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From the Editor

Welcome to our Autumn issue of 2022 and the new academic year.

We greet the new academic year with some exciting keynotes to stimulate your minds and perhaps add to your linguistic and intercultural research. First, Lavinia Bracci, Fiora Biagi and Isabelle Thaler, examine Digital Citizenship Education in foreign language learning. They identify the gaps between different models published by leading European frameworks and propose their own framework of digital citizenship descriptors. Since digital citizenship education is a supranational priority in European education policy this article is an important contribution to the field.

Zhiaoming Wang, argues that native speaker language teachers need training in how they work with non-native speaker learners on university courses, especially in how they express themselves and how they relate to intercultural differences in the classroom. Useful practical guidance that needs to be put into effect in in teacher education programmes.

In Learning a New Language as an Adult, Valeria Marco Sims approaches language learning from a different angle, focusing on the problems the adult learner may face and how to get over them and Deborah Swallow and I offer support to teachers of language for business in *Teaching Effective Negotiation Skills.*

In Teaching Tips, Michael Carrier introduces a really exciting area of activity that will motivate students and deepen their knowledge of the language they are learning. In his article *Relating the Language you are Learning to its History* he offers activities and a lesson plan to motivate students by learning about the history of the language they are learning. In doing so they will not only build their background knowledge of and empathy for the language but also improve their comprehension and research skills in doing so.

Lots of exciting topics in our webinar summaries in this issue and, as always, you can watch the webinars at www.icc-languages.eu/webinars.

Multi-cultural communities and the spread of digital communication through the Internet have really changed our view of the role of culture in language learning and our review of John Corbett's second edition of *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching* (the 1st edition was published 20 years ago!) offers lessons for all language teachers, not just Teachers of English as a foreign language.

Plenty of valuable ideas and useful tips for us a teachers and researchers.

Well, that's it from me. Delighted to hear from you and to print your articles as keynotes or teaching tips in our ICC Journal. We are here for you as practising teachers and researchers. Enjoy this issue and feel free to recommend it to your friends and colleagues. Get in touch with me direct at barrytomalin@aol.com.

Till next time best wishes, Barry (Barry Tomalin)

ICC-Languages and EUROLTA news

The ICC Journal is delighted to welcome Professor Thomas Tinnefeld and his wife Lillian Tinnefeld-Yeh on board as adviser and co-ordinator. Lillian is responsible for coordinating our ICC webinars programme and also the upload of this journal. Thanks to you both for your support. We also welcome Tanja Kovac who has been a board member for some time and Brigitte Schrader -Voelske as co-ordinator.

Always concerned to review and update good performance, ICC-Languages is working with Geoff Tranter of Dortmund University in Germany in a think tank to suggest new publications and projects for ICC-Languages and potential themes for our 2023 annual conference. More in our Winter issue.

EUROLTA

One of EUROLTA's major pre-occupations has been the development of teacher training programmes for teachers who are refugees. As we explained in our last issue, refugees are able to join EUROLTA programmes free of charge and we featured interviews with two teachers from Ukraine (See ICC Journal 4 (1) at www.icc-languages.eu/journals). The next phase of the EUROLTA programme will start on October 22nd and a programme specially designed for teachers who are refugees will be launched in 2023. Course materials are in the process of development and should be ready in December 2022. For more information see www.icc-languages.org/EUROLTA.

KEYNOTE 1

Digital Citizenship Education in Foreign Language Learning: Missing Interrelations between European Reference Frameworks and Drafting Assessment Descriptors

Lavinia Bracci, Fiora Biagi and Isabelle Sophie Thaler

1. Introduction

“[T]he value of assessment is almost self-evident” (Byram, 2021, p. 126). This statement probably resonates with most foreign language educators involved in everyday classroom practice. Yet, no traces of this self-evident value are to be found in the theoretical Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) framework by the Council of Europe (2019), which has induced us to contribute to bridging the gap between theory and practice (McIntyre, 2005) in this field.

The overall aim of this contribution is to start a critical reflection on and a discussion about some existing gaps in applying fundamental and widespread theoretical frameworks elaborated by European institutions, such as the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp) (Vourikari R., Kluzer S., & Punie Y., 2022), the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c) and the DCE domains (Council of Europe, 2018d, 2019), in the language classroom. More specifically, regarding the DCE framework, a comprehensive approach considering the assessment of DCE domains is still lacking, yet much needed. In addition to the well-known complexity of assessing the various elements of language learning in general, DCE assessment poses essential issues to reflect upon and leads toward the awareness that assessing the full complexity of DCE is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

As in the case of the five *savoirs* (Byram, 1997; Byram, 2021; Council of Europe, 2001) usually addressed in FLL, our proposal for assessment aims at offering a model for proficiency assessment – not performance assessment. This implies that our notion of assessment is not limited to observable behaviour but also includes ‘invisible’ core competences, such as values, which are not always evident to the eye. As indicated by Gipps (1994), a ‘paradigm shift’ is probably needed: a ‘shift from a psychometric model of assessment to an educational model’ (p. 167, quoted in Byram, 2021, p. 126-127). Gipps also argues that “‘educational assessment’ is characterised by its potential for enhancing good quality learning. What is needed are assessment programmes which have a positive impact on teaching and learning” (Gipps, 1994, p. 158 quoted in Byram, 2021, p. 128).

The present reflection was conceived within the work linked to Digital Citizenship Education and Foreign Language Learning (DiCE.Lang), a three-year transnational European Erasmus + Strategic Partnership project from September 2021 to August 2023. The project’s overall aim is to strengthen the profile of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) vis-à-vis foreign language learning. Digital Citizenship Education has emerged as a supranational priority, as it has been strongly affirmed through recommendations issued by the Council of Europe (Frau-Meigs *et al*., 2017; Council of Europe, 2019; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019).

In the following, we will first present three key European frameworks: DigComp, RFCDC and the DCE domains. Our first main focus will be illuminating the missing interrelations between the three, even though one claims to build on the other. The second main focus is the tentative drafting of descriptors for assessing DCE in the foreign language classroom.

2. Three European reference frameworks: the European Digital Competence Framework, the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and the Digital Citizenship Education

In recent years, European institutions have produced three main frameworks regarding digital competences, democratic competences and digital citizenship education: the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and the Digital Citizenship Education (DCE).

2.1 The European Digital Competence Framework

The first one, the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), is a reference framework created by the European Commission to offer a common comprehensive understanding of the nature of digital competences. It was first elaborated in 2013 and its most recent update was released in March 2022. Since *"its adoption, DigComp has provided a scientifically solid and technology-neutral basis for a common understanding of digital skills and framing policy*" (Vuorikari et al., 2022, p. 1) in European countries. Digital knowledge, skills and attitudes are considered lifelong learning competences of EU citizens. According to this publication, digital competence involves:

> *"the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking."* (Vuorikari et al., 2022, p. 3).

The DigComp envisages 21 competences grouped in five areas: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem solving. The entire list of competences is shown in Table 1 (see Vuorikari et al., 2022, p. 4).

1. Information and data literacy	
1.1	Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content
1.2	Evaluating data, information and digital competence
1.3	Managing information, data and digital competence

2. Communication and collaboration	
2.1	Interacting through digital technologies
2.2	Sharing information and content through digital technologies
2.3	Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies
2.4	Collaborating through digital technologies
2.5	Netiquette
2.6	Managing digital identity
3. Digital content and creation	
3.1	Developing digital content
3.2	Integrating and re-elaborating digital content
3.3	Copyright and licensing
3.4	Programming
4. Safety	
4.1	Protecting devices
4.2	Protecting personal data and privacy
4.3	Protecting health and wellbeing
4.4	Protecting the environment
5. Problem solving	
5.1	Solving technical problems
5.2	Identifying needs and technological responses
5.3	Creatively using digital technologies
5.4	Identifying digital technologies gaps

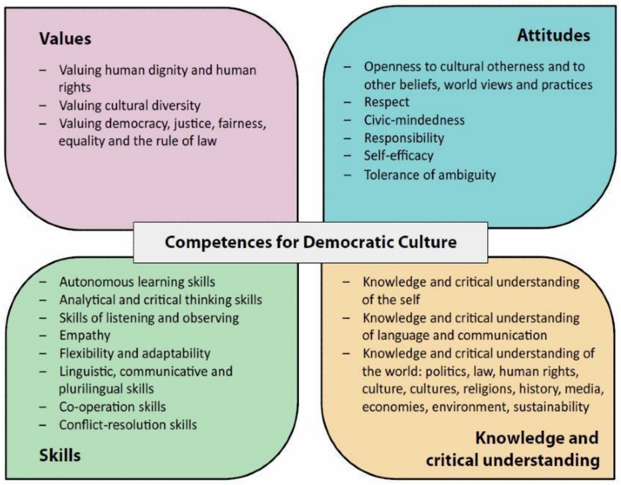
Table 1: The DigComp

2.2 Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

The second framework is the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), first elaborated in 2016 and enriched in the following years with other publications. This framework describes the competences needed for European citizens in order to live in the contemporary world as follows:

> *“The heart of the Framework is a model of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies”* (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 11)

Visualised as a “butterfly” or “flower”, it encompasses a total set of 20 competences, grouped in four areas (“wings" or “petals”): values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding.


Values
– Valuing human dignity and human rights
– Valuing cultural diversity
– Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law
Attitudes
– Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
– Respect
– Civic-mindedness
– Responsibility
– Self-efficacy
– Tolerance of ambiguity
Competences for Democratic Culture
– Autonomous learning skills
– Analytical and critical thinking skills
– Skills of listening and observing
– Empathy
– Flexibility and adaptability
– Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
– Co-operation skills
– Conflict-resolution skills
Skills
– Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
– Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
– Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability
Knowledge and critical understanding

Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

Figure 1: The RFCDC butterfly (Council of Europe, 2022b)

2.3 Digital Citizenship Education

The third reference framework – Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) – concerns *“the empowerment of children through education or the acquisition of competences for learning and active participation in digital society”* (Council of Europe, 2022). DCE, as mentioned before, has come to play a crucial role in education, especially during and after the pandemic crisis. Furthermore, the pandemic has been accompanied by a total affirmation of digital citizenship and the exercise of its rights and duties. Since 2016, the Council of Europe has taken action in this regard by producing a set of documents and tools that investigated *“good practice in digital citizenship education as well as the gaps and challenges in formal and informal learning contexts”* (Richardson and Milovidov 2019, p. 9).

The imperative for present-day students and future citizens is their ability to be digital citizens, i.e. someone

> *“who, through the development of a broad range of competences, is able to actively, positively and responsibly engage in both on- and offline communities, whether local, national or global. Educational stakeholders need to take these new demands into consideration and digital citizenship education ought to be*

> *implemented from the earliest years of childhood "at home and at school, in formal, informal and non-formal educational settings"* (Richardson & Milovidov, 2019, p. 11).

The DCE conceptual framework is visually represented as a "temple", whose foundations are the democratic competences of the RFCDC. Five constructs emerge as being essential in developing effective digital citizenship practices. These are depicted as pillars in this temple structure. While the competences for democratic culture lay the foundation for digital citizenship, the five pillars uphold the whole structure of digital citizenship development and they consist of policies, stakeholders, strategies, infrastructures and resources, and evaluation. This is also stressed by the following quote by Richardson and Milovidov (2019):

> *"To place these competences into the digital environment in which young people grow up today, and drawing on research from frequently cited experts and organisations in the field, a set of 10 digital domains have been defined as underpinning the overall concept of digital citizenship"* (p. 13)

As a result, a competence framework was elaborated. It encompasses ten domains grouped into three main areas:

- being online: access and inclusion, learning and creativity, media and information literacy;
- wellbeing online: ethics and empathy, health and wellbeing, e-presence and communication;
- rights online: active participation, rights and responsibilities, privacy and security, consumer awareness.

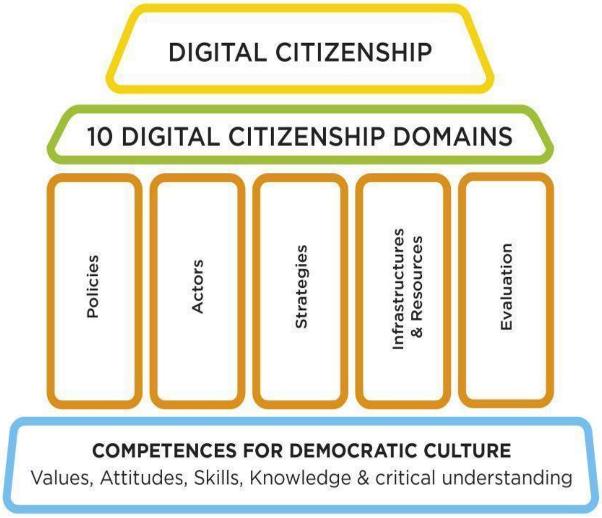

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
10 DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP DOMAINS
Policies
Actors
Strategies
Infrastructures & Resources
Evaluation
COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE
Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge & critical understanding

Figure 3: the DCE temple (Council of Europe, 2022b)

All three frameworks concern the competences needed by 21st-century citizens who live in culturally diverse societies both in their real and virtual dimensions. As such, they are necessarily critically and strictly interconnected. In the following section, this interrelatedness, which has been widely neglected in the literature so far, will be explained in detail.

3. (Missing) interrelations between the three European reference frameworks

The elaborations of the RFCDC and DCE models, including the set of 20 democratic competences and the ten domains, have been conducted separately and almost in parallel in the last few years. For this reason, their inner interrelations have been widely neglected and still lack careful and detailed analysis, which is what we aim for in this article. It is simply stated that the RFCDC stands at the foundations of the DCE temple, which is also exemplified and visually shown in the image of the temple, yet no further explicit indications of how the two are related are given. The relationships between RFCDC and DCE are more or less limited to the following words from the Council of Europe (2022a):

> *"The Council of Europe's Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe, 2016) provides the starting point for this approach to digital citizenship, noting that the competences which citizens need to acquire if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy are not acquired automatically but instead need to be learned and practised. As such, education has a vital role to play in preparing young people to live as active citizens and helping them acquire the skills and competences needed."*

However, how these competences build on each other was never followed up by necessary theorization, research and application. Furthermore, it is important to note that the list of the DCE experts of the Council of Europe does not include any members of the RFCDC *ad hoc* experts. This is a missed opportunity, which might have contributed to this evident disconnect between the DCE domains and the RFCDC.

It is clear that the competences needed to be digital citizens (as such in the digital/virtual environment) are inseparable from those competences necessary to be democratic citizens in the real world: this concept is also clearly stated in the DCE Handbook (Council of Europe, 2019, p. 13). Each of the ten DCE domains can be associated and related with quite a few of the democratic competences indicated in the RFCDC: this matching operation has not been carried out yet, and the aim of the current paper is partly to identify, for the first time, those links between the DCE and the RFCDC (please see table 2).

Needless to say, since no official relationship has been indicated between the two, our proposed matching can be considered a tentative first step; quite a few democratic competences can be linked to each of the domains, and some are more crucial while some others look more peripheral. For instance, the first DCE domain is "Access and inclusion" (included in the "Being online" area) and reads as follows:

> *"This domain concerns access to the digital environment and includes a range of competences that relate not only to the overcoming of different forms of digital exclusion but also to the skills needed by future citizens to participate in digital spaces that are open towards any kind of minority or diversity of opinion."* (Council of Europe, 2018d)

This domain can be matched with the following RFCDC competences: valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law; openness to cultural otherness, world views and practices; respect; civic mindedness; responsibility; tolerance for ambiguity; skills of listening and observing; empathy; flexibility and adaptability; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills (for a complete list of interrelations, please see table 2). Some of these competences seem to play a major role, such as openness to cultural otherness and the valuing of cultural diversity, which are essential for digital citizens in order to overcome forms of digital exclusion and be open towards any kind of minority or diversity of opinion; nevertheless, other attitudes and skills, such as respect, flexibility, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills are all also necessary to accomplish this and other tasks online.

The fact that so many (if not all the) democratic competences underlie more than one domain undoubtedly corroborates the idea that the DCE domains were created starting from and based on the CDC, which the Council of Europe (2022a) even explicitly mentions: "*The Council of Europe's Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe, 2016) provides the starting point for this approach to digital citizenship".* Yet, at the same time, the phrasing and terminology used in the description of the domains do not recall the democratic competences in a straightforward way: no proper reflection seems to have been conducted over the interrelations of the two frameworks, no explicit links and connections are mentioned (except those in very general terms), and, as mentioned above, the two frameworks were elaborated by two different groups of experts. These gaps have caused some difficulties in the way the two models can be harmonised, understood and adapted to teaching practice.

The correlations between DCE domains and RFCDC can become even more intricate when we come to consider another important milestone of European documents and models, which is the DigComp. Furthermore the same correlation between Digital Competence and Digital Citizenship Education needs more reflection. There are too many grey areas and terminological issues between the digitally competent citizen (who knows how to use the digital medium technically and practically in a competent way) and the digital democratic citizen (who knows how to use the digital medium and to live in democratic and culturally diverse societies, both online and offline). Digital competence is the first step, it is reasonably propaedeutic to the second, but it is not sufficient for full democratic participation in the virtual world. The ongoing exercise of those competences indicated in the RFCDC, which undergird the domains of the DCE, enables the effective practice of digital and democratic citizenship in societies as culturally diverse as ours. In a world where "digital life" and "analogue life" are increasingly intersecting and in which we build and manage our social network online as much as offline, it is crucial to consider our digital identity an integral part of who we are. Online and offline identities become increasingly blurred, which is why they should not be viewed as dichotomous. This contribution is to be considered an initial attempt to fill some of these gaps and, even more importantly, to open the discussion about this crucial and neglected correlation and its implications for teaching foreign languages.

Table 2 represents a first attempt to match DCE domains and the competences of the RFCDC.

Examples of interrelations between DCE domains and RFCDC

DCE Domains	Competences of the RFCDC
BEING ONLINE	
1.ACCESS & INCLUSION “[it] concerns access to the digital environment and includes a range of competences that relate not only to overcoming different forms of digital exclusion but also to the skills needed by future citizens to participate in digital spaces that are open to every kind of minority and diversity of opinion.” [1]	valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law; openness to cultural otherness, world views and practices; respect; civic mindedness; responsibility; tolerance for ambiguity; skills of listening and observing; empathy; flexibility and adaptability; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills[2]
2.LEARNING & CREATIVITY “[it] refers to the willingness and the attitude of citizens towards learning in digital environments over their life course, both to develop and express different forms of creativity, with different tools, in different contexts. It covers the development of personal and professional competences as citizens prepare for the challenges of technology-rich societies with confidence and in innovative ways.”	openness; autonomous learning skills; flexibility and adaptability; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; self-efficacy; knowledge of the Self
3.MEDIA & INFORMATION LITERACY “[it] concerns the ability to interpret, understand and express creativity through digital media, as critical thinkers. Being media and information literate is something that needs to be developed through education and through a constant exchange with the environment around us. It is essential to go beyond simply “being able to” use one or another media, for example, or simply to “be informed” about	autonomous learning skills analytical and critical thinking skills; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; civic mindedness; responsibility; self-efficacy; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (media)

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[1] Domains’ descriptions are taken from the *DCE Handbook* (Council of Europe, 2019, pp. 13-14).

[2] This first domain could actually be matched with all the 20 competences indicated by the RFCDC: access to the digital world is the very first step to exercise democratic competences online.

something. A digital citizen has to maintain an attitude relying on critical thinking as a basis for meaningful and effective participation in his/her community.”	
WELLBEING ONLINE	
4.ETHICS & EMPATHY “[it] concerns online ethical behaviour and interaction with others based on skills such as the ability to recognise and understand the feelings and perspectives of others. Empathy constitutes an essential requirement for positive online interaction and for realising the possibilities that the digital world affords.”	valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law; openness to cultural otherness, world views and practices; respect; empathy; cooperation skills; conflict resolution skills
5.HEALTH & WELLBEING “[it] relates to the fact that digital citizens inhabit both virtual and real spaces. For this reason, the basic skills of digital competence alone are not sufficient. Individuals also require a set of attitudes, skills, values and knowledge that render them more aware of issues related to health and well-being. In a digitally rich world, health and well-being imply being aware of challenges and opportunities that can affect wellness, including but not limited to online addiction, ergonomics and posture, and excessive use of digital and mobile devices.”	responsibility; self-efficacy; knowledge of the Self; knowledge and critical understanding of the world[3]
5.E-PRESENCE & COMMUNICATIONS “[it] refers to the development of the personal and interpersonal qualities that support digital citizens in building and maintaining an online presence and identity as well as online interactions that are positive, coherent and consistent. It covers competences such as online communication and interaction with	respect; civic mindedness; responsibility; self-efficacy; autonomous learning skills; skills of listening and observing; empathy; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; cooperation skills;

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[3] This competence includes knowledge and critical understanding of those challenges and opportunities that are linked to people’s dignity, rights and cultural, economic and environmental circumstances, all of which can affect their physical and psychological well-being.

others in virtual social spaces, as well as the management of one’s data and traces.”	conflict resolution skills; knowledge of the Self knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
RIGHTS ONLINE	
7.ACTIVE PARTICIPATION “[it] relates to the competences that citizens need to be fully aware of when they interact within the digital environments they inhabit in order to make responsible decisions, while participating actively and positively in the democratic cultures in which they live.”	all 20 democratic competences
8.RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES “[they] are something citizens enjoy in the physical world, and digital citizens in the online world also have certain rights and responsibilities. Digital citizens can enjoy rights of privacy, security, access and inclusion, freedom of expression and more. However, with those rights come certain responsibilities, such as ethics and empathy and other responsibilities to ensure a safe and responsible digital environment for all.”	valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law; respect; civic mindedness; responsibility; self-efficacy; analytical and critical thinking skills; empathy: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (law and human rights)
9.PRIVACY & SECURITY “[it] includes two different concepts: privacy concerns mainly the personal protection of one’s own and others’ online information, while security is related more to one’s own awareness of online actions and behaviour. It covers competences such as information management and online safety issues (including the use of navigation filters, passwords, anti-virus and firewall software) to deal with and avoid dangerous or unpleasant situations.”	responsibility; civic mindedness; self-efficacy; analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the self; knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (media, politics, cultures, religions, history)
10.CONSUMER AWARENESS “[it] relates to the fact that the World Wide Web, with its broad dimensions, such as social media and other virtual social spaces, is an environment where often the fact of being a digital citizen also	responsibility; self-efficacy; autonomous learning skills; analytical and critical thinking skills; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills;

means being a consumer. Understanding the implications of the commercial reality of online spaces is one of the competences that individuals will have to deal with in order to maintain their autonomy as digital citizens.”	knowledge and critical understanding of the world (politics, economies, sustainability)

Table 2: Interrelations between DCE domains and RFCDC

4. Draft descriptors for DCE domains

This section aims to start a theoretical discussion of tentative descriptors for the ten DCE domains. We would like to state the obvious by acknowledging that these descriptors still need to find their way into the classroom, where they can be tested by the actual target group: teachers and students. This will lead to a recursive process of testing out, evaluating and adapting the descriptors to increase their usefulness and applicability in everyday teaching practice, which is the overarching goal. At this stage, however, we can merely show what this could look like. At a later stage, i.e. after this recursive process, we might end up with a different list. We plan to move to the second phase, i.e. testing out the descriptors in schools before September 2023, which marks the end of the DiCE.Lang project.

The development and testing of the DCE descriptors is designed keeping in mind the experience of the RFCDC descriptors, in Byrams’s words (2021, p. 149):

“The stages of development for the RFCDC were modelled on the approach taken in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) and are described as follows:

The process consists of the following stages:

1. *Defining criteria for formulating descriptors.*
2. *Formulation of an initial large bank of draft descriptors.*
3. *Selection of descriptors based on feedback from experts and education professionals.*
4. *Piloting of the selected descriptors in various educational settings across Europe.*
5. *Scaling the descriptors to different levels of proficiency. (Council of Europe, 2018b, Vol. 2: 53)”*

In this article, we can only offer the first two stages: defining criteria for formulating descriptors and formulating a bank of descriptors. The remaining three stages will be completed in the near future and we do acknowledge that they are crucial. In the following, we will elaborate on stages 1 and 2.

4.1 Defining criteria for formulating descriptors

In this section, we will provide some transparency into our reasoning and learning processes when formulating descriptors. In formulating the descriptors, we drew on the RFCDC and followed the defining criteria indicated for that framework's descriptors (as well as for the CEFR): brevity, positivity, clarity, independence, definiteness (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 54).

The descriptors are written in the first person singular: this was a deliberate choice among two other possible options: "the learner" and "he/she". Even though the latter is used by the RFCDC and could be applied to the DCE set of descriptors, yet, aiming for inclusivity, we considered the first person singular choice the most all-embracing one. This option is also used by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) for their so-called self-assessment orientation tool. Furthermore, using the first person singular emphasises learner's control over and taking responsibility for their learning process as well as learner's agency, the latter referring to both the observable and non-visible aspects of learning (Mercer, 2012); as mentioned above, this last concept is very important for the complex notion of DCE.

In alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) and the RFCDC descriptors (Council of Europe, 2018b), we have chosen to use three broad levels of proficiency: elementary, intermediate and advanced. Even though this might be reminiscent of a linear relationship of learning, we are aware of the fact that learning and assessing are definitely not linear: instead, they have ups and downs, progress in one domain might be achieved whereas in a different domain there might be a step back. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the levels are not clear-cut and that learners cannot easily be "categorised" into one level. This relates to the notion of learning as a process. In addition, a learner might be considered "elementary" in one domain but "advanced" in another at the same time. Hence, these descriptors might also be seen as a tool for seeing the "glows" (those aspects learners are already good at) and "growth" of learners (those aspects learners could work on). Besides, the three levels were partly guided by Bloom's (Bloom et al., 1956) taxonomy. This taxonomy underlines a dynamic continuum of increasing complexity and depth of learning. Furthermore, this notion of levels is hierarchical and cumulative, i.e. each level subsumes the preceding levels.

Connecting thereto, neither the CEFR nor the RFCDC did the scaling on *a priori* ground. Instead, the scaling of the descriptors to the levels of proficiency was empirically determined, being based on the judgements of teachers about their learners' performance. We explicitly do not want the descriptors to be determined by a small group of experts rather than by student performance as judged by their teachers. This is one drawback of various competence schemes such as DigComp. However, this is stage 5 and we are currently at stages 1 and 2.

Thanks to our past experience and engagement in a European project co-funded by the Council of Europe, we were given the opportunity to have a deep and thorough insight of the process through which the RFCDC descriptors were formulated, tested and scaled[4]: this helped a lot in the designing and formulating the present DCE draft descriptors. Notwithstanding, the formulating process has posed some challenges, which we had the chance of discussing with expert consultants from whom we received precious feedback. In order to avoid ambiguity and formulate descriptors that would be as simple and straightforward as possible, we refrained from using double-barrelled descriptors and terms that might present subjective interpretations (such as the word ‘aware’, as there might be different levels of ‘awareness’ leading to or involving different types of behaviours). Therefore, we opted for expressions like “can explain”, “can describe”, “can express”, which relate to behaviours more than mental states and are less susceptible to subjective meanings.

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[4] The mentioned project was "DCDC: Democratic Competences via Digital Channel", co-financed by the Council of Europe within the DISCO (Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation) Micro-Grants programme (as a dissemination of the results of a previous cycle) and it was granted to the Nuova Associazione Culturale Ulisse (NACU). The aim of the project was spreading knowledge among Italian teachers about the Reference

4.2 Formulating an initial bank of draft descriptors

In this second stage of creating a tentative set of descriptors for each domain of the DCE we are going to highlight which competences are most relevant and pertinent, keeping in mind that becoming a digital citizen necessitates being a democratic citizen, who develops, though at different degrees, as many democratic competences as possible. As stated above, when creating the DCE domains, too many things were taken for granted, especially the links between the DCE domains and CDC, so now we find ourselves creating descriptors that partly include competences but partly fall outside of them and at the same time include competences found in DigComp.

In our case, we elaborated descriptors that can be used in the assessment of the DCE in the context of learning and teaching foreign languages. Therefore, we highlighted those core democratic competences that best suit the profile of language learners: this does not detract from the fact that, in other learning contexts and according to the discipline taught, the core democratic competences underlying the domains may be different. The descriptors have been elaborated and phrased on the base of the description of each single DCE domain, along with them we indicate some of the competences that seem relevant to us for each domain.

In principle, all the 20 competences could be involved in each domain. However, such a reflection would lead to a much longer list implying that for each domain we would need to elaborate at least three descriptors for each of the 20 competences, (thus counting up to 600 descriptors). Notwithstanding, being aware of the limits of our decision and for sake of transparency, we opted to elaborate only those descriptors that were directly linked to the most pertinent democratic competences for each domain.

Furthermore, along the process of descriptor making, we realised that two concepts do not find their counterpart in the RFCDC: digital literacy, which is described in the first area of the DigComp and in DCE domain n. 3 (in both cases this idea is labelled as “information literacy”), and creativity, which is cited both in the DigComp (mentioned in areas n. 3 and n. 5) and the DCE domain n. 2 (area of well-being online).

Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) through the digital channel. The project lasted nine months, from March 5 to November 20, 2021 and it originated from a clear analysis of the Italian educational context and its needs regarding the implementation of the RFCDC and the status of digitalization. Within the project, we had the opportunity to translate the RFCDC Volume 2 (the one concerning the RFCDC descriptors) in its entirety.

In addition, we could detect one of the 20 democratic competences that could not be easily included in any of the DCE domains, i.e. knowledge and critical understanding of the world. This broad, yet core competence, which in the RFCDC is declined according to its several aspects (politics, law, human rights, culture, etc.), appears – at least to us – to be underlying the entire DCE model: in order to be (democratic) digital citizens, it is essential to have at least some basic knowledge of the world.

In our view, it is important here to recall the fundamental distinction employed in the RFCDC between the term competence and competences:

> *“Competence (in the singular) is defined as the ability to activate and use relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, difficulties and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations” (Council of Europe, 2021, p. 16), while competences (in the plural) refers to the “specific values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding that are activated and used”* (Council of Europe, 2021, p. 16).

Our impression is that in developing the domains, the DCE expert group generically referred to the concept of democratic competence without reflecting in detail on the set of 20 competences and without consequently being able to point out the intimate interrelations between the RFCDC competences and the DCE domains.

In Tables 3-12, we present the preliminary results of stage two, our tentative descriptors for each of the ten DCE domains (for detailed descriptions of the ten domains and the democratic competences that are required for each domain, readers can refer to Table 2).

4.2.1 Being online

Access and inclusion

Table 3

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
1	I can use digital devices for everyday needs.	ELEMENTARY
2	I can use digital devices for entertainment purposes.	
3	I can understand when someone is excluded from digital activities.	
4	I am capable of establishing a first contact with other digital users.	
5	I can use digital devices to access online services for citizens.	INTERMEDIAT
6	When using digital devices, I can detect others’	

	exclusion.	E
7	I can express when some groups are systematically excluded from the digital space.	
8	I feel included in the digital media.	ADVANCED
9	I know how to include other people in the digital space.	
10	I can deal with digital ambiguous situations.	
11	I can solve conflicting situations in the digital environment.	

Learning and creativity

Table 4

Desc. #	**Descriptor**	**Level**
12	I am ready to use digital tools for learning but I need some help and guidance.	ELEMENTARY
13	I am ready to use digital tools for creative purposes but I need some help and guidance.	
14	I am curious about digital innovation but cannot deal with it alone.	
15	I can autonomously use some digital tools for learning.	INTERMEDIATE
16	I can autonomously use some digital tools for creative purposes.	
17	I can take the first steps towards the use of new digital tools to express my creativity with some guidance.	
18	I can fully express my creativity using several digital tools without help or guidance.	ADVANCED
19	I feel up to constant innovation in digital technology.	
20	I feel confident to learn new digital technology during my life course.	
21	I use my linguistic and plurilingual repertoire in order to improve my digital skills.	

Media and information literacy

Table 5

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
22	I am able to use digital media to search for information,	ELEMENTARY
23	I am able to use digital media to gain information.	
24	I can use digital media as a reliable source of information in a responsible way.	INTERMEDIATE
25	I can develop my critical thinking skills in the context of digital content and activities.	
26	I can apply my critical thinking skills to digital content and activities.	
27	I can meaningfully and effectively participate in my digital communities.	ADVANCED
28	I am confident in using digital media for advocacy purposes about global issues.	
29	I can use digital media for advocacy purposes about global issues.	

4.2.2 Wellbeing online

Ethics and empathy

Table 6

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
30	I can detect some examples of inappropriate behaviour online.	ELEMENTARY
31	I take other people's feelings into account before posting comments, pictures, etc.	INTERMEDIATE
32	I try to understand different perspectives of online behaviours.	
33	I understand when digital contents and/or behaviours can be inappropriate and/or offensive for people with different perspectives.	ADVANCED
34	I share the positive values of digital contents and/or actions related to other people's worldviews.	

Health and wellbeing

Table 7

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
35	I am capable of taking advantage of the opportunities given by digital media and tools.	ELEMENTARY
36	I am aware of my habits online.	INTERMEDIATE
37	I can critically reflect about my own habits online.	
38	I can critically reflect about other people's habits online.	
39	I can observe other people's excessive use of digital and mobile devices.	
40	I can reflect on the opportunities given by digital tools and media to vulnerable groups.	
41	I can change my habits online when I understand they are not healthy.	ADVANCED
42	I am aware of and can keep the right posture and ergonomics while using digital and mobile devices.	
43	I willingly use the opportunities provided by digital media and tools for the improvement of my health and wellbeing.	

E-presence and communications

Table 8

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
44	I can create a very simple profile identity in social media.	ELEMENTARY
45	I can have some simple positive interactions.	
46	I can build my online presence and identity.	INTERMEDIATE
47	I am able to respect turn-taking in the digital environment.	
48	I am able to use proper language in the digital environment.	

49	I am aware of my data and traces online.	
50	I can build and maintain my online presence and identity.	ADVANCED
51	I am aware of managing my data and traces online.	

4.2.3 Rights online

Active participation

Table 9

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
52	I know that people's rights apply to the digital world too.	ELEMENTARY
53	I try to understand the importance of active participation online.	
54	I actively and positively participate in online activities for personal purposes.	INTERMEDIATE
55	I am able to make responsible decisions online on a personal level.	
56	I am able to take responsible actions online on a personal level.	
57	I know how to responsibly interact in digital environments.	ADVANCED
58	I can use the digital media for advocacy purposes.	

Rights and responsibilities

Table 10

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
59	I know what my rights online are.	ELEMENTARY
60	I know about other people’s rights online.	
61	I am capable of exercising my rights online.	INTERMEDIATE
62	I feel responsible for my actions online.	

63	I can use digital tools to exercise my rights online.	ADVANCED
64	I can use digital tools to support other people’s rights online.	
65	I am capable of taking actions in order to ensure a safe and responsible digital environment for me and others.	

Privacy and security

Table 11

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
66	I know about the necessity of protecting my own online identity and information.	ELEMENTARY
67	I can manage personal information online for everyday activities.	
68	I am aware of protecting others’ online identity and information.	INTERMEDIATE
69	I can manage multiple and complex activities online safeguarding my privacy and security.	
70	I know about the risks and implications of unsafe behaviours online.	ADVANCED
71	I can properly manage my own information shared online for the purposes of online safety in order to avoid dangerous or unpleasant situations.	
72	I can help other people to properly manage their information which they share online for the purposes of online safety in order to help them avoid dangerous or unpleasant situations.	

Consumer awareness

Table 12

Desc. #	Descriptor	Level
73	I can complete small commercial transactions online.	ELEMENTARY
74	I know how to benefit from the advantages of e-commerce with some guidance.	
75	I am careful about commercial frauds online.	

76	I can identify quality products in the online space.	INTERMEDIATE
77	I know that some commercial products available online do not respect workers' rights.	
78	I can avoid commercial frauds online.	ADVANCED
79	I can denounce commercial frauds online.	
80	I can detect commercial products that respect workers' rights.	

Again, we want to emphasise that we are currently at stage 2. Hence, stage 5, the scaling of the descriptors to different levels of proficiency, has not taken place yet. Therefore, our current scaling to these three levels of proficiency is preliminary and tentative and will be tested empirically at a later date using data that will be collected from teachers at a later stage. We are considering conducting Rasch scaling, which means that after stage 5, we might revise the scaling of some of the descriptors.

5. DCE descriptors for formative and summative assessment

In the introduction, we have already echoed Byram's (2021) words that *"the value of assessment is almost self-evident"* (p. 126). Nevertheless, in this section, we want to briefly, yet explicitly outline the rationale of DCE descriptors for formative and summative assessment purposes. To do so, we will draw on Byram (2021) again:

> *"Assessment provides evidence of learning, and [...] has various uses, including: to trace learners' progress; to identify specific strengths and weaknesses, which can be the basis for planning further teaching and learning; and to provide information in processes of evaluation of the effectiveness of a course or of a particular teacher or teaching technique"* (p. 126)

Byram's statement emphasises the inextricable relationship between teaching, learning and assessing. Especially the part "trace learners' progress" shows that a process perspective is adopted: learning/teaching is a process – not a product. This resonates with the Council of Europe's (2021, p. 40) four purposes of formative assessment:

- identify[ing] what has and has not yet been learned
- understand[ing] the learning processes in which the learner has engaged
- establish[ing] appropriate future learning goals for the learner
- plan[ning] further learning activities that will enable the learner to progress and achieve those new goals

These purposes also link to the three-tiered perspective of feedback by Hattie & Timperley (2007): feedback, feed up and feed forward. In a similar vein, the Council of Europe (2021, p. 40) considers it “assessment *for* learning” (p. 41), which is why the assessment needs to occur during learning to become a digital citizen.

This contrasts with summative assessment, i.e. “assessment *of* learning” (Council of Europe, 2021, p. 41), occurring at the end of – not during – a specific unit, such as in the context of tests. Therefore, the aim is to summarise the learners’ proficiency. In our case, this allows us to see how proficient they appear in the DCE domains. We use the word ‘appear’ on purpose since we do acknowledge that not everything related to DCE can be assessed in a reliable and trustworthy way.

We hope that schools will not only use our draft descriptors for summative but also for formative purposes. This would be in line with considering the development of DCE as a lifelong process. Teachers should assist learners during their journey of becoming digital citizens.

6. Conclusion

Speaking of journeys, writing this article constitutes one of the first steps of our journey, which has indeed been a learning experience for us. We want to use this conclusion to reflect on what we have done so far and provide an outlook on what is to follow. This procedure will highlight our contribution to the field of assessing DCE. In addition, we will also express our gratitude to those who have helped us learn.

Our overall aim in this contribution has been to critically reflect on the missing links between three main frameworks regarding digital competences (DigComp), democratic competences (RFCDC) and digital citizenship education (DCE), which European institutions have produced in recent years. These frameworks include the competences needed by 21st-century citizens who live in culturally diverse societies on a continuum of real and virtual dimensions. Even though one framework claims to build on the other, we have – for the first time – identified drastic missing interrelations between them, which may lead to negative repercussions in applying them in the foreign language classroom. This lack, in turn, might reduce the usefulness of employing the frameworks for fostering the competences delineated by the frameworks. The competences digital citizens need are inseparable from those competences necessary to be democratic citizens. We are also the first to explicitly identify those links between the DCE and the RFCDC and match each of the ten DCE domains with democratic competences indicated in the RFCDC.

Furthermore, the DCE framework entirely neglects assessment, even though learning, teaching and assessing are inextricably intertwined. According to us, this is a huge gap, which to close is of crucial importance. Otherwise, what competences frameworks expect learners to achieve cannot be assessed. In this article, we have provided the first two of five stages: defining criteria for formulating DCE descriptors and formulating a bank of descriptors for each of the ten DCE domains.

As for our future journey, we will be working on the remaining three stages: selecting DCE descriptors based on feedback from experts and education professionals, piloting the selected DCE descriptors in various educational settings across Europe and scaling the descriptors to different levels of proficiency. This highlights once again that our work is still a work in progress, i.e. we are still in the middle of our journey of developing assessment for DCE.

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Martyn Barrett is a consultant for the Council of Europe and led the development of the Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture. Furthermore, he has also worked for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, where he helped to design the global competence assessments for use in PISA 2018.

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KEYNOTE 2

Problems Caused by the Native Speaker in Intercultural Communication

Zhaoming Wang

Abstract

In the past decades, most of the attention has been given to the sojourners in the field of intercultural communication. Although a few literatures suggest a negative role that native speakers played in the interaction between native and non-natives, it is still unclear what exactly are the problems caused by the native speakers. To fill in this gap, this study focuses on international and home students' interaction in a university in the north of England. By conducting interviews with 48 international students, it found out that home students or native speakers do make their interaction more difficult and stressful for the non-native speakers. In particular, native speakers' use of English and their lack of awareness and skills to adjust their English are the main problems. As a result, linguistically, non-natives could not understand the natives. Psychologically they felt more distant from the natives. This study hopes to raise more awareness of the need to pay attention to native speakers and their intercultural competence development for future study.

KEYWORDS: native speaker, home student, international students, sojourners, intercultural competence, intercultural communication, UK higher education

Introduction

Intercultural competence is crucial for the students involved in colleges and universities—not only to prepare themselves for the demands of employers seeking interculturally competent employees, but also to fulfil their own social needs. Moving to a new city and living with other students from different backgrounds, university students are actually doing intercultural communication at all times. As the global demand for higher education increases, countries are competing to attract internationally mobile students (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009). Although the United States continues to be the world's leading higher-education destination, the United Kingdom is the second most popular choice in the world for international students to study—it is estimated that 15% of the student population in the United Kingdom are international students (King, Findlay & Ahren, 2010).

Since the 1980s, intercultural training and intercultural competence has been explored by many researchers. In the higher education settings, much attention has been given to international students or sojourners. In particular, there is plenty of literature focusing on international students' adaptation ((e.g., Young, Sercombe, Naeb & Schartner, 2013; Zhang and Goodson, 2011; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). For example, Furnham and Bochner (1986) proposed that language incompetence, loneliness, social communication difficulties and pressures associated with the role of representative of their country in their interactions with host nationals are the main problems they encounter. These five problems proposed by Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) have been broadly supported by the literature. For example, loneliness is a serious problem among international students (Robertson, Lone, Jones & Thomas, 2000). Although these studies are important and helpful for the international students' adaptation in the foreign country, there is also evidence that interaction with host nationals plays an important part in international students' adjustment (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Trice, 2004). However, there was little focus on the native speaker or the host nationals. It seems that it is the international students or sojourners who take the whole responsibility for a successful intercultural interaction, especially with the host nationals.

As an international student myself, I also put my focus on the international students first—just like most of the existing literature. The motivation to look at the role native speakers played in intercultural interaction actually came from the book *English-Only Europe? Challenging Language Policy* (Phillipson, 2003). In particular, there is one paragraph which points out the negative role that native speakers played in intercultural communication—in fact, they maybe the cause of communication problems. According to Phillipson, "although native speakers have an edge in many types of intercultural communication, tend to talk more, and may succeed in influencing outcomes more, native speakers can in fact be the cause of communication problems" (p. 167). It seems what Philipson argues is that language proficiency is not equivalent to intercultural competence. Although native speakers have greater facility in speaking the language, they may not necessarily have greater sensitivity in using it appropriately. On the contrary, competent speakers of English as second language are more comprehensible than native speakers in many intercultural settings. For the second language speakers, they may be better at adjusting their language for the people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The idea "native speakers are the cause of communication problems" or "native speaker's problem" opens a new door for research. However, it is difficult to find literature that has a particular focus on the native speakers' or home students' intercultural competence. Even in Phillipson's book, there is no further information about it. Some researchers have pointed out the importance of home students' intercultural competence. For example, Crowther and his colleagues' (2000) paper on *"internationalisation at home*" recognises that the home student can and should take an equal place in the international learning community without leaving home and that this entails the development of sensitivities, skills and abilities just as complex as those deployed by students studying outside their home culture. Samovar, McDaniel and Roy (2015) propose several considerations for the native speaker while interacting with a non-native speaker such as adjusting their speech rate, vocabulary and monitoring non-verbal feedback. However, it seems far from enough. The literature does not show how these techniques or policies could be applied into classroom setting in the higher education system. There still is a huge gap in the literature and there is a need to explore what exactly is "the problem caused by the native speaker" and how the native speakers affect the intercultural interaction with non-native speakers.

Study and Method

In order to fill this gap, this study aims to find out what exactly is the “problem caused by the native speakers” in intercultural interaction, especially with non-native students in UK higher education setting. It is hypothesised that: 1) linguistically, native speakers’ English is more difficult for the non-native to understand, particularly their speaking speed, accents and the use of idioms; 2) native speakers may lack the intercultural competence, particularly the skills and the awareness, to adjust during the interaction with the non-natives.

Here it is important to clarify the terms involved. Although host-national, home students, native speakers are defined differently according to different contexts. For example, native speakers are often studied in the field of applied linguistics or language studies; there are also cases that home students are not stereotypical native speakers. However, as the focus of this study is within the UK higher education setting, these terms were used synonymously, which refers to the students mainly educated in the UK. Similarly, sojourner, international students and non-native speakers are used synonymously, which refers to the students who are not mainly educated in the UK.

Method

To find out the “problem caused by the home students” in the UK higher education setting, interviews were conducted at one university in the north of England. The interviews were carried out with international students at the university. They were semi-structured with a focus on the interaction between the interviewees (international students) and home students. As the participants were international students, the interview questions were designed to be simple and straightforward to minimise the misunderstanding caused by language proficiency. By answering the open-ended questions such as “how do you feel about your experience in the UK so far” and “what do you think about your interaction with home students”, interviewees were required to engage in self-reflection and evaluation of their own UK life and intercultural competence.

In total, 48 international students participated in the interview. There were 31 females and 17 males. 28 were from Asian countries (China mainland, Hong Kong and Japan); 20 were from European countries (e.g., Germany, France, Denmark etc.). A detailed description of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview participants N=48

Interview participants	**N=48 (F=31M=17)**	
Factors	**Description**	**Number**
Nationality	Asian European	28 20
Education Level	Undergraduate Master Ph.D.	22 19 7
Length of stay in the UK	≤ 3 months 4 to 12 months Over 12 months	13 28 7
Previous intercultural experience	Yes No	11 37

Procedure

All the interviews were semi-structured in order to follow up interesting and important issues that came up during the interview. Each interview lasted around 10 to 20 minutes and consisted of two main sections. All interviews opened with icebreaking questions on basic personal information (e.g., what are you studying? How long have you been in the UK?). Then the interview moved on to the main questions—What is your biggest challenge during your stay in the UK? Then questions focusing on communication with native speakers were particularly asked. For example, how is your interaction with native students? Is there any difference when you speak to them and other international students?

Thematic analysis was used after all interview were transcribed. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. For this study, the data were read and reread several times in order to generate an initial list of ideas (codes) about what is in the data and what is interesting about them. After the data was familiarised, they were read again with specific questions in mind—the two hypotheses mentioned above. Based on the semantic and latent meaning of the data, different codes were compared and combined throughout the whole data set to form an overarching theme. At this stage, a collection of candidate themes and sub-themes, and all extracts of data were coded. For the candidate themes that appeared to form a coherent pattern, they were defined and named as a theme.

Results

Preliminary coding themes and their subcategories of both pilot and follow-up groups are listed below in Table 2. The preliminary coding themes were listed according to their frequency. Overall, according to the interviewees, the main problems they have encountered during their interaction with native speakers were summarised as language barriers and communication barriers. In general, such findings met the predictions suggested by the hypotheses. A detailed description of each theme is reported below.

Table 2. Frequencies of each preliminary coding theme (N=48)

Preliminary Coding Themes	Subcategories	Number & Frequency
Language Barriers	• Speed • Accent • Vocabulary • Culture knowledge	45 (93.7%)
Communication Barriers	• Psychological pressure • Feeling distant • Easier with internationals	40 (83%)

Language Barriers

45 out of 48 interviewees (93.7%) mentioned that language is the main barrier when they communicate with native speakers. In particular there are four aspects that frustrated them most in the native speakers' English—speed, accent, vocabulary and culture knowledge.

(i) Speed and Accent

The first barrier or problem that native speakers created is the speaking speed, which seems to be too fast for the non-native speakers. What makes it more difficult is that sometimes native speakers have their own accents. For example, one Chinese interviewee reported, *"The speaking speed of local students is too fast for me. Comparing to some European students, local students speak faster with an accent*". For the interviewees from European countries, some of them also said *"sometimes it's hard because of the home students' accents or if they speak fast in the beginning; I had to remind them to speak slowly".*

(ii) Vocabulary and Culture knowledge

Apart from the fast-speaking speed with accent, the vocabulary that native speakers used is another barrier for the non-natives. For example, one German student said native speakers used some idioms or local expressions that made it difficult to understand— *"they (native speakers) talk so fast and they use so many local terms that I don't know and they just use some sort of Yorkshire dialect".* Some participants also reported that there is a difference between what they heard in the UK and what they learned from textbooks back in their own countries— *"what I've learned from textbook is different from what I've heard here".* Such an example indicates a gap between the textbook and the real communication with native speakers in the UK. What international students heard in the UK seemed to be more localised English rather than the so called "standard English" they learned from textbooks. Comparing it with other international students, the participants did admit that it was easier to communicate with other international students rather than the natives. One interviewee from Switzerland said that *"some of them (internationals)* *have really strong accents but the way that they speak is easier so we can interact with each other without any problems and without any difficulties. With native speakers it always a bit complicated and I have really got to concentrate and try not to be too tired".* He further pointed out one problem of native speaker's English lies in their lack of the use of "international English*"— "maybe they (home students) don't know what a simple word is. That is the problem that actually I have noticed. I just asked if they could use simpler words instead of slang words, but it is difficult for them because they are so used to using those kinds of words and they don't know what the basic words are"*.

International students also reported that their difficulty in understanding the English involved the knowledge that was shared by the local people from the name of a store to the inside jokes. For example, one international student said, *"somebody called me mug and I didn't understand it until I understood it was a joke—and mug means a silly person".* Another Chinese student admitted *"it is difficult to understand the jokes English people make—even though you know every word they say*". As an outsider, it was not surprising that the interviewee found it difficult to understand the English humour.

(ii) Communication Barrier

In all, 40 out of 48 (83%) interviewees admitted that they felt more difficulty when they communicated with native speakers compared to the interaction with other international students. To be more specific, there are three areas that participants mentioned in which they have difficulties.

Firstly, participants mentioned that it was more stressful when speaking to native speakers as they were afraid of making mistakes. For example, one Japanese interviewee said *"if I have to talk with native speakers, I feel really nervous—because they are natives… I don't know what is appropriate or what is inappropriate".* One girl from Germany also mentioned that *"I feel a lot more under pressure when I talk to native speakers because I feel like maybe 'oh that word was wrong' or I won't understand what they say because they talk really fast".*

Secondly, native speakers seem to be distant or hard to approach for international students, thus it is difficult to develop intimate relationship with them (e.g., friendship). One Italian interviewee talked about her experience during class—*"the English people just go together, because the teacher is like 'ok make groups and the English people go together"*. In terms of developing friendship, she *said "I don't know why it is, but English people are very grumpy sometimes, you can't approach them. For example, during class they don't say hi to you, but they are very kind because if you ask a question— 'ooh yes I can help you' but that's all. I realise that if I insist, we could become friends, but I have to do the first step and the first move*". A French participant said*, "I feel like there is a problem with being an international student here because I feel like the native students and native speakers here just see you as different".*

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the role native speakers played during intercultural interaction, in particular from a non-native speaker's perspective. There are two main barriers that native speakers caused—language and communication barriers, which make the interaction more difficult and stressful for the non-natives. Linguistically, the natives speak faster and sometimes with accents that makes it hard for international students to follow or understand. Even if when native speakers speak slowly, *"still sometimes it doesn't help".* It turns out that the English of native speakers is more locally influenced with the use of informal terms or slang, whereas the English that international students speak is simpler or more "international". Therefore, international students find it easier to understand each other as they all speak international English. Psychologically, as second language speakers, international students felt more stressed when they speak to natives as they were afraid of making mistakes. They are less confident or reluctant to dare to speak English especially when they just arrived in the UK. Furthermore, international students felt distant from the native speaker. To them, native students seem to be less motivated for communication and hard to approach. Thus, the participants said it was really difficult to form or develop intimate relationships such as friendship with native students. That confirms the result from former literature in terms of "passive xenophobia" (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010, Henderson & Spiro, 2007).

The testimony from the interview pointed out the importance of "international English" for home-international interaction. Comparing to non-native speakers, natives speakers' English seems to be less "international", which makes it difficult for non-natives to understand. As there is a lack in the literature on how native speakers could cope with "international English", it seems difficult to solve such problems if native speakers have no knowledge of it. It will be more problematic if the native speakers do not have the awareness or the skill to adjust their English during interaction. Thus, proper intercultural competence development for the home students or native speakers are crucial for more efficient and successful intercultural interaction. For an interculturally competent native speaker, with awareness and communicative accommodation skills, they should be able to change their English when needed. For example, more paraphrasing or adjusting their English according to their listener's English ability could complement for the lack of their knowledge of international English.

Although this study was conducted within the UK higher education setting only, the results may be applicable to other settings, such as the business world. For example, In the book "*World Business Cultures: A Handbook*", Tomalin and Nicks (2014) mention that *"for most people in the world, the problem of English can be summed up in two words: native speakers*" (p. 81). Similarly, they argue that the problem caused by the native speakers is that the non-native speakers cannot understand them (e.g., native speakers in UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia etc.), particularly their accents, their idioms and their humour. As a result, in the business world, many non-native speaking countries simply prefer to do business with other non-native speaking countries as at least they can understand each other (Tomalin & Nicks, 2014). Such arguments help explain why within the UK university the international students and home students seem to disengage from one other. As a result, they just keep communicating within their own cultural groups.

Now it is clear what the problems are that native speakers cause in intercultural interaction, the next question is—how to solve the problem? In the business world, Tomalin and Nicks (2014) propose six key rules for the efficient and clear use of English in the business setting. The six rules are: 1. articulate; 2. pause; 3. no jokes; 4. explain idioms; 5. spell out acronyms; 6. KISS (keep it short and simple). According to Tomalin and Nicks, keeping their (the natives') language simple or putting idioms in simpler words is key to better understanding. These rules are suitable for the people who need hands-on skills or techniques within a limited time. However, using these rules and applying them in the interaction need a degree of awareness. As argued by Fantini (2000), awareness is the keystone on which effective and appropriate interactions depend. Without the development of awareness, any knowledge, skills or attitudes will not be enhanced. Therefore, how to enhance native speakers' self and intercultural awareness is the key to solving the problems caused by them. Such intercultural awareness/competence training programme is especially crucial for the home students in the higher education setting, not only to fulfil their own social needs, but also to prepare themselves for the demand of employers who seek interculturally competent employees.

To solve the problem caused by the natives, apart from developing native speakers' intercultural competence, what is equally important is non-native speakers' attitudes. The findings of this study show that non-natives were more stressful when they talked to native speakers. They were afraid of making mistakes or being judged by the natives. Such findings suggest that the power of the use of English is not equal between native and the non-native speakers. Thus, the non-native speakers or international students need proper guidance to build up their confidence, especially when they speak English with native speakers. This applies particularly in language teaching as well as intercultural training. It is important to let the second language learners know that learning foreign languages is not a route towards pretending to be native speakers. What is more important is to be able to express themselves effectively in English with people from anywhere in the world. Only when people realise that the language belongs to its users, wherever they come from, and however they express themselves, then they are one step closer towards equitable communication (Philipson, 2003).

Conclusion

As little attention has been given to the role that native speaker plays in intercultural communication, this study aimed to find out what exactly are the problems caused by the native speakers. It turns out the language barrier and communication barriers are the major problems that non-natives encountered during their interaction. Not only is native speakers' English more difficult to understand but they also lack the awareness or the skill to adjust their English for the non-natives during interaction. Hence, this study emphasises the urgent need to raise the awareness of training native speakers not only in higher education but also in other fields such as business, public services and the medical care system. Only by doing so can successful and effective intercultural interaction be realised. After all, it needs mutual understanding and efforts from both sides.

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KEYNOTE 3

Teaching effective negotiation skills

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In our global economy dominated by international business and the use of international telephonic communications (ITCs) our ability to understand and teach the skills of negotiation is one of the keys to successful communication for students of language for business purposes and also in government organisations and diplomacy. This article summarises some of the key techniques in successful negotiation based on a lecture given by Doctor Swallow to the Diplomatic University of Bahrain in August 2022 on behalf of the International Academy of Media and Diplomacy (IAMD) of which she is deputy director.

1. Understand the structure of a negotiation

There are five stages in a negotiation. They are, Prepare, Debate, Propose, Bargain and Agree. By preparing well you explain your position, where you are coming from and what you would like to achieve and the other side does the same. What you are doing at this stage is setting out your stall, like in a market and each language has typical phrases such as, in English for example, “What we would like to achieve is. . .”, “our situation is . . .” and quite often negotiators will introduce a problem they wish to solve, using phrases like, “The problem we face is . . .” or “the key issue in our market is . . .” All these phrases introduce the key aims of the negotiation but in a way that invites discussion and that is what happens in the next stage of the negotiation, Debate.

In the Debate stage the negotiators explore what has been said in the Prepare stage and ask each other’s opinions. Typical phrases used in English might be, “Tell me what you feel about . . .” or “tell me what you think about . . .” Quite often a negotiator will list the points they find positive and balance it with the points they would want to question, using phrases like, “On the one hand (positive things) but on the other hand (negative things). If you can get your students into pairs or small groups and give them a negotiation topic or getting them to think of one it can be a very successful way of practising the language and getting into the swing of learning and absorbing the five steps.

This leads us into the third stage, the Propose stage. This is where the deal is put on the table. This can be done by a fairly formal offer using phrases in English which are more formal, such as “I propose . . .” or “I suggest . . .” or quite often in English the proposal is made using a question with phrases like, “How about .. .?” “What would happen if we did this?” or “Suppose we did this. Would it be acceptable?”

The fourth stage, Bargaining, may continue the question asking approach. The important thing is to consider alternatives, using in English phrases like, “If we do this will you . . .?”, “If you can agree to this we’ll . . .” and “If you can’t agree to this we’ll . . .” And there are a couple of useful phrases that stress no deal unless concessions are made by the other side as in “This is a deal breaker for us,” and the rather muted, “I’m not happy with that,” (= ‘I’m very unhappy’). These are nuanced ways of expressing one’s views in a negotiation and it is important to teach and practise them as an example of how different negotiators may express their views. A similar variation of opinion can also be shown by phrases used in the fifth stage, the Agree stage.

There are various ways of expressing opinion when agreeing to a proposal, from “I’m comfortable with that” (meaning It’s OK) and “I’m happy with that” (meaning ‘It’s good’) to “I can live with that” meaning ‘I don’t like it but it’s acceptable.” An interesting formal acceptance is, “I think we can proceed along these lines.” Teaching the nuance of different phrases expressing acceptance and practising them in mini-roleplays are important.

Also, for students of language for business, one thing the teacher needs to emphasise is contract language. What is legally enforceable and what isn’t? For example, if a clause in a contract or agreement uses “shall’ instead of “will’, it means the action referred to or failure to comply is legally actionable. In the same way, the phrase, “Time is of the essence” means that legal actions may be applied in the case of late delivery, whereas a statement like, “the parties will use their best efforts to . . .” is not.

2. Successful negotiation strategies

Having taught and practised the five stages of a negotiation and some of the language commonly associated with negotiations, it is crucial to understand the most important strategies that negotiators use. For this, one of the best sources is Harvard Law School in the USA where Roger Fisher and William Ury produced one of the world’s best-selling treaties on negotiation strategies, Getting to Yes (Fisher R. and Ury W. (1981).

Fisher and Ury offer the six key strategies of principled negotiations he first strategy is to look for interests not positions. What people may say is the reason for their demands may not be the real reason. As part of their preparation negotiators should research what their real interest in negotiating might be which is not something they talk about. Being prepared and able to focus on the real interests of the other side is vital to a successful negotiation.

It is very easy to blame people when things go wrong and Fisher and Ury stress the importance of avoiding the ‘blame game’. Their strategy is, “Be strong on the problem and soft on the person.” In other words, focus on negotiating to resolve the problem not blame the person responsible, even if they are liable.

The third strategy is look for mutual gain. This is what is called a ‘win-win’ situation where both sides are reasonably happy at the outcome. This is key to a successful negotiation.

The fourth strategy stresses the importance of always focusing on objective criteria. Avoid your opinions, which may come across in a negotiation as prejudice, and focus on published records and statistics which are recognised and considered reliable. Provide facts that can be checked out. This will reinforce your position.

The last two strategies deal with what happens if a negotiation is not successful. The fifth strategy is knowing your ‘walkaway’ point. Your walkaway point is your reason to stop the negotiation. There may be several reasons not to proceed with a negotiation ranging from price to failure of the proposed agreement to yield the benefits accepted. This needs to be pre-agreed with your team and your authorities so you can feel sure about what to do if the negotiation is failing.

However, it is also important to keep the door open even if the negotiation has failed. This is why Fisher and Ury offer the BATNA, the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement’. Your negotiating team should work out beforehand not just your walkaway point but how you can restart the negotiation or at least keep the contact door open for future negotiation.

Learning and practising these six key strategies should be at the centre of training students of language for business in the key communication strategies of how to negotiate successfully, as well giving students the chance to research and explore the different styles of negotiation of different communities they may have to deal with, including the different approaches to ‘win-win’. Harvard Business School has a wonderful site offering reports and articles dealing with different types of negotiation free of charge with lots of case studies and we list the site at the end of this article.

It is also very useful to be able to show examples of negotiations in action and we list a number of videos illustrating negotiations also at the end.

3. Negotiators skills and qualities

Finally, what are the qualities of a successful international negotiator? What are the factors of success?
We can summarise them as follows:

- **Legitimacy**: Establish the legitimacy of your case.
- **Confidence**: Have confidence in presenting it.
- **Courtesy**: Show courtesy to the other party,
- **Adaptation**: Adapt to the other party’s style.
- **Rapport**: Try to build rapport by stressing commonalities in the organisations or personal experiences of the negotiators on the other side.
- **Incentives and trade-offs**: Look for incentives to encourage agreement and be prepared to offer reciprocal concessions (trade-offs) if it will lead to a successful agreement.
- **Research:** Do your research into the other negotiator’s function and the background of the organisation you are dealing with. Knowing where the other side is coming from is an immense negotiation advantage.

In addition, we can practise the key skills of top negotiators with our students in the classroom or seminar room. Our top key negotiator skills are:

- **Patience**: Develop good listening skills. You can see an exercise on Active Listening in ICC Journal 4 (1) available online at www.icc-languages.eu/iccjournal.

- **Open-mindedness**: Be tolerant, non-judgemental. Show patience and tolerance at all times.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Be sensitive to cultural differences
- **People oriented**: Remember ‘Hard on the problem. Soft on the person.’
- **Willingness to use team assistance:** Focus on achieving consensus and synergy
- **Self-confidence:** Demonstrate professional competence and integrity.
- **Personal relationship:** Build personal relationships before negotiating.
- **Trust:** Appreciate importance of building mutual trust.
- **Study:** Find out what you can about the culture and history of the other side.
- **Shared experience**: Note and build on shared experiences.
- **Cultural interpretation;** Appreciate the other party will interpret what you say in the light of their culture and language.
- **Body language**: Be alert to body language and silence. Some cultures successfully use silence as a tactic to get others to make concessions.
- **Seniority**: Respect status and seniority, avoid someone losing face.
- **Be prepared**: Negotiations may continue post agreement.
- **Commitment and consistency**: Show commitment and consistency throughout the negotiation but this doesn’t mean being stubborn.
- **Focus on the outcome not the process**.

These qualities can be developed through interactive classroom activities which are important for the psychological development of students. If you can teach the five steps of negotiation and the language usage differences that might arise through them, and the six steps of a principled negotiation and practise them while you inculcate in your students the qualities and skills mentioned above, you will have done great service to your students as negotiators and to the organisations and countries they represent.

KEYNOTE 4

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE AS AN ADULT

impossible

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Learning a foreign language in adulthood can be very difficult but not impossible. Although children have an easier learning journey, adults can too. The secret lies in having an agile mind, imitating native accents, persisting with your goals and, above all, having a lot of patience. Here are some ways to keep yourself motivated.

Learning is a gradual process

Regular practice is by far the most important element of learning a new language. When we begin to learn a new language, we often try to cram as much into our heads as possible. This will eventually lead to burn out. So how do we maximize our learning? First of all, it is important to understand that learning is a gradual process. A good way to start is to take a class and be exposed to the language a few times per week, plus homework. In addition, spending a few minutes a day (about 10-15 minimum) thinking, reading, and speaking in the target language will help us progress. Here are some simple tips to maximize our learning experience:

- Speaking out loud in the foreign language whenever we are alone is a good way to practice. We should start by describing simple actions, such as: “I go to work, I live in Italy, I am a student.” Let’s repeat them over and over and then change the subject, for example: “Simon goes to work, lives in Italy and is a student.”
- While walking or running errands, we should listen to a podcast in the target language or review the vocabulary we just learned (e.g. we can record the vocabulary on our phone and play it while we do other things).

- Repeating the basics and adding some new weekly elements is a great way to learn. I recommend incorporating the present tense, modal verbs (should, would, could, must, may) and the verb “I like.”

Enrol in a class

Attending a language class is one of the best ways to motivate ourselves. The fact that we are held accountable for producing oral and written material before the teacher and other students will help keep us on task. When our financial situation allows it, hiring a private tutor to customize our learning experience will also go a long way.

Choose the right resources to kick-start our learning journey

If we decide to start learning on our own, let’s make sure to choose the right resources, such as a good book with audio material for pronunciation. There are also plenty of language apps out there that can support our learning. However, apps do not cover all the aspects of the language as a personal tutor or a live class would. For example, apps like Duolingo are great for learning the basics and vocabulary, but they lack practical speech. Bottom line, we should try to diversify our learning sources as much as possible.

Full-immersion

Whenever possible, let’s bring the language to us by attaching stickers to items all around our home with their name in the language we’re learning. This is an excellent vocabulary-building technique. We should also make sure we hear the language everywhere. Listening to music, radio stations, or watching movies (with subtitles in our language in the beginning) will get us acclimatized to the native accent, cadence and pattern. Even if understanding is tough in the beginning, being exposed to the language will get our ears accustomed to it!

Reading also helps. We should read about familiar topics and start easy with kids’ books made of simple sentences and pictures. Once we learn high frequency words and more vocabulary, we can move gradually to longer and more complicated texts.

Last, let’s make sure to befriend a native speaker or practise the language orally whenever and wherever we can (e.g. at the grocery store, at the café, etc.). Our goal is to interact with native speakers as much as we can. It’s important to give the language a try and don’t wait until we feel totally comfortable, otherwise we will never start.

Relax

The biggest hurdle to learning a new language is psychological. If we’re nervous when we interact with strangers, then let’s start with baby steps. If we begin to use bits and pieces of the language here and there, we also begin to gain our confidence. Once we feel comfortable, let’s try to make longer sentences (e.g. ask the teacher in her native tongue how her weekend was or make a comment about the food that the waiter at the café just brought us). If we kick ourselves for every little mistake (and, believe me, it is totally normal that we *will* make plenty!), we’ll never progress. Let’s mentally relax and take a deep breath while we interact. It’s surprising how far our confidence will take us.

TEACHING TIPS

Relating the language you are teaching to its history

Michael Carrier

ICC-Languages board member

1. Purpose

Most of our language learners are well-motivated to learn English or other languages because they need it for their education, their work or for future career opportunities. But we still need to find new ways to motivate learners, to keep them interested, to keep them delighted in the process of learning more English or other languages, for whichever purpose they have in mind.

Most of the texts and dialogues that we use in textbooks or lesson materials tend to be serious and communication task-oriented (as they should be). This means they are about some work-oriented topic or about a city to visit, an awesome cultural artefact or an important theme like climate change.

All of these are important and useful topics for contextualising the kind of English that people need. But can we also imagine thematic areas that will be interesting and even exciting for learners, and make them more delighted to learn about the language itself?

In other words, can we add the competence of ‘knowing something about the nature of English or other languages’ to the normal competencies of speaking, reading, listening, mediating and so on? I think we can.

This is not a plea for more grammar - I don't mean that kind of knowledge of a language. I mean the knowledge of how a language is formed, and where a language comes from. For example, where English comes from, how it's related to other languages, and how it developed in the southern steppes of Ukraine over 5000 years ago, reaching English speaking countries via a very diverse set of peoples and circumstances.

When I have included something about the history of the Indo-European languages and specifically English into upper intermediate or advanced classes in the past, my experiences show that the majority of students are quite fascinated by this new area of knowledge that most had not previously encountered.

2 Content

What would this mean in practice?
First, we would plan some short sessions on linguistic history, starting with the Yamnaya, the dynamic hunter gatherers in the Ukrainian steppes and how they moved across Asia and into Europe. We would explain how Proto-Indo-European came about, and how we can reconstruct it from existing languages.

Then we would explain language families, giving examples of how they connect to each other and how they have arisen over time in different places.
We would give key examples of words from each of these families and arrange activities to try and match these cognates to their meaning.

These language history lessons may be taught in a longer session (eg 45mins) or a series of short sessions (5-10 minutes activity) over a number of lessons.
Each history snippet would be introduced by a text, perhaps with a map, and comprehension questions and tasks to help learners unpick the relationship between languages.

We would talk about the relationship of Indo-European languages across the world and the introduction of different Indo-European speaking groups into Europe.
For English language learners we can cover the arrival of Anglo-Saxon into England, the coming of the Normans in 1066 and examples of middle English from Chaucer on through Shakespeare to the present day.

3 Lesson series

Here is a possible syllabus for a series of this kind of lesson. This is a list of 10 lessons or lesson themes that bring new content and understanding of the English language to upper intermediate and advanced learners of English.

- Ancient History: Indo-European
- Latin & Greek
- Germanic languages
- Anglo Saxons
- The Normans
- Middle English and Chaucer
- Shakespeare
- The King James Bible
- The empire – borrowing from India and beyond
- Modern slang and current language changes

Each theme combines a bit of history, some sample words in context showing the changes in meaning, and some word histories – how words relate to their cousins and cognates in other languages.
Each class is different, and for some it might be best to choose only two or three topics. For other classes the whole series may be motivating and interesting.

4 Activities

What kind of activities could we involve the learners in?
When looking at the present day, we can develop activities around the English language by the selection of words and phrases (loan words) borrowed from other languages and countries.

One activity could be to learn about loan words from specific languages like Hindi (bungalow, pyjama) or Arabic (alcohol, algebra). Leaners can match the word, the meaning and the origin.

Another activity can be based on cognates (related words, or ‘cousin’ words) that we can recognise in modern languages. Learners can read short texts on the language families, and explain the histories of the words in pairwork ‘information gap’ activities. For example, we can explain how the word ‘exit’ in English is linked to ‘exodus’ in Greek and ‘vykhod’ in Russian, noting how ‘exodus’ links to the word ‘method’ as well.

We can also look at the deep roots of words in Proto-Indo-European (PIE), the language spoken about 5500 years ago. Our English word ‘heart’ is cognate with Latin ‘cor’, and both stem originally from PIE ‘kr̥djom’.

The change from an initial ‘k’ sound to an ‘h’ sound is an example of a common sound shift. And this also explains how PIE ‘phter’ becomes Latin ‘pater’ but English ‘father’ – via a sound shift in the initial consonant. PIE roots can be fascinatingly close to modern English. The verb ‘to stand’ has an ancient root of ‘sta’, so it has not changed much in 5500 years. Learners can find these links and connections enlightening and of great interest as they attempt to learn new languages.

A further activity may be based on the reverse borrowing from English into other languages – such as the way modern French ‘flirter’ is borrowed from English ‘flirt’, without people being aware that ‘flirt’ is itself an example of the English stealing the word from French, ‘fleuretter’ = ‘to whisper sweet nothings into someone’s ear’. Each of these sessions could be introduced by a text or a visual (a chart or a map) or start with a word in a sentence context that students have to unpick, in order to speculate as to its origins.

These lessons could also be seen as a CLIL activity, where the focus is not only on language development but also on knowledge development. This is most likely to be appropriate in secondary education, where other subjects than the foreign language are taught. This type of language history lessons might fit into other subjects taught in the school (e.g. history, or the students’ native language and literature).

5. Lesson plan

Here is a sample activity plan that can be used as a model for a number of lessons.

- **Warmup** - give the students a word and ask what they know about its origins and its relation to other languages around the world.
- **Pre-teaching** - explain words that will come up in the text they are about to read.
- **Input** - use a text or a short exposition from the teacher using a map or graphic and introduce the simple context of the word history in about 200 words.
- **Comprehension check** - check comprehension and get students to summarise the texts to each other.
- **Pairwork** – get students to summarise or explain the word history to each other or speculate on other languages this may be related to. Ask them to link this back to their own language wherever possible.
- **Research**- get students to identify and research the origins of words in the language they are learning which have been loaned to or borrowed from it.

They can present the results to the class and discuss their meanings and how their usage may have changed in the language under study.

- **Etymology** – give students a word and ask them to research its historical and possibly foreign origins.

6. Conclusion

These activities, and others like them, are not meant to displace more traditional communicative tasks and competency building exercises.
They are designed merely to introduce variety and diversity of theme into the language classroom, as well as making students more aware of the links between the language they are learning and other languages that have contributed to or borrowed from them.
There could be an intercultural benefit too, as understanding the long historical connections of languages like English to other languages around the world may help learners to build more acceptance and understanding of other language speakers, their history and their cultures, building an awareness of commonality and a sense of unity.

7. Some ideas for reference

Not everyone has had the chance to study the history of languages, so here are some references to the history of English I have found useful.

- Melvyn Bragg (2003) *The Adventure of English - the Biography of a Language* (London, Hodder and Stoughton)
- David Crystal (2005) *The Stories of English* (London: Abrams)
- John Ayto (2011) *Dictionary of Word Origins: The Histories of More Than 8,000 English-Language Words* (London: Arcade)
- Simeon Potter (1966) *Language in the modern world* (London: Penguin)

Of general interest a dictionary of etymology might be valuable, for example, for English:

- Barnhart R.K. (1988) The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology, USA, W.H. Wilson

WEBINARS

One school, fifty languages: plurilingual education in an Irish primary school

Professor David Little

Delivered on May 26 2022. You can watch the recording at ICC-languages.eu/Webinars and scroll down to webinars archive. You can also view the slide pack on the website.

The focus of David's talk was a unique experiment conducted by an Irish primary school in introducing plurilingualism into the school's language teaching. The aim was to incorporate immigrant pupils into the system. Irish is the second official language of Ireland although it is the preferred language of a relatively small minority of the population. English is the other official language. Ireland has 8 years of primary schooling, including 2 preparatory years followed by 6 primary grades. Irish schools have a child-centred curriculum recognising the uniqueness of each child and stressing the importance of using the child's existing knowledge and experience as a basis for learning and emphasising the importance of life at home.

The experiment described by David was carried out in Scoil Brídhe Cailíní (St. Bridget's School for Girls) Blanchardstown in 2014-2015. The school had 320 pupils ranging from age four and a half to twelve and a half. 80% of them were immigrants and had little or no English when they started school and between them they had 51 languages, not including English or Irish and most of those languages were unknown to their teachers. This presented a huge problem for the school. So many languages but hardly any English. How could the school cope with this challenge?

David divided his talk into four sections; an inclusive language policy, inclusive plurilingual education in action, three bonuses of a plurilingual policy and a final conclusion.

Why adopt an inclusive language policy?

Many schools tell their students to leave their home language at the school gates and say that the only language permitted in school is the language of schooling (in Ireland, English). This is cruel because the child's home language is central to their sense of identity. It is foolish because it denies the child's right to use their primary cognitive tool – their home language. It is also bound to fail as minority language speaking pupils are still forming thoughts in their home language. Therefore, we have to find ways in which students can use their home languages in the process of teaching and learning in a way that will benefit all the students.

The answer is plurilingualism. The Council of Europe CEFR defines plurilingualism as *"a communicative competence to which all experience and knowledge of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact."* (Council of Europe, 2001) Scoil Brídhe encouraged children to use their home language both inside and outside the classroom in the interests of education inclusion. The school's pluralism policy involved the use of home languages, pupils sharing classroom discourse, developing literacy in English, Irish and home languages and French in the last two years of primary. Immigrant parents were also involved in helping develop literacy skills at home. The assumptions were that students would learn more effectively if they could use all the languages at their disposal. Even very young children will use their home languages as a tool of learning and language awareness can support learning but is also one of education's most valuable outcomes.

How can home languages be used in the school?

- Reciprocal conversation with other pupils who speak the language in pair or groupwork in class or in the playground before school and during breaks.
- 'This is what we say in my language' – in junior classes working with shapes, colours and numbers etc. students can learn in English, then Irish and then compare with their home languages. So, a student can learn numbers 1-5 in English and Irish and then say the equivalents in her home language and teach the class how to count from 1 to 5 in their language.
- The use of home languages scaffolds the learning of English.
- Home languages act as a source of intuitive linguistic knowledge that students can share with the class.

David gives some excellent examples of the use of different languages in doing tasks and in written work as shown in the recording of his presentation.

The three bonuses

Bonus 1 is that as well as motivating students to learn and use foreign languages through activities, plurilingualism was a positive motivation to learn Irish, for English speaking students and students with other home languages alike. In other countries such as Greece learning English may be used as a bridge between Greek and the students' home languages.

Bonus 2 is that using their home language enables students to contribute autonomously to classroom activities. Bilingualism also helps develop 'executive function skills' such as focusing attention, managing tasks and regulating thinking.

Bonus 3 is that the use of home languages in school fosters the students' self-esteem. When the director asked what it would be like if you couldn't use your home languages in school the answers were very negative. When she asked how they felt about being able to use them in school the answers were extremely positive.

Conclusion

Thanks to the emphasis on writing minority language students developed high levels of age-appropriate literacy in English, Irish, home languages and French. They achieved a massive increase in range, confidence and fluency in Irish and in metalinguistic awareness and skills. They also did better in yearly standardised tests in English and Maths above the national average. The key was that encouraging students to use their home languages autonomously at school meant that they could use their language as a cognitive tool, make connections between their home languages and English and Irish and it also stimulated students whose first language was English. The teacher’s interest in plurilingualism encouraged students to write in their free time and present the results for approval. (Please refer to the recording for examples) In this way students developed a critical interest in their own learning.

For more details please refer to Engaging with Linguistic Diversity, published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2021 also to Language and Languages in the Primary School , a FREE download at Post-primary languages Ireland www.ppli.ie. Go to Resources, Page 2.

From Maps to Navigation systems - Trends in Intercultural Training

Robert Gibson

Recorded June 23 2022. You can watch the recording at ICC-languages.eu/Webinars and scroll down to webinars archive.

After introducing himself and his experience in intercultural training, Robert addressed three 'hot' topics; multiple cultural identities (Multicollectivity), Culture and DEIB (Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging) and Culture and Neuroscience. Also, he asked the question, where is intercultural training going and how is it changing? In writing his most recent book, '*Bridge the Culture Gaps'* he recognised how much the intercultural field has grown in the last twenty years with globalisation and how much of the early theories of intercultural interaction needed to be rethought and updated. Some thinkers have rejected the concept of '*intercultural'* and adopted the term, *'transcultural'* to describe how people from different cultural backgrounds interact. Another factor is the belief in some quarters that exploring cultural differences is by definition 'othering' and emphasising division rather than bringing people together.

In his presentation Robert identified what he saw as the key differences between the early years of this century and today. We have moved away from focusing on national culture and now recognise that people have multiple cultural identities. The traditional 'iceberg' theory of 1/3 behavioural differences which we can observe and 2/3 attitudinal differences that are below the surface is now replaced by culture related to context. Instead of referring to intercultural competence we now refer to global or transnational competence and focus on diversity and inclusion. Where once we taught people to be wary of stereotyping we now focus on the danger of showing unconscious bias, and rather than teaching culture as way of coping with difference we now think in terms of constructive intercultural management. As trainers our market has expanded from managers in international corporations to a much wider range of professions, including the huge growth in international migration and the training of people who are responsible for looking after them and helping them integrate, and, partly as a result of the pandemic, much more training is being done virtually online and also the use of coaching is developing. Finally, the perspectives on training research is moving beyond the US and Europe and embracing a far more diverse world with multiple paradigms.

Robert defined a culture as a shared system of beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. He recognises from his training experience that people differ by their profession. the sector and the department they are working in and the site where the trainees are based. All this is additional to their position in the company, the team they are part of their function and even length of service, how long they have worked there. He identified three levels of culture based on the research of Gardenswartz and Rowe; level 1 is the inner level of personal identity, level 2 is the outer level of society and level 3 is the culture of the organisation you work in. These are very useful reference points for understanding people, their personalities and the culture they live and work in.

Since the beginning of the study of intercultural communication, researchers like Hall, Hofstede and Trompenaars have identified a number of dimensions based on their research which they applied to nationalities. Although the application to nations is no longer accepted, as described above, the dimensions themselves, such as, for example, monochronic and polychronic attitudes to time or direct and indirect communication styles, are still valid.

One of the key influences on the understanding of intercultural communication is the application of neuroscience, in particular, how our brain filters information we receive and can lead to unconscious bias. Sandy Sparks of Warwick University defines unconscious bias as an implicit pattern of thought we are unaware of, automatically triggered by our brain making quick assessments of situations and people (Sparks, 2014). Everyone has a different personal wiring which we as trainers can help them become aware of.

Similar to how Milton Bennett established his six-stage process of adaptation to a new cultural environment (DMIS Model, Bennett, 2013), Robert suggested a five-stage personal development process of accepting and bridging perceived cultural differences. First is acceptance that people are different and second is understanding the difference and empathising with it. Third is the process of learning how to fit in so that, fourth, the team functions together successfully. The fifth and final stage is being able to connect with organisations from different parts of the world, in other words, bridging cultures and connecting people in a positive way and possessing cultural agility, an increasingly popular term in the business world.

Connecting cultures is an important process and the Map, Bridge, Integrate model developed by Magnevski and Di Stefano in 2000 is a very good exercise as is the 3 factor model, combining culture with context and situation. (You can read more about the Map, Bridge Integrate model in ICC Journal Volume 3 Issue 2 on Page 24). The context refers to the overall situation, for example, the pandemic, and the situation refers to the specific interchange to be explained. To achieve success in bridging cultures you need to be aware of your own culture and the influence of your age, your education and your professional background. Then compare with those you are dealing with and build a common vision of what you want to achieve and implement what you decide. One way is to create an eco-system, which includes diagnostic tests, sharing best practice, providing, reports, resources and country profiles combined with training to achieve positive results. A last point involves nudging – a popular term in business to describe messages and graphics and signs advising people on how best to behave. (Kepinski and Nielsen, Inclusion Nudges Guidebook, 2020) Other resources can be seen in the slides at the end of Robert’s presentation.

Successful Studying Abroad – Top Tips

Dr Deborah Swallow
Barry Tomalin

Recorded July 7 2022. You can watch the recording at ICC-languages.eu/Webinars and scroll down to webinars archive. You can also view the slide pack on the website.

Debby Swallow and Barry Tomalin offered their ideas on how to improve students' study experience abroad focusing on three key areas, the issues of studying overseas, culture shock and how to deal with and the problems experienced on return home. For many students an overseas study period is an adventure and often a defining positive experience in their lives. However, for others it can be a period of intense loneliness and dislocation, which can affect their studies. The presentation identified 7 areas of concern that students have expressed.

1. **Distance:** Their lodgings and the college where they are studying may quite far apart and therefore students may go straight back 'home' after lectures and miss out on social events in the university.

2. **Living with a family:** Some students may be accommodated in a family. They have a room of their own but no social relationship with the host family and may get very lonely over weekends.

3. **Don't mix:** Students may not mix with other students easily and don't attend social events in the university, leaving them feeling isolated and excluded.

4. **I don't understand my teacher.** Although reasonably proficient in the language of the country they are studying in a lot of students experience difficulties in understanding their lecturers. This may be because their teachers speak too fast or have regional accents the students aren't used to. They use unfamiliar acronyms and idioms which they don't explain and they don't pause long enough to allow information to be absorbed. There are lessons here for teachers to observe their performance in a lecture hall or classroom and check how they can make their presentations easier to understand by their students.

5. **My nationality only:** Many students only mix with others of their own nationality and sit together in class and revise together and never form relationships with students from the countries they are studying in or from other nationalities.

6. **Burnout**: Many students find the workload punishing with the pressure of the classroom and the preparation of assignments in a foreign language. Life is reduced to the classroom and the computer and once again doesn't allow the student to relax, make new friends and enjoy the country they are staying in and can lead to depression.

7. **Culture shock:** And on top of the other issues mentioned there is always the difficulties of adapting to the different lifestyle of the new country, often experienced as culture shock, which affects the quality of their academic work.

What can we as teachers and fellow students do about it? First, we can take a personal interest and encourage foreign students to share their experiences and the difficulties they face. The use of groupwork in class and breakout rooms in online tutoring can encourage foreign students to make friends. Also keeping in touch with the student representative, if there is one, can alert teachers to possible individual problems. Also, if necessary, a students' issues regarding travel and accommodation can be referred to administration and even, if appropriate, pastoral care can be very effective. The key issues for teachers is to develop sensitivity so that they can be aware of possible student problems and be able to direct them to where they can get help. Just showing personal interest and empath can help resolve difficulties.

One very good teaching technique is to get students to examine their experience in the host country by using the MBI process. MBI stands for Map, Bridge and Integrate and it works like this. First, invite your students to share with you or the class incidents that they have found difficult to deal with in the host country, what we call critical incidents. Ask them to describe the critical incident in three stages. The first is map. What did they experience that was different and how would it be different for them at home in their own countries? Stage 2 is bridge. Ask why people were behaving differently. This is the vital process of showing empathy with the host population. Stage 3 is Integrate. Decide what needs to change in order to fit in with the society. And, finally, ask what people have learned about the new culture they are in as a result of applying the MBI process. A ten-minute session devoted to MBI from time to time in class can really help students resolve problems and develop empathy with their new environment and those they deal with. (Magnevski & DiStefano, 2000)

So, a few tips for teachers and administrators. First, slow down and make sure the important points are clear. Try to get to know your class a bit so you can identify possible difficulties. If necessary, get the support of the student care body or even pastoral care (regardless of religious denomination). Keep in contact with the student representative to be aware of possible problems. Most important, just by showing interest you build student engagement and involvement.

Dealing with culture shock

If you've lived and abroad or had to live and work in a different environment you've probably all had this experience. One day you wake up, you feel depressed but you don't know why. You are missing friends and family and you ask yourself, 'Why am here?' You feel Loneliness, anxiety or depression. You are overworking or underperforming and you suffer burnout.

What's going on? It's not you. It's culture shock. Culture shock is the shock of being away from family, friends and daily routines. It manifests through four stages, Stage 1 is the thrill or the shock of being in a new environment. Stage 2 is the point where things may go wrong because of your difficulty adapting to the new environment. This is the culture shock. The third stage is the one where you gradually recover and get used to where and how you are living and working, culminating in stage 4 where you integrate with the new environment.

When culture shock occurs just treat it like the flu. Go to bed and try and relax, but there are number of comfort strategies seasoned travellers recommend.

- Learn about it. – You're doing that now.
- Expect it. – It will happen in some form or other.
- Don't get too busy too quickly.
- Leave time to settle in and for family.
- Keep in contact – with friends, family at home.
- If you need help, ask. – HR/ and many admin staff are trained in this. See a doctor if you need to.
- Take comfort things – not just photos, films and music, but also a duvet, a cushion, a favourite mug.
- Find comfort places – find a place similar to where you feel comfortable at home (a park, a religious worship place, a hotel lounge with a piano bar).
- Don't let your sports or exercise routine slip. If you are used to regular exercise and decide to leave it till you've settled in, you'll feel sluggish.
- Webcam, WhatsApp, Zoom - schedule virtual coffee breaks or mealtimes
- Create a blog or leaning journey diary. Lots of students study/travel abroad and would be followers.

Coming home

Culture shock is not pleasant but, as we have suggested, there are things you and your students can do to lessen the impact. However, as seasoned travellers and overseas workers will tell you, it's worse coming home! Why?

You've changed. You expect everything at home to be the same but they've changed too and they're not interested in your extraordinary adventures. The food tastes different to what you're used to, your uni. Or school is not the same, things you expect have gone and prices have probably gone up. Most of all, things you enjoyed in your new environment are not available at home. So, how do you deal with it?

There are a number of things you can do.

1. **Think ahead:** What are you going to do when you get home? Will there be things you've learned overseas you want to use at home? How? Look for ways to validate the overseas experience. (meet the diaspora of the country you've been in, listen to music, read books about it, tell your friends and other students about it, have a class discussion about where you've been and what it was like.) If you feel depressed or need support, talk to friends you trust, arrange with your school or college for mentoring or counselling.

2. **At university / work:** Find out how things have changed at home and don't get upset. Maybe, have a 'coming home' party to catch up with everyone. Keep in touch with overseas friends via social media. Identify a personal mentor you can rely on. Talk to others who've studied abroad. What was it like for them? How did they adapt? Above all, don't jump to conclusions. See what lessons you can learn and apply them.

As teachers, if you can offer a class about Culture Shock in the first month of the course, allowing debate and discussion, it will be really helpful. Also, in the last month or so offer a class on Going Home to help your students prepare to deal with possible issues that might arise when they go back to their own countries and give them strategies they can use to overcome difficulties. Above all, remember that showing interest in your students can really make a difference to how they feel about their time in your country and help them to adapt and study successfully,

REVIEW

An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching 2nd Edition

Author: **John Corbett:**

Published by: **Multilingual Matters (2022)**

Reviewed by: **Barry Tomalin**

The first thing to say is that although this book highlights English language teachers it offers valuable ideas to teachers of all languages. Secondly, in the twenty years since he wrote the first edition of this book, John Corbett's ideas on the importance of intercultural knowledge in language teaching and learning have evolved massively and changed his approach to teaching in ways we can all learn from.

The book is very readable and organised into 12 chapters reviewing changes and progress from linguistic and ethnographic perspectives on culture and what we mean by intercultural communication competence. It also covers how to assess intercultural communication competence and summarises further prospects in intercultural language education. In the process, Corbett examines various approaches to intercultural communication including the role of culture in conversation, interviewing skills and literary, media and culture studies and the development of what he calls an ethnographic frame of mind. In chapter 4 he discusses how to implement an intercultural approach in English language teaching (ELT). The appendix at the end contains a very useful set of questions teachers can ask students to help them focus on how to improve visual literacy when working with illustrations and texts in the language they are learning. Another positive and practical feature of the book is the insertion of questions for reflection at the end of sections of the book which teachers can use with students in classes where the ideas and examples he introduces can be discussed.

One of the key changes is that it is no longer generally acceptable to allocate particular cultural attitudes, communication styles and behaviours to nationalities. Of course, there are some common features and ways of doing things but different communities and individuals will have different habits dependent on background and upbringing, their profession, and their personalities.

Corbett shows how in the final decades of the 20th century the teaching of language became increasingly based on a notional functional approach. The focus was on teaching the rules of grammar in relation to context, such as ways of exchanging personal information, leading to its adoption by the Council of Europe and published as the Threshold Level framework. As the study of intercultural communication has developed, other areas of language understanding have been developed and applied by scholars such Michael Byram, Henry Widdowson, Claire Kramsch, Ed Hirsch and many others and incorporated in the CEFR (Common European Framework) published in 2003 and revised and updated in 2018.

One of the key principles is the five *savoirs* (knowing how do do) presented by Michael Byram in 2008. They are knowledge, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of interpreting and relating to one’s own culture, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness. This relates to a definition of culture based on the core beliefs shared by a group and manifested in patterns of behaviour, communication, language and art that the group produces. Corbett warns that these patterns and values are under constant negotiation within and outside the group.

Corbett goes on to identify the role of the language learner as looking in from the outside. He says that learners may not wish to adopt the world view and patterns of behaviour of the target culture whose language they are studying but they should learn about the culture to better understand the language. An intercultural curriculum goes beyond communicative competence as a purely linguistic skill. As well as principles and facts about culture an ICC (Intercultural Competence Curriculum) programme would aim to teach skills to develop personal qualities in recognising and accepting cultural differences, developing the ability to research independently the cultures of the communities whose language they are learning and learning how to navigate cultural differences and mediate between them.

What is the teacher’s role in the classroom? Is she/he the cultural expert ‘laying down the law’ and assessing results or a facilitator and guide? According to Corbett it’s both. In the early stages the language teacher is responsible for identifying the culture expressed through the language and organising the role cultural knowledge plays in assessment. But as students get more used to the culture on which the use of language depends the teacher can encourage students to do their own research and present their results in class.

In terms of activities, Corbett devotes useful space to chapters on conversation, interviewing skills and very interestingly, intercultural telecollaboration and using media, literature and the arts for examining and understanding intercultural expression. He describes activities for developing skills in the context of business, the arts and literature in the context of teaching English as a foreign language but applicable to all languages taught. Ultimately, the teacher has to develop what Corbett calls an ethnographic frame of mind in which intercultural experience and its influence on the way the language being learned is used is shared with the students to encourage them to develop the same mindset.

Although, it has lots of useful examples of the cultural influence at play it is ultimately a theoretical work, It will mainly be of value to researchers and teachers interested in cultural studies. So, what are Corbett’s conclusions? First it is an advantage for teachers to study other’s cultural practices and use them in one’s own educational context. He notes that in the last ten years or so intercultural language education has moved from the margins of language education to near the centre. In doing so it has developed educational principles and practices that are particularly useful in our world of instant digital communication, international migration and social change. Most important, it is now accepted that language teaching and learning should be allied to a broader and deeper enquiry into our understanding ourselves and others. As he ends, in his own words, ‘It is time to close this book and let that exploration continue’.

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