions on their time, including the timetable, the curriculum, the exams to be prepared for and the demands of the textbook. Many teachers complain how difficult it is to get through the required textbook lessons in a semester.

On the other hand, students' engagement with the language learning process is often inhibited by the feeling that their teacher isn't interested in them, doesn't understand them or that they can't understand the teacher because they speak too fast in the language they are teaching. Socially, students overseas often feel lonely. They don't know anybody. They can't get help when they need it. So, students get demotivated and lose interest in learning or practising the new language.

What can we do to engage our students in the language learning process?

In Tricks and Tips on Page 54 I explain 6 intercultural lesson plans you can use to stimulate learner engagement. Others of value are:

- **Create a Culture corner**

Have a notice board or other space in the classroom where students can post pictures or illustrations from their countries reflecting their interests. Then, they can discuss them with the class.

- **Hold a student '15 minutes'**

Have a 15-minute period once or twice a week, depending on class time available, in which students can talk about their own interests and what they enjoy. This allows students to apply the language they have learned to their own interests.

## **Conclusion**

Milton Bennett in his Constructivist paradigm emphasised key qualities of teaching involving students from varied cultural backgrounds. He identified the qualities of humility (one culture is no better than another), tolerance, respect, awareness of difference and what brings us together and the creation of mutual understanding through empathy.

In intercultural relations these qualities can be expressed through understanding, feeling cultures not just being informed about them, adapting, showing commitment and especially, internationalism and a commitment to global intercultural citizenship.

Students need to feel their interests and experience are recognised and they can share them with classmates. Involvement will help motivation as their cultural background will become one of the bases of their learning success. One of our jobs as language teachers is to show people can live together and recognise and value each others' experience. (Milton Bennett [The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication](#) , pp. 521 – 535 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108555067.038>[\[Opens in a new window\]](#), Publisher: Cambridge University Press, Print publication year: 2020)

## WEBINARS

**Andy Cowle**

**Turning a New Page: Why Students Don't Like Reading and How to Change It!**

**February 24th 2022**

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Andy's webinar by visiting ICC-Languages/Webinars, scrolling down to Andy Cowle and clicking on 'Watch the recording'. Andy's slides are also available on the website.**

We have a broken system regarding the way we use reading texts in the modern language classroom. I'm coming at this presentation with two agendas. One, it is widely misunderstood how reading can be approached in the modern language classroom and two, what we mean by reading is often misinterpreted around the world, including the UK, about how texts are used to test the language or reading skills rather than as a way to give meaningful and supportive practice. I'm going to demonstrate this with what I have found eye-opening for many teachers and is corroborated by scientific research. What I'm showing you is not new but is very effective. What we need is for students to leave high school with a reading habit, both in their own language and another language but they won't do that if we just drag them through coursebooks and use reading as a testing mechanism, not reading for pleasure. When we tell parents they are pleased but when we say it will take up classroom time and is not tested reading, everybody gets uncomfortable. There's a widely held belief, not written down, that practice should be difficult and I'm going to argue the case that not all practice should be difficult. It should be quite easy and through that you can get a reading fluency that has enormous benefits; enjoyment, escape, knowledge, learning about the lives of others and other worlds.

I'm not talking about reading for knowledge but reading for pleasure. When we read we learn about the world, we learn new things, we improve our life skills by seeing how people in different times and cultures manage their relationships. However, in school students are not reading for these reasons. They are reading to learn a foreign language and to pass language tests.

So, how do you learn a language in the classroom? You learn grammar and vocabulary, you have reading and listening practice together with writing and speaking practice with the aim of learning the language and the culture and how to communicate in the new language. And the purpose? Pass the test. I would like to see if teachers, rather than preparing the students to take tests, could follow the Scandinavian model where students are freer in how they take tests and their timetables and not even having homework at all. There is a disconnect between what we get from reading, and what they will do in their grown-up lives with books and how we give it to them, making them think they are just learning a language and they are just going to be tested. We need to change it.

To learn a language you get some grammar and some vocabulary, you learn to read and to listen and to write and to speak, including pronunciation, and you learn about the culture and how people communicate. And the purpose of it all? Pass the exam!

Language and learning a language is too often reduced to being taught as a subject. It's not a subject. Students need to feel they are learning a new language for a purpose not just the mechanics of a language. It's as if we were swimming teachers and the students didn't learn to enjoy swimming but learned a lot about buoyancy and the mechanics of movement in the water.

I studied French at school and if it hadn't been for my father's travelling experience and my own love of travel, I would have given up on the language. My Dad was a role model. Are we as teachers, role models? Do we spend time reading for pleasure? If not, we have two problems in the classroom. We are giving our students difficult reading. We're giving them only questions and essays at the end of it so they hate reading because they don't get a choice of which book or which text and don't hear the teacher talking about how much they love a book they've just read. We have to fight against the digital distraction that makes us feel that reading a book of 300 pages is a bit boring, but that's another session. 30 minutes a day reading a book for pleasure is building your book reading habit. Even 15 minutes a day can get you through a novel a month. That's 12 novels a year. But where is this habit being taught in schools? How can we possibly expect this habit to be picked up by students if teachers aren't doing it and sharing their experience and giving their



students the cultural, knowledge and linguistic experience that can come from reading for pleasure? So, make a date with a book!

I worked in Germany and my parents drove over to see me and they often wondered about signs on the motorway saying Umleitung (diversion) and Ausfahrt (Exit). They learned them because they saw them very often. If students see particular words regularly in class they will automatically learn them too and they won't get bored. At the moment they just get lists to learn and it doesn't really stimulate the brain and it's a bit boring. What would it be like if students as part of their learning alongside the mechanics of language and their practice workbooks, which have their place, also had the choice of reading books that they choose, topics that they are interested in, expressing their different tastes. We need to find out what our students like and then give them a chance to read at their own level. This causes controversy because we assume that the class is at the same level and, of course, we know that they're not.

Frequency is how we learn a language. That is the fastest way. If you visit a country you will learn the language that is most frequent. If you think about it there is no easy way to learn a language. There are easy words and difficult words. Regular exposure to words used frequently is how we learn language in everyday life so why not in the classroom? We could introduce a culture of reading in the classroom, but at or below their level. What they read can be fiction or non-fiction using graded readers, where the language has been made more accessible at beginner, elementary or intermediate level, with common words repeated regularly. Readers give them the opportunity to see language used repeatedly at their level in a story or a book they would like.

The teacher could do a survey of the students at the beginning of the year to find what topics interest them and the school could provide a series of graded readers at different levels on the topics the students say they like. Students choose their own book, put it back if they don't like it and read without stopping. The whole point of graded readers is not just to make language simpler but to give students the chance to see words used frequently at their level and not demotivate them by their thinking, *'I can't finish this. I don't understand it.'* Whenever they see texts in coursebooks they are often overwhelmed because they are seeing a text for the first time and they

have to start all over again with new vocabulary and new grammar. The way to consolidate language acquisition is to expose the students to the same words.

### **Intensive and extensive reading**

In class and in their workbooks learners see texts that are short and difficult, followed by tests with no choice of topic, not much variety and limited range. Extensive reading, a movement which has existed in foreign language learning since the 1980s stresses reading for practice and pleasure. The books, usually readers, are easy with no tests. There is a choice of topics available and if the learners don't like what they are reading, they can give up and swap the book for another one. Extensive reading provides variety and encourages frequent reading with words recurring frequently.

### **Using extensive readers as a stimulus to reading**

When I work with teachers I get them to show a variety of readers to their students and discuss the pictures on the covers and the titles. In doing so the teacher can build the learner's belief in reading; that it can be fun, that it can be owned by them and that reading is for everybody, not just swats and clever geeky people. If you've got learners who are struggling with the language they are learning, try giving them simple extensive reading to motivate them and prove their confidence. Graded readers don't replace coursebooks but a number of schools I have visited have given up coursebooks and adopted graded readers instead.

The benefits of extensive reading are getting exposure to language and motivation, Learners will tell you they finished the whole book on their own and they enjoyed it and were motivated by it. They improve their reading fluency, which is different from speaking fluently. It can also improve writing skills and the benefit of cultural knowledge and developing critical thinking skill is its own reward.

### **Reading out loud to language learners**

A good idea for teachers is to read a book in every lesson for 5 minutes. Pick a book below their level they can understand and like and keep it short. Don't test them. This is about getting learners to follow a story. Reading aloud for a few minutes in

class sends the learners a message that reading is important. Reading to the class unites it and at 5 minutes a lesson you can get through 20 or more stories a year. Creating a regular habit of you reading to them unites the class.

### **Getting language learners to read out loud in class**

I don't like asking students to read aloud because it's not something they do in real life. Asking learners to read aloud in class can be intimidating and demotivating and it's often seen as a means of controlling the class or of practising pronunciation. If a teacher does that, it is better to give learners a chance to prepare individually or in pairs or in groups to avoid the tension of being 'picked on' by the teacher. I even ask learners to prepare at home and read and record on their smartphone or computer and send it to me privately to avoid the pressure in the class. I remember as a child hating to be picked on and asked to read out loud in class.

Many teachers believe that asking learners to read out loud is good pronunciation practice. I don't agree and the evidence doesn't support it. What I would suggest is give the class a writing activity and as you go round the class, talk to students quietly one-to-one and you can then help them with pronunciation without embarrassing them in front of the whole class.

### **What's stopping us doing extensive reading?**

Lack of time in the classroom is one thing and also the demands of getting through the textbook. Many teachers think, "The students are not learning unless I teach them" but in fact learners like learning on their own and the aim of extensive reading is to get students used to reading more if they can read below their level. There is a lot of evidence that if learners read extensively they get better results than from purely grammatically based teaching methods. I have included references at the end of my slide presentation which you can see in **ICC-Languages/Webinars**. Scroll down to **Andy Cowell** and click on **Presentation slides**.

### **Next steps**

The first step is to build an extensive reading library using the school budget or maybe setting up a parent-subsidised 'book for life' fund in which parents pay for and

donate one book to the school. Allocate some of the money to buying a storage box or even a bag to store the books to create a mini-library in the classroom. Google extensive reading and you will find the evidence that it works. Finally, just try it and see how it works for you. Pick a few learners or just one class to start with and expand as you get more experience and see its success. Extensive reading is a game changer in successful language learning. Go to [www.ER-central.com](http://www.ER-central.com) for advice on how to set up an extensive reading (ER) programme, how to choose the right book, how much to read, sample extensive reading programmes and how to assess whether learners are reading and how successful they are.

## **Conclusion**

If we know that extensive reading reinforces learning but is missing from the system we need to introduce it and adjust the system to make room for it and encourage it. Although our system believes and is based on graded introduction of grammar and vocabulary, extensive reading parallels it. Give it time and trust that it works. If you feel that students don't enjoy language classes and when they leave school forget their language work, this is an answer.

## Richard Lewis

### **The Earth is Round, the Ocean is Flat, Culture is Triangular: Why 70% of Mergers & Acquisitions fail.**

Webinar delivered on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 by Richard Lewis, Author of '*When Cultures Collide*' and Chair of Richard Lewis Communications

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Richard's webinar by visiting ICC-Languages/Webinars, scrolling down to Richard Lewis and clicking on 'Watch the recording'.**

First, we need to understand what culture is, not an easy concept to describe. I describe it as follows. '*Cultural behaviour is the end product of collected wisdom, filtered and passed down through hundreds of generations and translated into hardened, undiscussable core beliefs, values, notions, and persistent action patterns.*'

We have to recognise different layers of culture. After all, people in California don't behave exactly the same as people in New York. As well as national culture we have regional, professional and educational differences and also differences in gender, social class, religion, generational, ethnic differences within society, corporate differences according to who you work for and, combining all these is the most important factor, your personal culture. So, each person is a culture in themselves.

How many countries are there in the world? The United Nations membership includes 197 countries. However, if you ask how many cultures there are in the world the answer is more than 2000, including hundreds of minor ones, such as the Amazon basin and the Australian Aborigines. However, when it comes down to doing business there are 45 key countries measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (See Largest World Economies at [www://worldpopulationreview.com](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com).)

All the world's cultures can be neatly classified into three categories, Linear-Active, Multi-Active and Reactive. Linear-Active cultures are task oriented, highly-organised planners who like to do one thing at a time. Multi-Active cultures tend to be more

extrovert and people-oriented where people tend to do many things at once, often in an unplanned order. Reactive cultures are more introvert, respect-oriented cultures whose people are reluctant to initiate anything. They prefer to listen first and then react to it. Broadly speaking, you can identify national cultures like this but some are hybrid, showing aspects of all three characteristics in their national cultures. These include India, Russia, Finland, Sweden and Turkey. The diagram of the Lewis Model, which you can see online, shows the relationship of different national cultures to the three characteristics I have mentioned. Individuals, of course are a combination of different characteristics and when we test participants on our training courses we find people from the same country may well be more Linear-Active, Multi-Active or Reactive, despite sharing the same nationality. For example, our test discovered a participant who seemed to be Reactive (like east Asians) but turned out to be from Paraguay in Latin America, which is Multi-Active, but acted quite differently from colleagues from Uruguay or Argentina. So, nationality is not the only indicator of cultural identity.

In a world population of 7 billion people how many are Linear-Active, Multi-Active and Reactive? Statistics published in 2019 suggest that 4 billion are Multi-Active, 2 billion are Reactive, and 700 million people are Linear-Active. That leaves 300 million who can be considered “hybrids” or “mediators.”

When we look at the typology of the different cultures the most important is values. Linear-Actives tend to value scientific truth and put facts before feelings. Multi-Actives tend to focus on feelings before facts and are more flexible in their relationship to rules and regulations. What is seen to be truth may depend on the situation. Ask a French speaker about the truth, you may get the reply, “*Cela dépend*” (it depends). Reactives tend to put ‘face’ (personal dignity) first and believe in group orientation. They can be quite indirect in order to avoid causing offence. Another important feature in understanding different cultures is differences in communication styles, which can easily lead to misunderstandings. For example, An Italian involved in a joint venture might explain the background at length whereas the Finnish counterpart may just want to get to the facts and interrupts the Italian, causing offence. Linear-Active communication leads to fairly direct and quick action, as speech is for information. Among Multi-Actives speech is more for expressing

opinion. They will include different perspectives and try to persuade people. This may have a negative influence on Linear-Actives who require facts and evidence. The communication priority for Reactives is politeness and creating harmony. They are quite good at reaching agreements with people but it takes a long time before any action is taken. Speech is for creating harmony. These are, of course, generalisations. Individuals may find their style varies and may contain elements of the styles of other categories.

As well as talking in different ways, people also listen in different ways. Once again, we can make a differentiation between listening for information (Linear-Actives), listening for opinions (Multi-Actives) and listening for harmony (Reactives). The fact is that different listening patterns can easily lead to misunderstandings, particularly attitudes to towards humour and jokes.

Leadership style is another key distinction between cultural groups. Linear-Actives tend to be more democratic, Multi-Actives tend to be more top-down autocratic and Reactives tend more towards a Confucian consensus (respect for workers rewarded by obedience) although individuals in corporations may adopt different styles. In making decisions, leaders go through five steps;

- problem recognition
- information search
- construction of alternative solutions
- choice
- implementation

How these five steps are put into practice may vary considerably between corporations and individuals. Leadership also involves the business strategy, negotiating styles, building trust, employee status, customer orientation and attitudes to time and space.

Strategy is also influenced by cultural differences. Once again, Linear-Actives will tend to go for the bottom line (profit), Multi-Actives will also look for profit but also focus on enhancing reputation whereas Reactives will tend to go for potential market share as a reason to initiate a new business project.

Negotiating can also be affected by cultural differences. Linear-Actives tend to put their cards on the table right away, whereas Multi-Actives prefer background discussion before putting proposals on the table. Reactives often prefer general discussion, leading to a compromise that leads to a solution. Not knowing the typical negotiation style of your future commercial partner can easily lead to misunderstanding of motives resulting in frustration and even withdrawal from the negotiation.

Attitudes towards the truth and its role in building mutual trust is also important and different communities have different understandings of what the truth involves. Is it absolute (scientific), is it situational (flexible), is it negotiable, does our understanding of the truth depend on the context or is it a 'dangerous' concept to be avoided? Again, there are differences between Linear-Actives, Multi-Actives and Reactives in this respect. Imagine, five people are negotiating a bridge-construction project. Four are Japanese and one is German. A Japanese colleague makes a mistake in the calculations and the German colleague points it out. As a result, the Japanese colleague feels he has lost face in public and the negotiation breaks down as a result. If the German had understood Japanese culture he would have waited until the end of the meeting and quietly talked to the Japanese negotiator on the side to point out the error. Even pointing out the error should be done indirectly, using words like, "*Your figures appear to be different from mine. Maybe I made a mistake.*" Using this technique, the Japanese manager would be happy to admit the error and correct it. So, in Japan you have to think '*How do I stop them losing face? How do I make them look good?*' Key differences in approaching trust-building between trading partners is trust in institutions (Linear-Actives), compassion and personal closeness (Multi-Actives) and protecting others from losing face (Reactives).

Employee status, understood as the power distance between management levels, is also significant. In Linear-Active companies power distance is relatively low and open discussion is relatively easy. In Multi-Active cultures the power distance is high with decisions taken at the top. In Reactive companies the directors and managers generally show respect to those below them and get obedience as a result.



How do different cultures deal with clients? For Linear-Actives service, delivery and cost are prime factors. For Multi-Actives the personal relationship is key and for Reactives being part of the same network and building long term inter-company relationships is what matters most.

Looking at attitudes to time and space, Linear-Actives are very much task, calendar and deadline orientated whereas both Multi-Actives and Reactives prioritise tasks and there may be variations in the timing of task completion.

Finally, in expressing disagreement Linear-Actives tend to be more direct, whereas Multi-Actives usually try to keep things pleasant and Reactives will prefer indirectness. It is important to understand coded speech - how people say one thing but may mean something quite different.

Statistics suggest that 75% of international joint ventures fail to achieve their financial goals and break down as a result. As we have seen, the failure to work together successfully is often due to a misunderstanding of cultural differences. The key to success? Do your cultural due diligence before you start.

## **The EU Lifelong Learning Platform and the added value to its members**

**Oonagh Aitken**

**April 21st 2022**

**NOTE: You can access the recording of Oonagh's webinar by visiting ICC-Languages/Webinars, scrolling down to Oonagh Aitken and clicking on 'Watch the recording'. Oonagh's slides are also available on the website.**

### **Bio**

Oonagh Aitken is a former Chief Executive of Volunteering Matters, a UK national charity providing volunteering opportunities to people of all ages. She began her career as a teacher of modern languages and following several years in the Education Directorate of Scotland's largest region, spent 2 years as its representative in Brussels. She held a number of senior management roles in Scottish local government. Following a move to Quebec, she joined the staff of the McGill School of Social Work and became involved in research in indigenous communities in Quebec. She spent a number of years working for the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government in the UK before joining the voluntary sector. She has taught on the Voluntary Sector Management Masters programme at City University for the last three years. She holds an MA in Modern Languages, an MEd in Educational Administration and an MA in Art History.

Oonagh has been a member of the Steering Committee of LLLP for the last three years. She is also the Treasurer of the European Civic Forum and President of Volonteurope.

For more information or to get in touch: [oonagh@volonteurope.eu](mailto:oonagh@volonteurope.eu) or visit [www.lllplatform.eu](http://www.lllplatform.eu).

### **The Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP)**

The Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP) is a group of 41 European networks (CSOs) founded in 2005 and involving over 50,000 education and training institutions. It's a network of networks devoted to lifelong learning and facilitating Europe-wide cross sector cooperation between civil society organisations in the field of education and

training. Volonteuropa, a member of LLLP, is a network of organisations of volunteers who believe that volunteering is a form of learning for anyone of any age.

The members of LLLP include teachers, parents, educators, volunteers and practitioners and learners, so it is a very broad-based network. Its key objectives are to build inclusive and democratic education systems, widen access to quality education for all and to increase the relevance of education to modern society. LLLP works in all sectors related to education from early childhood to adult education. We are involved in a fairly wide range of cross-cutting topics in all disciplines, varying from employment and sports to learning in a digital era and assessment. We work with EU funded projects to do with education and training and as part of an Erasmus+ coalition. Our work comes out of Brussels and we make sure we are constantly in touch with the EU, the European Parliament and relevant institutions.

In terms of our activities, from 2017 to 2021 we have contributed to conferences on learning in a digital world, lifelong learning culture, learning democracy, values and participation, lifelong learning for sustainable societies and the changing nature of evaluation in education and its impact on learners' wellbeing and have produced position papers for conferences and focus groups.

## **Erasmus+**

Erasmus+ is the successor to the original Erasmus programme which was set up under the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme. Erasmus+ supports educational, professional and personal development of people of all ages in education and training, youth and sport in Europe and beyond. There are 33 programme countries and international activities are open to the rest of the world. Its three key priorities are mobility, cooperation and policy development, implanted indirectly through national agencies and directly through the EAC (European Association for Counselling) and EACEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency).

Erasmus+ has listed a number of priorities. so if you wish to apply for an Erasmus+ project with EU support you have to focus on one or more of their four priorities

which are Inclusion and Diversity, Digital Transformation, Participation in Democratic Life or Green. By Green the EU means eco-friendly approaches, incorporating green practices and greener ways to protect the environment.

One of the projects we were involved in offers an interesting example. It was a project aimed at involving migrants in the world of work in their country of immigration with a particular focus on arts and culture. So, the team would search for opportunities in art galleries, libraries and community arts and other cultural organisations for recent migrants to the area. The east of England took on a lot of migrants as volunteers, particularly women coming to the UK who found it quite difficult to get employment. By volunteering, the migrants were able to set up projects and get a whole new set of skills, including improving their English, that would enable them to work in that area. You can see that such a project supported inclusion and diversity but also active citizenship and participation in democracy.

The way that Erasmus+ projects work is that there are transnational meetings, a conference or a multiplying event where all the people from different countries involved in the project are able to come together in one of the countries to exchange ideas.

Erasmus+ has a structure operating from 2021 to 2027 containing 4 key actions. Key Action 1 concerns the learning mobility of individuals both of students and staff. Key Action 2 involves co-operation between organisations and institutions, focusing on partnerships for cooperation, innovation and excellence. Key Action 3 focuses on support for public policy reform and what Erasmus+ describes as the John Monnet Actions (after a key founder of the European Union after World War 11) which focuses on modules, chairs, centres of excellence and networks. Many of our projects focused mainly on Key Actions 1 and 2, giving opportunities to young people who didn't have the privilege of attending university to work on international projects and travel abroad and meet their peers in other European countries. They were able to see the possibility of doing more than being stuck in their own town. Most of the programmes were very successful. We used to work closely with a French organisation, Itinéraire International, to provide a much more focused programme for young people with fewer opportunities where they actually gave them almost a

month's pre-placement training and preparation and then a month's debriefing when they came back from the placement,

I think that Key Action 1 says that if you are going to work with people in placements abroad you need to give them as much preparation as you possibly can. LLLP has also been involved in Key Action 2 projects.

## **Application**

You can apply for projects as an individual but usually it has to be through an organisation, such as your university or training centre or a company. The organisation needs to be active in education and training or youth or sport. The application process is fairly involved but once you've done one application the process gets easier. There are two or three windows a year when you can apply so it is important to be aware of timing.

## **LLL and Erasmus+**

The LLLP has played a role in EU projects either in liaison with EU institutions, providing content or disseminating project results. It has also been involved in projects which fit in with our policy work, such as using project resources to promote good practice and improving cooperation among LLLP members. One project we were involved in was to do with the validation of informal learning where a group of us got together to work out how to validate the work involved in volunteering. How do you demonstrate to employers or training centres that in two years of volunteering you have gained a set of skills which can get you employed regardless of formal qualifications? That was quite a successful programme. The details of these projects and what they achieved can all be found on the LLLP website (<https://llplatform.eu/> and [notifications@3.basecamp.com](mailto:notifications@3.basecamp.com)).

## TEACHING TIPS AND TRICKS

### Engaging language students through culture

#### Barry Tomalin

This article presents in detail six lesson plans discussed in Barry's presentation at the ICC Conference on April 9<sup>th</sup>. They can be used at various levels ranging from elementary to advanced and aim to use intercultural understanding as a way of improving learners' practice of and commitment to the language they are learning.

#### **Name that tune- Why Can't We Live Together?**

Everybody's got a tune in their head. It's part of our personal culture, a song or a tune perhaps we grew up with. I'm a fan of soul music and '*Why can't we live together?*' by Timmy Thomas is the song in my head right now with the conflict in Europe. All our students have songs in their heads. Why not engage with their culture? Get them to explain their favourite song or piece of music and ask them to play a recording of it. Teach them how to describe it in the language they are learning and they will engage with the target language through their own culture.

#### **Lesson plan 1: Name that tune**

1. Preteach vocabulary in context.
  - My favourite song is . . .
  - My favourite piece of music (at higher levels)
  - Who's the singer? The singer is . . .
  - Why do you like the song? The tune (melody) the words (lyrics), the singer etc.
2. Ask the class to work in pairs.
  - They ask each other the questions and answer them.
3. Get feedback from the class.
  - Who has an interesting famous song?
  - Where is the song from?
  - Why does (NAME) like it?
4. Maybe get students to play short extracts of a couple of favourite songs on their smart phones.

#### **Outcome:**

Students feel personally engaged with the language they are learning and using by talking about their own cultural interests. They practise how to talk about what they like and why.

#### **'Need to Knows' first**

With my students I ask them to complete a brief one-page pre-seminar questionnaire in which I ask for three pieces of information.

- **About you** (name, nationality, email, lived abroad? Things you're interested in)
- **About your job or school** (position, responsibilities, nationalities you're likely to be involved with)
- **Three key issues you'd like to see dealt with in the seminar**

The three key issues, named by my colleague, Dominique Vouillemin, as 'Need to Knows' are the most important as they can provide a background agenda for my teaching and training. They may also refer to real personal issues, such as, '*How do I deal with a difficult manager?*' this may reveal personal management issues arising at work. The 'About you' section helps me understand more about their interests and hobbies, as well as places they are interested in. I can then exploit this information in developing my lesson plans instead of simply focusing on the culture of the target language being taught.

### Lesson plan 2: 'Need to Know'

1. Devise a simple one-page pre-seminar questionnaire for your students. (I'm happy to share the one I use if you need it.)
2. Send it to all your students (if possible before the course). You may need to send a 'chase-up' email and some students may not reply.
3. Write all the 'Need to knows' down (WITHOUT NAMES!) and share them with your students.
4. In small groups (breakout rooms) students in each group appoint a rapporteur and prioritise their key 'need to knows'. (Two or Three per group)
5. Elicit them from the rapporteurs and make those your priorities.
6. If possible, provide an online answer to the need to knows and distribute to the group. Arrange personal follow-up with students with particular issues.

#### Outcome:

Students appreciate your concern with their learning interests and experiences and engage more deeply with the work.

#### Avoid essentialism

Get away from the nation. Focus on the concepts and the people. The 'Get to know Jo' activity helps students find out about each other as individuals, not just as target language learners.

### Lesson plan 3: Get to know Jo

1. Teach the key questions to allow people to dig down from the national to the personal. The questions are:
  - Nationality: "Where are you from?"
  - Region: "What part are you from? What's it like there?"
  - Profession: "What did you do before you came here?"
  - Background: "Where were you brought up? What was it like?"
  - Personal: "Have you travelled much? What was it like? Where would you like to go next?"
2. Divide the group into pairs.

3. Ask them to choose someone they don't know very well.
4. The group ask each other the questions and discuss. (Allow 15 minutes for this.)
5. Get the pairs back together in one group (if possible standing together) and ask, "Who learned something interesting?" People respond.

**Outcome:**

Students learn how to ask people about themselves in the target language, learn things they didn't know and feel more personally engaged in the language they are learning.

**Active listening**

A Moroccan student once said to me, "*People listen to what you say but they don't listen to your feelings.*" Active listening helps you appreciate others' feelings as well as what they say. It is one of the most important interpersonal skills, especially in learning a foreign language.

**Lesson plan 4: Active Listening**

1. Divide the class into pairs. One is the speaker, the other is the listener.
2. The speaker must choose a topic and talk about it for one minute. The other listens.
3. Time the talk and stop the class. Ask the speakers how they felt. Ask the listeners how they felt.
4. Teach F.A.C.E.
  - **F = Focus** (regular eye contact – but remember some people avoid fixed eye contact out of respect.)
  - **A = Acknowledge** (Show the speaker you are listening with nods and the occasional 'uh, uh'.)
  - **C = Clarify** (Don't ask for explanation but encourage the speaker with a phrase like, 'Go on', 'Tell me more' and 'What happened next?')
  - **E = Empathise** (Use phrases like 'Well done!!', 'Terrific!' or "What a shame!" or "I'm so sorry!")
5. Listener and speaker change sides. The listener is now the speaker and chooses a topic.
6. The speaker speaks for a minute and the listener, listens, using F.A.C.E.
7. After a minute, stop and get feedback from the group. How did it feel different? Encourage students to use Active Listening in their own conversations.

**Dealing with misunderstandings – the MBI Process**

Misunderstandings are common and almost inevitable. Encourage students to remember misunderstandings they have had and encourage them to write them down as short (5 line) critical incidents and share them with the class. As the teacher, make sure you have one or two of your own to use as a model or fill a period of non-response. Use the MBI process to help resolve misunderstandings.



### Lesson plan 5: Dealing with misunderstandings – the MBI Process

1. Invite your class to think of misunderstandings with native speakers of the target language.
2. Suggest they write them down in 5 or so sentences as ‘critical incidents’. Have one or two of your own to use as examples.
3. Students volunteer their critical incidents. Teach the MBI process.
  - MBI stands for Map, Bridge, Integrate.
  - ‘Map’ stands for understanding how you normally behave and how the other has behaved differently.
  - ‘Bridge’ stands for understanding WHY they behaved differently (empathy) and WHAT they may think of you.
  - ‘Integrate’ stands for taking action and changing your behaviour and reflecting on what you have learned and what you will say, do and THINK differently in future.
4. Students volunteer their critical incidents and discuss how they can use MBI to resolve any issues.
5. Summarise.
  - (NOTE: For an explanation of MBI see Distefano, J. J., & Maznevski, M. L. (2000), “Creating value with diverse teams in global management”, *Organizational Dynamics*)

#### Outcome:

Students learn two techniques ‘critical incidents’ and the ‘MBI process’ to help them understand and resolve intercultural issues that arise. This will improve their confidence in learning the target language and the language and behaviour of the people they interact with.

#### Assess your intercultural awareness progress

The Intercultural Awareness (INCA) project allows us to check key issues in intercultural awareness. In this activity we have simplified the explanations to help students assess their progress in each area and see where they need to improve. For a full study of the INCA project visit: [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/inca-project-intercultural-competence-assessment\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/inca-project-intercultural-competence-assessment_en)

### Lesson plan 6: INCA: Assess your intercultural awareness progress

1. Explain briefly the INCA project and explain the six key concepts. (NOTE: My formulation).
  - **AVOID OTHERING – Be inclusive.**
  - **EXERCISE PATIENCE- tolerance of ambiguity**
  - **BE FLEXIBLE – Local solutions may be better.**
  - **SHOW EMPATHY – Put yourself in the other person’s shoes.**
  - **SHOW INTEREST – Show interest in your colleague’s/client’s culture.**
  - **LEARN A BIT ABOUT THE LINGO – What do you need to communicate? How can our language teaching help?**
2. Explain each item and ask the class to discuss which areas they are good at and which areas they need to improve.

3. Ask them what they can do to improve the areas they need to improve.
4. Get them to choose a 'buddy' in the class with whom they can assess their progress.
5. Go through this process with your class three or four times in the semester to help them to assess their level of improvement.

**Outcome:**

Ongoing improvement in intercultural understanding and adaptation and increased commitment to the target language and intercultural understanding.

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## REVIEWS

### **Migration, Multilingualism and Education**

#### **Critical Perspectives on Inclusion**

**By:** Latisha Mary, Ann-Birte Kruger and Andrea S Young

**Published by:** Multilingual Matters 2021

**Reviewed by:** Barry Tomalin

Given the escalation and importance of migration in recent years due to conflict, climate change and employment opportunity, studies of the role of education and language learning have become fundamental in showing how to achieve success in teaching the language of the immigrants' new homes and exploiting the plurilingualism many already possess.

*Migration, Multilingualism and Education* examines a range of situations in different global environments to show how language teachers can use the language learners' own languages, cultural experience and identity to build a plurilingual learning environment to engage students in learning the language of their new home.

The editors are all based in France, Latisha Mary and Andrea Young at the University of Strasbourg and Ann-Birte Krüger at the University of Besancon. The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 comprises 8 papers on inclusion in language education and Part 2 has eight papers on new language teaching practices to achieve inclusion. The book is all about how we as teachers can successfully engage students from other countries who are refugees or from refugee families and addresses all levels of teaching and learning from pre-school to university. The papers cite case studies of educational practice in a wide range of countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Japan and Portugal as well as others. It also explores key issues in establishing trust between parents and the school they have chosen, supporting students' first languages and avoiding unintended consequences, designing suitable educational materials and supporting the students' relationship between home and school.

Part 1 of the book addresses the issues of inclusion and policy in foreign language education. Christine Helot, Professor emerita at the University of Strasbourg, argues that it is an anachronism that students from other countries should lose their

language or languages of origin in the process of learning the language of the country they are living in or, worse still, find its use forbidden in school. Why, she asks, should schools remain bastions of monolingualism? A UNESCO report in 2005 stressed the importance of attitudes in inclusion. A report by the Council of Europe in 2017 on the education of adult migrants stressed the importance of social inclusion to nourish motivation. As Christine Helot summarises, recognising the societal language is as important as language proficiency in promoting social integration. It's a two-way or multi-way street.

Christine Helot cites some flagrant example of language discrimination, including one school where students were asked to denounce other students speaking Arabic. The use of 'language othering' is often done because the use of the language spoken at home in the classroom is regarded as inhibiting the learning of the new language at school. Evidence suggests that in our increasingly multicultural classrooms, "English only" or "Dutch only" is demotivating. Christine Helot highlights a chapter in the book by Majima and Sakurai about a school in Japan with a cohort of students from China. The authors describe how the institution of a multilingual policy made the Chinese students proficient bilinguals with high self-esteem and a positive attitude towards themselves, their school and their environment. A secondary but important result was an opening up of the school's attitude towards different nationalities, languages and cultures. The elaboration of this policy involved eight factors which are useful in developing a multilingual environment in education. The Japanese school used a bilingual very engaged teacher, created special classes that used both languages for instruction, improved relations with Chinese parents through translation, the visualisation of multiculturalism in the school and the valuing of Chinese bi-lingual practice. Also important are taking an intercultural approach to the different cultures represented and the establishment of a literacy project encouraging students to write in both their languages and getting them to express themselves in public in both their languages.

Parents are important in encouraging the multilingual classroom. Ann-Birte Krüger and Nathalie Thamin write about pre-school education in France where parents were encouraged to act as translators, to read stories to children in class and participate in 'parent cafes' to exchange on their role in and out of school. The result was that

'migrant' parents felt empowered and teachers recognised how the children often felt 'invisibilised' by the failure of teachers and classmates to recognise their language. Indeed, as one teacher said he would never correct a student using her or his mother tongue by saying, "*Here we speak French.*"

An especially interesting case study for followers of EUROLTA is the Hellenic Open University starting a project called, 'Languages without Borders' for refugee women. The project, designed by refugee women for refugee women, drew on translanguaging and experience in refugee camps to produce a set of educational materials to meet refugee women's aspirations.

The fifteen chapters in the book discuss case studies from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands, Palestine, Portugal, the UK and the USA plus others in classes ranging from pre-school to adult education both in formal and non-formal education. It is an important resource for researchers and an important source of information and ideas for practising teachers. Above all, it makes an unanswerable case for the move from monoglossic teaching of language to a multilingual approach allowing for the expression of different languages and different cultural experience in the classroom. Instead of excluding multilingual experience language teachers need to learn to embrace it. Its message, as a Canadian anti-racism advocate put it in 2006, "*inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is creating a new space that is better for everyone.*"

That is what this book sets out successfully to do.



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