

Volume 6 (2)

Christmas Issue 2024

ISSN 2747-9862

ICC Journal is indexed on EBSCO



ICC Journal



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From the Editor

Well, we got here! Our Christmas issue of ICC Journal is here with some great articles by researchers in Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey.

We also greatly appreciate the webinars offered in 2024 by experts from all over the world, two of which we summarise in this issue and with more following in the new year. Our first subject is Shakespeare and his legacy with David and Ben Crystal showing how Shakespearean sayings from their book 'Everyday Shakespeare' can be the basis of language exercises in English language classes. Our second subject has Luke Prodromou using examples from Shakespeare plays and comparing them with issues of importance in our lives today and language practice exercises using both extracts from plays and activities using AI to improve understanding of Shakespeare and his value today.

A great discovery is the work on teaching tips by Nick Michelioudakis, two of whose classroom ideas we published in our special conference issue, ICC Journal 6 (1) and two more included here. Nick offers practical and really innovative ideas for teachers to use in livening up their classes and getting students to work together.

Regarding our monthly webinars let me take the opportunity to thank our wonderful presenters and our organisers, Lillian Tinnefeld, Birgit Schrader Voelzke and Burcu Koc and co-presenters Nazan Dogruer, and Thomas Tinnefeld. We look forward to our final webinar of 2024 with David Stringer-Lamarre on building international contacts in education on December 19 and to our first webinar of 2025, Alan Maley presenting a session on Using Wisdom Stories and Related Inputs for Continuous Professional Development on January 23rd 2025 at 4-5PM (GMT).

Alan has just published a new book entitled *Using Wisdom Stories in Language Teaching Education*, published by Pavilion Books and you can read our review of it in this issue on Page 75.

In case you haven't seen the news, the ICC-Languages Annual Conference 2025 will be held in Larnaka in Cyprus on May 9-11 2025. The theme of the conference is Redefining Language Education – Technology, Accessibility and Empowerment.

I'm delighted to tell you the list of subscribers to ICC-Journal continues to grow with teachers from all over the world showing interest. The ICC-Journal is an online academic journal published free of charge and can be accessed at www.icc-languages.eu/ICC-journal.

We aim to offer practical support for language teachers and trainers and for teachers and trainers specialising in international culture. It is recognised by EBSCO and offers an exciting opportunity to publish your teaching and training ideas and research.

We would love to hear from you and if you are thinking of publishing your research or sharing knowledge of the work you do or where you teach please do not hesitate to

get in touch with me at barrytomalin@aol.com. Enjoy this issue and we wish you – Happy Christmas and very Happy New Year!

EUROLTA UPDATE

Regarding our special EUROLTA (European Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults), this program offers a unique service not just for teachers of specific languages, such as teachers of English as a foreign language, but for all teachers of all languages. The EUROLTA Certificate consists of 8 modules taught online on Saturdays from 09:00 to 18:00 CET. Visit our website (see below) for details of courses starting soon.

We are excited to announce that the EUROLTA Certificate is being updated to include topical issues such as the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language teaching, teacher and learner well-being in language education, and intercultural communication skills. As soon as this enhancement is ready, we will share the new course dates on our website.

ICC also provides a range of short courses designed to meet the needs and interests of language teachers, keeping them up-to-date with the latest developments in the field.

To learn more about the EUROLTA Certificate, explore the courses we offer, and read testimonials from teachers who have participated, visit our website at www.icc-languages.eu/EUROLTA.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas and a joyful New Year, 2025! Stay tuned for updates, and we look forward to seeing you in our courses soon.

Myriam Fischer and Tatjana Kovac

Joint Chairs of ICC-Languages and Chair of the EUROLTA Certificate and short courses.

KEYNOTE ARTICLE 1

The Role of eTwinning Projects in Gaining Intercultural Competence through Collaborative Learning: A Case Study

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Abstract

Intercultural competence is a crucial skill for individuals in our globalizing world. One way to develop this skill can be bringing students from different countries together and establishing collaboration among them. eTwinning projects, which connect students and teachers from different countries can be used as a platform to promote intercultural understanding. However, there is limited research available on the effectiveness of eTwinning projects in developing intercultural competence. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of eTwinning projects in gaining intercultural competence through collaborative work, with the goal of providing insights into the perspectives of students who actively participate in the projects.

Keywords: eTwinning projects, Intercultural competence, Collaborative learning.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural competence has become an essential skill for individuals to navigate diverse cultural landscapes and effectively engage in global contexts. The ability to understand, appreciate, and communicate across cultural boundaries is crucial for fostering mutual respect, cooperation, and harmony among people from different backgrounds. As a result, educational initiatives that promote intercultural understanding have gained significant attention. One such initiative is eTwinning, an online platform that connects students and teachers from different countries through collaborative projects. eTwinning projects provide a unique opportunity for participants to engage in intercultural exchanges, facilitating intercultural learning and fostering

global citizenship. However, despite the growing popularity of eTwinning projects, limited research has focused on their effectiveness in developing intercultural competence in terms of students' perceptions. Main participant groups of many studies on this subject were the conductors (i.e., teachers) and the perceptions of students have been understudied in the research carried out so far. For instance, in studies by Akdemir (2017) and Camilleri (2016), teachers were chosen as the primary cohort for data collection, while no data was gathered from students.

Hence, this study aims to address this research gap by investigating the role of eTwinning projects in gaining intercultural competence through collaborative work, with a specific focus on the perspectives of students who actively participated in one of these projects called "An Eco Message Through Music". By examining the experiences, views, and learning outcomes of students engaged in this project, this study focuses on two aims. The first one is to investigate whether eTwinning projects promote intercultural competence through collaborative learning among the students of different cultures by exploring the participants' views. The second is to have an understanding of the effect of eTwinning projects on students' attitudes towards other cultures. To this end, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Does engaging in an eTwinning project promote intercultural competence through collaborative learning according to the views of secondary school students?
2. What is the effect of eTwinning projects on students' attitudes towards other cultures?

European eTwinning Projects

The eTwinning community consists of numerous teachers and educators who share a common vision of creating inclusive schools by effectively utilizing information and communication technology and leveraging 21st-century skills. It was officially launched in January 2005. Within eTwinning, teachers collaborate with their students and colleagues from participating countries in the Erasmus+ program to organize and conduct various activities both in-person and online. They actively participate in joint projects facilitated by the TwinSpace platform. The validation of user registrations and maintenance of a secure platform, as well as offering support and guidance, are the responsibilities of National Support

Organisations. Furthermore, these organizations acknowledge teachers' efforts through the issuance of National and European Quality Labels, recognizing their outstanding work (European School Education Platform, 2022).

The Present Project: An Eco Message Through Music

The aim of the present eTwinning project was to sensitize its audience to climate and environmental issues. The idea of the project was to work together, as teachers and students, to choose songs about respecting the environment and songs for a better future. The project called “An Eco Message Through Music” was implemented from November, 2022 to May, 2023 and five countries -Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and Greece- took part as partners. The project began with ice breaking activities and students from different countries introduced themselves on Padlet. Throughout the project, students had online meetings and participated in online Kahoot activities. Additionally, they periodically communicated via an online meeting platform to complete tasks such as creating a joint e-book, designing logos for the project, voting for the logo contest, and composing a new song in mixed country groups. Final joint products were accomplished and the feedback on intercultural competence was gathered. When the project was finalized, it was awarded the National Quality Label and the European Quality Label. These documents indicate that the partners met the maximum requirements according to the rubric. The rubric was used to assess whether they met the criteria or not regarding five main headings: inter-school collaboration, technology usage, pedagogical innovation, integration with the curriculum, outcomes, and documentation along with their subheadings.

Collaborative Learning

There is no agreement on a single definition for the term *collaboration* (Sharratt & Planche, 2016). However, it relates to work done together. Collaborative learning (CL), as an educational act, is an approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product (Laal & Laal, 2011). CL is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together. Dillenbourg (1999) specifies the constructs of

collaborative learning as *two or more* may be interpreted as a pair, a small group (3-5 subjects) or a class (20-30 subjects); *learn something* may be interpreted as follow a course, perform learning activities such as problem solving; and *together* may be interpreted as different forms of interaction which may be face-to-face or computer-mediated.

Intercultural Competence

The concept of intercultural competence (IC), according to Deardorff (2009), is defined as “a person’s ability to interact effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural situations based on his or her intercultural attitudes, knowledge and comprehension and skills” (as cited in Gopal, 2011, p. 374). Another definition comes from the field of foreign language learning, which typically follows the use of Byram’s (1997) term *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC). This term indicates communication between people who do not speak the same language (Byram & Golubeva, 2020).

To better understand IC, Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva (2020) broke down the term into its component parts. They took the prefix *inter* which means ‘between’ in common dictionaries as the first component, *intercultural*, therefore, meaning ‘between cultures.’ They considered the term *culture* as a complex concept, and to explain it they cited Ting-Toomey’s (1999) definition as “cultures are made up of groups of people from different communities which possess unique traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings and symbols” (p. 113). They took *competence* as implying “capability, aptitude, know how or proficiency” (ibid). Finally, they suggested *being interculturally competent* would mean that “one is proficient in relation to different cultures or different communities of people” (ibid).

Method

Research Design

The present research is a qualitative case study. Qualitative research design is crucial in educational research as it enables researchers to deeply understand particular experiences, phenomena and context. (Creswell, 2009). With this in mind, qualitative case study research was thought to be the most appropriate method for this study since it enabled

the researchers to have a deeper insight into the students' views on intercultural interaction with their peers.

Participants

The participants of this study were seventeen students attending a state secondary school in a small town in northeastern Turkey. The age range of the students was between 11 and 14 years old. Ten of the students were male and seven were female. None of the seventeen students had been involved in an eTwinning project before. However, the majority of them (n=11) reported that they had been involved in communication with a foreign peer before via social media, online video games, or face to face. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic variables of the individual participants.

Table 1. Demographic Variables of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Previous eTwinning Experience	Previous Communication with a Foreign Peer	Tool of Communication
S1	M	14	x	x	x
S2	M	13	x	✓	Social media
S3	M	13	x	✓	Social media
S4	M	13	x	✓	Social media
S5	M	12	x	✓	Online video games
S6	M	13	x	✓	Face to face
S7	F	12	x	✓	Online video games
S8	F	13	x	x	x
S9	M	13	x	✓	Online video games
S10	M	13	x	✓	Online video games
S11	F	11	x	✓	Social media
S12	M	13	x	✓	Online video games
S13	F	13	x	x	x
S14	M	12	x	✓	Online video games
S15	F	13	x	x	x
S16	F	13	x	x	x

S17	F	13	x	x	x
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The first sampling method employed in the study was purposeful sampling since insights of students into their experiences of collaborative online tasks in an eTwinning project were needed for the study. The second sampling method employed was convenience sampling since the participants were students at the secondary school in which the first researcher works as a teacher of English. These two sampling methods enabled the researchers to include all the participants who actively took part in the eTwinning project mentioned and contributed to the joint products collaboratively.

Data Collection Tools

Data for the present study was obtained through a qualitative questionnaire and interviews, to help participants freely share their ideas or thoughts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The questionnaires of the data collection tools were formed based on the literature to include the concepts of IC such as respect for and tolerance of other cultures or similarities and differences across cultures. Expert opinions were obtained from three scholars in the field of English language teaching for the questionnaire and interview questions and adjustments were made based on the comments provided.

Firstly, the qualitative questionnaire which included eight questions in total was administered to seventeen secondary school students who took part in the above-mentioned eTwinning project in Turkey. In the questionnaire, six of the questions were open ended and for the two semi-structured questions, participants were expected to choose one or more options among the provided answers. Extra space was also provided for these two questions in case the participants wanted to add further information. The reason for designing two questions in a semi-structured format was enabling the participants to think over all the concepts of IC and provide the best answers without overlooking any aspects. Furthermore, when the participants' age is considered (average 13 years old), it was more practical for them due to their lack of familiarity in responding to such a questionnaire. Secondly, interviews with the seven volunteering students

were conducted and voice-recorded to complement the questionnaire data. In the interview, the participants were asked to talk about the competences, if any, they gained through collaborating with peers from different cultures, how this collaborative work helped them to understand other cultures and lifestyles and their emotional response to taking part in an eTwinning project, collaborating with peers and producing collaborative work in tasks. Both the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants (which is Turkish) to prevent any limitations that could be caused by using a second language.

Data Analysis

Data obtained by students for the present study were analysed by using the content analysis method. “The basic process in content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to interpret them in a way that the reader can understand” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p.27). Content analysis is thought to be the best method of analysis for this study since, as described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2012), it enables researchers to study human behaviour indirectly through an analysis of their communications (p. 478).

Results

In the questionnaire, participants were asked to choose the best option for their improved skills once they had answered the open-ended questions (question 5). It was reminded that if the project didn’t improve any skills, they didn’t have to choose any options and that they could write their own ideas and comments in the space provided. However, all the students marked at least one option and some of them wrote their own opinions. Table 2 shows their responses in detail.

Table 2. Participants’ Responses on IC Skills in the Post-project Period

Students’ Responses	Students’ Codes	f
Recognition of other countries and cultures	S2,S3,S4,S5,S6,S7,S8,S9,S11,S12,S13,S14,S15,S16,S17	15

Gaining competence in a foreign language	S2, S3, S5, S10, S11, S16	6
Making new friends	S2,S3,S4,S5,S7,S8,S9,S10,S11,S12,S14,S15,S17	13
Socializing	S1, S2, S3, S4,S5,S6,S7,S8,S9,S10,S11,S12, S13, S14, S16, S17	16
Recognition of new self-skills	S1, S2, S5, S12, S17	5
Feeling more confident	S1,S2,S3,S5,S6,S7,S9,S10,S11,S13,S14,S16	12
Gaining competence in communicative skills	S1,S2,S3,S4,S5,S6,S7,S9,S10,S11,S12,S13,S14,S17	14
Willingness to share	S2, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S17	8
Gaining competence in collaborative skills	S2, S4, S5, S7, S8, S9, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16	12
Eliminating the prejudices	S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S12, S14, S15, S16, S17	11

In this question, “other comments” section was present and students were reminded that they were not obliged to answer this part. Ten out of seventeen students chose to answer and add their comments. Their answers were coded and eight of them were re-phrasings of the options given. Two of the students added new perspectives to the “other comments” part. The previous codes and new codes given can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Participants’ Responses to “Other Comments”

Students’ Responses	Students’ Codes	<i>f</i>
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Having fun	S8, S14, S16, S17	4
Making new friends	S5, S12, S17	3
Gaining competence in foreign language	S6, S10	2
Gaining competence in communicative skills	S8	1
Socializing	S12	1
Feeling more confident	S5	1
Gaining competence in non-verbal communication	S7	1
Being more conscious about the environmental issues	S13	1

When table 3 is examined, it can be seen that some students wrote similar comments to the previous codes. However, four students stated that they had fun with the activities. In the last two responses in the table, it can be seen that new skills were realized by S7 and S13. S7 stated that she improved her non-verbal communication skills to maintain the course of the speech. Negi (2009) defines non-verbal communication as using hands, (gestures), head movements, eyes (eye contact), lips (smile), bodily postures and other body language such as eye movements, which communicate and always accompany oral discourse whether intended or not. S7 mentioned that she had to follow other students' facial expressions to get clues about the discourse. Besides, S13 stated that this project increased her consciousness of the environmental issues. She reported as follows:

“I have learned many things about the environmental problems and actions. I feel more devoted to environmental issues.” (S13)

Students were asked whether the project they carried out provided insight into the culture, values and lifestyle of people who are living in other countries. All the students answered this question with “yes” and chose the options which showed the best statements in terms of their feedback on how this project changed their point of view regarding cultures. The responses to this question (Number 6) can be found in detail in Table 4.

Table 4. Participants' Feedback on How This Project Changed Their Point of View Regarding Cultures

Students' Answers	Students' Codes	f
I know the special occasions and celebrations in other cultures.	S1, S5, S9, S10, S12, S14, S15, S16, S17	9
I feel tolerant of other cultures.	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17	17
I believe that some people of other cultures could teach me valuable things.	S4, S5, S8, S14, S17	5
I can identify the distinctions and similarities between my culture and other cultures.	S2, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16	12
I try to find opportunities to communicate with people of other cultures.	S2, S5, S6, S7, S10, S12, S14,	7
I feel more eager to communicate with my peers from other cultures.	S2, S3, S5, S9, S10, S12, S13, S14, S15, S17	10
I feel less prejudiced.	S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S12, S16, S17	9

As illustrated in Table 4, all the participants ($N= 17$) in the project reported that they feel more tolerant of other cultures after being involved in the project. To support this opinion, S16 and S17 commented that they abandoned the idea of discrimination of language, religion and race in their lives. This was followed by the statement that students could identify the distinctions and similarities between their culture and other cultures with a high frequency of 12. Students who feel more eager to communicate with their peers in other cultures came third with the frequency of 10. S11 supported this opinion of hers by saying:

“I was normally a shy person, but when I communicated with other kids from all over the world, all my embarrassment was gone. I feel more

relaxed with my communication with all the people and look for opportunities to have some time with my peers from abroad."

As a final question, students were asked about their feelings related to participating in such a project. Question number 7 was an open-ended one and the students' responses can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Participants' Feelings about participating in the Project

Students' Feelings	Students' Codes	f
Good	S5, S7, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S16, S17	10
Confident	S1, S2, S3, S4	4
Excited	S10, S11, S13, S14	4
Amused	S11, S15, S16	3
Disappointed	S7	1
Collaborative	S4	1

As it can be seen in Table 5, the project aroused mostly positive feelings in students. Only S7 felt disappointed in the process of voting for the best 3 poster designs and described the incident as follows:

"We designed posters. I worked with my friend and voting started. The posters were anonymous, but some of my friends guessed it was our poster and I think this affected the voting process. Our poster was chosen as the second-best poster although we endeavoured a lot." (S7)

The most outstanding emotion was 'feeling good' and students with this answer were asked deeper questions about what they meant by this reply and they all responded that good meant *'being happy to have the chance of participating in such a project.'*

Conclusion

The analysis of students' responses in the research described above provides valuable insights into the effects of an eTwinning project on their intercultural competence including improved perspectives on cultures, awareness of similarities and differences across cultures, eagerness in communicating with peers from other cultures and overall feelings about

participation. The study presented the students' reflections on their improved skills, such as recognition of other countries and cultures, making new friends, socializing, gaining competence in communicative skills etc. These findings indicate that the project had a positive influence on many aspects of the students' skills development and intercultural interactions.

In relation to additional comments provided by some of the students, in addition to the previously mentioned skills, they introduced new perspectives. It is noteworthy that some students emphasized having fun during the activities, while others mentioned gaining competence in non-verbal communication and developing a greater consciousness of environmental issues. These unique perspectives indicate diverse outcomes and individual experiences resulting from the project.

In response to the project's impact on their understanding of cultures, all the students agreed that the project provided them with insights into the culture, values, and lifestyle of people from other countries. The majority of students expressed feelings of tolerance, a willingness to communicate with individuals from different cultures, and an eagerness to learn from them. This highlights the project's great impact in fostering intercultural understanding and breaking down prejudices.

Regarding their feelings about participation in the project, students reported positive emotions, such as feeling good, confident, collaborative, excited, and amused. However, one student expressed disappointment regarding the voting process for the best poster design. Nonetheless, the majority of students associated feeling good with being happy, indicating a sense of satisfaction and amusement throughout their engagement in the project.

To outline the main points, the analysis of students' responses underscores the positive impact of the project on various aspects of their development. The project not only contributed to the improvement of skills such as language competence, cultural awareness, and socialization but also fostered tolerance, eagerness to communicate with diverse peers, and a sense of happiness and satisfaction. These findings underline the significance of well-designed projects in promoting the interaction with

other classrooms and fostering positive attitudes towards other cultures and collaborative learning.

In conclusion, eTwinning projects hold immense potential for transforming classroom experiences and preparing students for a globally interconnected world. The results show that eTwinning projects offer valuable opportunities for educators who embrace these projects as valuable tools to enhance intercultural learning, collaboration, technology integration, language development, project-based learning, global citizenship education, and student motivation. Based on the results of the research, the following implications can be drawn:

- By connecting classrooms from different countries, eTwinning projects expose students to diverse languages, cultures, and perspectives. This invaluable experience helps cultivate global awareness, empathy, and appreciation of diversity. So, more time should be allocated to these projects along with the national curriculum.
- The mobility of students is limited, but some Erasmus+ projects are available for teachers and students for the purpose of increasing mobility. However, the application of these projects is down to the teachers' eagerness to undertake them. Project based learning with foreign partners, as in the eTwinning projects, can be taught as an elective course.
- eTwinning projects nurture global citizenship education. These projects evoke a sense of responsibility in students towards the global community and empower them to become agents of positive change. Incorporating eTwinning projects into classrooms is a promising way to foster active global citizenship and inspire students to make a difference in the world. So, students' every act with their peers inside or outside the classroom can be promoted.

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KEYNOTE ARTICLE 2

The Language of Fear: COVID-19 Portrayal in News Articles across Croatian and English Language Media – a language analysis

Barbara Perik PhD

Abstract

The global outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 prompted an unprecedented cascade of information dissemination, with news media playing a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. As the pandemic swept across continents, media outlets worldwide became primary sources of information, serving as conduits through which societies received updates, guidance, and insights into the evolving crisis. This study delves into the nuanced analysis of COVID-19 representation in news articles from two distinct linguistic and cultural contexts: Croatia, and the English-speaking world. A systematic analysis of our corpus suggested that the same, or similar, word combinations and conceptual metaphors dominate the media discourse in order to cultivate fear among the readers.

1. Introduction

The relatively sudden arrival of the disease from a country that seemed far away and where seemingly all measures were taken to prevent the spread of a virus that leaves unknown consequences and against which there is no cure or vaccine, surprised the European continent. Precautionary measures began to be introduced at a high speed, especially in the area of Italy, which had the worst case of the spread of the infection in Europe, and for a time also at the level of the whole world. Large numbers of the dead, infected and frightened by the coronavirus flooded media spaces, posters and media messages of caution flooded regular media content. According to Holy (2021), in addition to branding bats as the primary culprits, a prevalent narrative in the media during the initial phase of 2020 and the first wave of the pandemic was the portrayal of the Chinese, where the epidemic was believed to have begun as people who would 'eat anything that flies, crawls, walks, slithers or swims'. After the first Croatian case, at the beginning of March 2020 the World Health

Organization declared a coronavirus pandemic, which meant that the new virus had infected more than 100,000 people. On March 17, the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia made a decision on the introduction of strict preventive measures, which include restrictions on shortening the working hours of essential facilities such as grocery stores, a limited number of people who may stay in a certain space, depending on the size of that space, the introduction of social distancing of two metres between people and wearing protective masks and/or gloves. Also, in mid-March, international borders were closed at the Croatian level, as well as at the level of the members of the European Union (Archive content of the evening newspaper and 24sata, 2020). The events mentioned significantly impacted media coverage due to the rapid circulation of information, evolving situations on an hourly basis, daily press conferences unveiling new updates, and virtually no instances where journalists lacked information. As noted in the work of John K. Atwell, in the context of reporting on diseases and epidemics, precise, accurate, and comprehensive news coverage is believed to be crucial in combating the epidemic, regardless of the global infection rates. It all typically initiates from local media outlets, tasked with acquiring timely information and educating citizens on necessary actions and behaviours (Atwell, 2003: 401). One aspect of media operations is the rapid dissemination of news and the competition for exclusive content and dominance in the media market, often leading to sensationalism and tabloidisation. However, this fast-paced publishing environment comes with drawbacks, such as insufficient source verification and the dissemination of inaccurate or sensitive information. Failing to authenticate sources undermines reader trust, particularly if unverified news is later refuted. In more severe cases, it can even facilitate the spread of terrorist messages and activities. Serani suggests that fear-based news serves two purposes: first, to capture the viewer's or reader's attention, and second, to persuade them that the solution to alleviating their fear lies within the content provided by that medium (Serani, 2008: 1). Grabbing the attention and trust of media consumers is often achieved by citing seemingly credible sources, employing attention-grabbing keywords, and using statistics and visual elements to instill fear within articles. The culture of fear is a phenomenon in public life, referred to as the "conservatism of fear" in politics, while Furedi defines it as a cultural

sentiment rather than a political one (Furedi, 2006: 161). Fear, as a fundamental human emotion crucial for survival, has permeated society and become ingrained in lifestyles and thought processes. It is recognised as a powerful tool for manipulation, particularly in the realm of politics, where it can be used to achieve various objectives. By capitalising on someone's fears, individuals can be compelled to take drastic measures to alleviate those fears and their sources. The media, as a primary vehicle of mass communication, shoulders much of the responsibility for spreading the culture of fear. However, Glassner (1999) suggests that the media can also serve as opponents to the propagation of fear culture. Across various platforms from newspapers and radio to television, the internet, and social networks, there's a constant battle for media dominance. This often leads to tactics aimed at grabbing attention and diverting focus, tapping into common human experiences regardless of gender, race, or age. The media's unparalleled influence has created opportunities for content manipulation and the manipulation of its consumers. To maximize media sales, capturing as much attention as possible is crucial, often achieved by tapping into basic human emotions, fear being one of them. As stated by Skoko & Bajcs (2007), some authors argue that the mass media in Croatia are deviating from their fundamental roles. Rather than focusing on informing, educating, and entertaining, they prioritise entertainment while providing minimal information and little to no education. However, despite this shift in mission over recent decades, no one can deny the media's power, which can both positively and negatively impact social processes (Skoko & Bajcs, 2007:95). According to Vilović (2003), in essence, the ethical dilemma for journalists lies in balancing their duty to serve the public good with the need to achieve goals and results. Most media outlets understand that they risk failure if they don't align with current trends, which often include sensationalism and appeals to fear. As the culture of fear evolves, questions arise about its dissemination and the media's role in shaping it, as well as the social factors influencing media reporting. This study aims to explore the prevalence of the culture of fear in Croatian and English-language media, particularly during the coronavirus epidemic. By analysing media content, the research seeks to understand how the media addressed a topic inherently causing fear due to its unknown nature. Ultimately, the study

aims to discern how Croatian and British newspapers navigated fear and leveraged their considerable influence to shape public opinion.

2. Aim

This research aims to uncover how Croatian and British media portrayed the coronavirus pandemic as a dire threat to humanity, instilling widespread fear and impacting the daily lives and discourse of billions of people. The object of the study is to analyse strategies used by British and Croatian media to foster fear among their readers, while the subject is language means employed to evoke fear and anxiety among the readers.

3. Methodology

The research material consists of texts (170 articles) retrieved from the following British and Croatian newspapers and online media: Jutarnji list, Novi list, Večernji list, 24 sata, Slobodna Dalmacija, Indeks, The Guardian, The Independent, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail and The Telegraph. Research was conducted using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis in the period from January 1st to March 31st 2020. This research method examines how language choices in media texts are employed to sway the audience and elicit the desired response (Van Dijk, 1998; Fairclough, 1992). According to Chaiuk & Dunaievska (2020), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) equips researchers with tools to analyse how the media craft their messages to shape and interpret public discourse. This method zeroes in on vocabulary choice, what's included or excluded, and how things are portrayed. Each linguistic element functions like a nuanced and delicate tool wielded by the communicator. Consequently, how the sender manipulates this tool influences the perception and comprehension of the recipient. (Chaiuk & Dunaievska, 2020). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) suggests that words used often in public discussions can form connections and acquire shared meanings. These meanings then extend across different contexts where the words are used, making them seem self-explanatory and emotionally impactful symbols. This is how words start to imply fear (Altheide, 2003). In the Foucauldian framework perspective, mass media play a significant role in shaping our social environment. They influence and alter everyday routines, societal

expectations, and public discussions by perpetuating a culture of fear (Chaiuk & Dunaievska, 2020). When fear becomes linked to multiple references and expands its reach, it starts to permeate discussions and conversations more broadly. (Altheide, 2002: 3).

4. Results and discussion

In summary, the coronavirus outbreak, originating in China's Hubei province in December 2019, quickly garnered global attention. Media coverage, in all international media including British and Croatian, intensified as the virus spread beyond China, heightening fears of its potential impact in Europe. The World Health Organisation's declarations further fueled media alarm, leading to extensive coverage of the pandemic. This unprecedented focus on the coronavirus reflects a culture of fear pervasive in British and Croatian society. All the media employed sensational language to depict the situation in China, emphasising the threat of the virus reaching Europe. Such reporting techniques, characterised by emotive language, contribute to the construction of a discourse of fear, as described by Altheide (2003). This is what is done in The Telegraph's and Slobodna Dalmacija's description of events in Wuhan, the epicentre of the 'deadly' coronavirus:

1) *Mask-wearing patients fainting in the street. Hundreds of fearful citizens lining cheek by jowl, at risk of infecting each other, in narrow hospital corridors as they wait to be treated by doctors in forbidding white hazmat suits. A fraught medic screaming in anguish in a break-room* (Smith & Newey, 2020).

2) *Muškarac sijede kose nosio je masku za lice, a srušio se i umro dok je hodao ulicom. Na snimci se vidi kako je medicinsko osoblje prekrilo tijelo muškarca plavim prekrivačem, nakon čega je policija oko njega posložila kartonske kutije kako bi sakrila ovaj prizor od znatiželjnih i uznemirenih prolaznika*

[A man with grey hair was wearing a face mask when he collapsed and died while walking down the street. In the footage, medical staff can be seen covering the man's body with a blue sheet, after which the police arranged cardboard boxes around him to shield this scene from curious and distressed passers-by] (PSD, 2020).

3. *Bili su na odjelu intenzivne njege i snimili umiruće pacijente, liječnike koji jedva stoje na nogama i niz lijesova onih koji su izgubili bitku protiv korona virusa* [They were in the intensive care unit and filmed dying patients, doctors barely standing on their feet, and a row of coffins of those who lost the battle against the coronavirus] (Mahmutović, 2020).
4. *Umjesto spektakularne zabave kakvu pruža ovakav odmor, putnici gledaju prizore nalik filovima katastrofe* [Instead of the spectacular entertainment that such a vacation offers, travellers are witnessing scenes resembling disaster movies] (Blotnej & Burazer, 2020).

These sentences are filled with words that create fear and have a powerful impact, almost like a scary scene from a horror movie. Both, the UK and Croatian press employed the vocabulary that transferred the epidemic narratives into a military discourse using metaphors of war and fighting. These metaphors were particularly prevalent in the media: (e.g., a battle, to surround, to defeat, to combat, to hit, to fight, to beat).

5. *.....never-before-seen killer virus* (Matthews et al., 2020)
6. *.....many victims who have mild, cold-like symptoms and don't realise they have the infection* (Matthews et al., 2020)
7. *Italija je ušla u "najmračniji sat" u borbi protiv koronavirusa* [Italy entered its "darkest hour" in the fight against the coronavirus] (Zdelar, 2020).
8. *Prva žrtva u Sloveniji: Umro je muškarac od posljedica korone* [The first victim in Slovenia: A man has died from the effects of the coronavirus] (Pušić, 2020).
9. *Među 49 osoba zaraženim korona virusom u Hrvatskoj od nedjelje je dvoje liječnika Kliničkog bolničkog centra Dubrava pa je stupanj obrane podignut na višu razinu* [Among the 49 people infected with the coronavirus in Croatia, two are doctors from the Clinical Hospital Dubrava, so the level of defence has been raised to a higher level] (Tolić, 2020)
10. *Oni su prva linija u ovom ratu* [They are the frontline in this war] (Mahmutović, 2020)
11. *To je zajednički neprijatelj kojeg možemo pobijediti samo ako to radimo zajedno* [That is a common enemy we can only defeat if we work together] (Zdelar, 2020)

Both, British and Croatian media, depicted the virus as a monstrous entity that originated in a distant corner of the world, gradually spreading, traversing distances, and conquering nations.

12. *Smrtonosni virus ubija cijeli svijet* [The deadly virus is killing the entire world] (Čobanov, 2020)
13. *S ubojitim novim koronavirusom, koji je dosad pobio više od dvije tisuće ljudi*[With the deadly new coronavirus, which has so far killed more than two thousand people] (Stošić, 2020)
14. *Korona obruč se steže: prvi slučaj koronavirusa potvrđen u Hercegovini* [The Corona circle is tightening: the first case of coronavirus confirmed in Herzegovina] (Šagoli, 2020)
15. *Beštija je tu* [The monster is here] (Marković, 2020)
16. *U ovom trenutku je sreća što nemamo virus u RH, a ako i dođe, želimo biti spremni* [At this moment, it's fortunate that we don't have the virus in Croatia, and if it does come, we want to be prepared] (Rudež & Krnić, 2020)
17. *Kada su polovicom siječnja objavljene prve vijesti o izbijanju koronavirusa u kineskom gradu....* [When in mid-January the first news about the outbreak of the coronavirus in the Chinese city was published...] (HINA, 2020)
18. *....the virus has broken out of China....the disease, which has already killed 17 in China and has affected up to 1,700 people, could already have arrived in the UK* (Moran, 2020).
19. *....the virus crisis tightened its grip on the UK today; coronavirus could now gain a foothold in Britain* (Keogh, Borland, Payne, & Robinson, 2020).

The actions described by the verbs to *break out*, to *kill*, to *arrive* suggest that the virus operates with intention and purpose, while the phrases to tighten one's grip and to gain a foothold depict the virus as a creature with limbs, like a monster. In the Croatian media, the virus has even been referred to in the local dialect as a monster.

British and Croatian media often evoke the death concept, using terrifying clichés like “killer virus” and “death toll rises” to keep stoking people’s fear.

20. *Killer virus could reach the UK as death toll rises, warn experts* (Knapton, 2020).
21. *On je i prije upozoravao na smrtonosni virus* [He had previously warned about the deadly virus] (Asipi, 2020)
22. *Kako je broj smrtnih slučajeva od virusa bio veći od 2.500, sa zastrašujućim porastom od 150 posto u proteklom tjednu* [As the

number of deaths from the virus exceeded 2,500, with a frightening increase of 150 percent in the past week] (PSD, 2020)

23. *Korona virus ubio 1113 ljudi...* [Coronavirus has killed 1,113 people...] (HINA, 2020)

Furthermore, the media continue stoking people's fears by recalling one of the most lethal pandemics in human history and reminds that its death rate is the same as that of the coronavirus:

24. *the fatality rate on par with the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic, which wiped out 50 million people globally* (Knapton, 2020).
25. *Svjetski mediji prenose predviđanja epidemiologa koji govore kako bi korona virus mogao biti poguban poput španjolske gripe, od koje je umrlo 50 milijuna ljudi* [Global media report on predictions from epidemiologists who suggest that the coronavirus could be as devastating as the Spanish flu, which claimed the lives of 50 million people] (Sarić Čedić & Ozmeć-Ban, 2020).

People who live in an atmosphere of fear and perceive everyday life as inherently risky are more likely to view the coronavirus as a genuine threat. Consequently, they are also more prone to accepting the worst-case scenarios presented by the media. Many scholars consider these worst-case scenarios to be elements of a culture of fear. British and Croatian media contributed to the proliferation of anxiety by repeatedly forecasting outbreaks and anticipating more dire scenarios. The use of the word "scenario" also deepens people's fear by reminding them of scenes from horror movies.

26. *the virus will be impossible to contain here if it sweeps mainland Europe* (Bagot, 2020)
27.*ministers are considering a worst-case scenario that 50 million people here could catch the bug and it could kill 500,000 - mainly the elderly and those already unwell* (Bagot, 2020)
28. *U najcrnjem scenariju brzog širenja virusa velika većina ljudi neće moći dobiti nikakvu pomoć* [In the darkest scenario of rapid virus spread, the vast majority of people will not be able to receive any assistance] (Zeljčić, 2020)
29. *Od 5600 85% će biti blago bolesno. 15% će možda trebati respiratore. Imamo ih 800. Što bi značilo da od 840 ljudi koji budu trebali ventilaciju, njih 40 je neće moći dobiti. Za 19 dana. To je, ljudi, za 19 dana. 19 dana nas dijeli od talijanskog scenarija ako se*

pojedinci ne uozbilje [Out of 5600, 85% will be mildly ill. 15% may require ventilators. We have 800 of them. Which means that out of 840 people who will need ventilation, 40 of them won't be able to get it. In 19 days. That's, folks, in 19 days. 19 days separate us from the Italian scenario if individuals don't get serious] (*Burazer & Mrvoš Pavić, 2020*)

30. *Ispred nas je jedan surrealan scenarij zbog toga što su ljudi toliko u strahu da se rangira s psihozom* [We are facing a surreal scenario because people are so fearful that it verges on psychosis] (*Šarčević, 2020*)

Therefore, the media expand on the worst-case scenario by detailing the statistics and identifying the social groups most likely to be impacted. Furthermore, it is interesting how journalists avoid categorical statements by using adverbs *seemingly, probably* or the modal verbs *could and may*. This reduces their responsibility for the statements.

31. *Ministers are now expected to escalate their response which would mean no longer trying to contain the disease's seemingly inevitable spread* (*Borland, 2020*).
32. *Professor Whitty warned the virus was probably already spreading person-to-person in the UK...* (*Borland, 2020*).
33. *Ljudi koji su preboljeli korona virus mogli bi imati trajno oštećena pluća* [People who have recovered from the coronavirus could have permanently damaged lungs] (*Krivičić, 2020*).
34. *....15% će možda trebati respiratore* [15% may need respirators] (*Burazer&Mrvoš Pavić, 2020*).
35. *Međutim, neke bi ga nasumične mutacije mogle učiniti i opasnijim* [However, some random mutations could make it even more dangerous] (*R.I, 2020*)
36. *Zaraza liječnika najvjerojatnije znači da će se odustati od bolnice* [The infection of doctors most likely means that hospitals will be abandoned] (*Neveščanin, 2020*).

5. Conclusion

Both, British and Croatian media accorded exceptional attention to the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the study findings, the articles sampled portrayed the epidemic in a fear-inducing manner. They progressively heightened feelings of fear and anxiety by vividly depicting the epidemic's progression from distant China to the increasing death tolls in Europe. In order to instil a sense of foreboding, the media utilised various strategies. They portrayed the epidemic in China as if it were a script from a horror movie. They consistently employed language associated with death and warfare, depicting the virus as a malevolent, monstrous entity. Emphasising the global reach of the epidemic, they implied that the UK and Croatia would inevitably face the brunt of the disease, fostering worst-case scenario expectations among their audience. In conclusion, a systematic analysis of our corpus suggested that the same, or similar, word combinations and conceptual metaphors dominate the media discourse in order to cultivate fear among the readers. The research underscores the significant role of mass media as the primary shaper of social perceptions, with language serving as its main instrument.

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KEYNOTE ARTICLE 3

Empowering Adult Learners: Synergising Innovative Teaching Strategies in teaching English as a foreign language, Economic Perspectives, and Dyslexia Support for Inclusive Education

Frantzeskaki Evdoxia, Fotios C. Syropoulos and Alexia Palikidou

Abstract

Inclusive learning is a cornerstone of modern education, advocating equitable access to quality education for all learners. This teaching method has an important role in the evolution of adult education, where we meet a variety of learners with various backgrounds and learning abilities. This conceptual paper tries to show innovative pedagogical approaches in teaching English as a foreign language to adults with learning disabilities on one side and, on the other side, tries to present various economic insights within adult education. We will try to examine the challenges and opportunities in using inclusive learning environments for adult learners with dyslexia.

This article aims to illuminate how the fusion of these two dimensions can lead to more effective teaching practices, better resource allocation and improved programme design for adult learners. It also confirms that the deliberate integration of innovative pedagogy and economic perspectives can evolve adult education, making it more inclusive, flexible and effective.

Having as an objective to understand the obstacles adult students face in their everyday life when learning foreign languages, particularly

those with dyslexia, our conceptual paper tries to show that special learning techniques and equity are needed in adult education environments. Via useful approaches regarding the learners' needs, we propose techniques to reinforce adult teaching by integrating innovative pedagogical methods, on one side and economics insights on the other side, for adult learners with dyslexia.

Keywords: inclusive learning, adult education, dyslexia, innovative teaching methods, economic insights.

1. Introduction

Inclusive learning is a fundamental aspect of contemporary education, underpinning the premise that every learner, regardless of their background or abilities, deserves equitable access to quality education (Thomas & Collier, 2002). This aspect has important significance for adult students, since we become witnesses of a different group of individuals with diverse educational studies, cultural backgrounds and learning needs (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). That is why it is imperative to address relative challenges facing these students in order for them to succeed in their pursuit of knowledge and skills (Covelli & de Anna, 2020).

While the significance of inclusive learning is well-established in education, the sector of adult education presents unique obstacles. Adult students may confront time limitations, work-related stress and lots of responsibilities in their everyday life that do not have anything to do with the difficulties that exist inside a class (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). It is crucial to adopt innovative teaching techniques which will respond to the different needs of adult learners, including varying the method of teaching English as a foreign language in adults with dyslexia (Rea et al., 2002). In addition, it is also really important and profitable for these categories of

learners to integrate innovative teaching methods and economic insights (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

Furthermore, this conceptual paper has as a purpose to show how innovative teaching can be related to economic perspectives in the adult education sector and how these perspectives can influence educational methodologies, resource allocation and programme design (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). Finally, the impact of combining cutting-edge teaching techniques with economic insights into the inclusive learning path of adult students is examined (OECD, 2020).

2. Inclusivity in Learning

By applying inclusive learning as a unique educational approach, teachers are able to offer fair access to education for all learners, regardless of their background, abilities, skills, or unique needs (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). Thus, instructors, in that way, may be able to create a more flexible learning environment relative to the various demands of their students (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Via inclusive learning, the importance of accommodating individuals with diverse levels of prior education and competences is recognised and thus, provides a sense of belonging and equal opportunity in educational settings (UNESCO, 1994). This teaching method aims to provide a more personalised and tailored educational support for adult learners in order to contribute to their personal and professional development (Merriam et al., 2007).

Inclusive learning holds tremendous significance in adult education due to its role in fostering diversity and equity (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The literature underscores the importance of creating an educational

atmosphere where every adult learner, regardless of their background, can thrive. The existing literature on inclusive learning emphasises its numerous benefits for adult students (Thomas & Collier, 2002). These benefits include improved engagement, enhanced learning outcomes and increased personal and professional development.

3. Dyslexia in adults & special learning needs

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which makes it harder to learn how to read, write and spell accurately and of course it is not caused by lack of education or by lack of intelligence. That is why adults with learning difficulties such as dyslexia can experience stress and frustration as they try to learn in every step of their life and in every workplace, leading to increased anxiety (Merriam et al., 2007).

Adult students in diverse educational contexts bring a wide range of learning needs, experiences, and challenges. If teachers and educators have a better understanding for these diverse needs, it will be easier for them to adopt an effective adult education (Knowles, 1980; Merriam et al., 2007). We must not forget that often adult students come from various backgrounds and have distinct learning needs (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). These needs can encompass varying literacy levels, language abilities, prior educational studies and professional backgrounds (Merriam et al., 2007).

Adult learners face unique challenges, such as time limitations, work-related stress, family responsibilities and they are in great need of multiple commitments (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). It is of cardinal importance to say here that because of these obstacles, it is necessary to

tailor educational strategies to address them effectively (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008).

4. Teaching English to adults with special learning needs

Innovative teaching techniques are essential for meeting the various learning demands of adult students in the field of adult education (Nilson, 2016). Particularly, the examination and evaluation of pedagogical strategies is designed to improve the adult learning and at the same time to acknowledge the evolution of education (Nilson, 2016).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) acts as a main approach to using inclusive adult education (Boyle, 2010) and at the same time, by applying UDL principles, educators can enhance accessibility and inclusivity within adult education settings, ensuring that learning does not act as a disadvantage but as an advantage to individuals (Boyle, 2010). We must not forget that dynamic approaches such as flipped classrooms, online learning or experiential learning, help adult learners with dyslexia to interact, communicate and participate in the learning process (Nilson, 2016).

Another approach for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to adults with dyslexia is the use of multisensory teaching techniques, as suggested by Avramidis et al. (2000). By applying multiple senses, such as sight, hearing and touch, teachers can support learning and retention with their learners. Structured and tailored instruction, as is mentioned by Ainscow and Miles (2008), is also significant. Instructors have the ability to separate language concepts into comprehensive theories so as to help learners with dyslexia process information in a more effective manner.

According to Bedoin and Séguillon (2021), some activities are used to boost phonological awareness skills, or to improve sound recognition and pronunciation in individuals with dyslexia. In EFL teaching when teachers use visual supports and supportive technology, comprehension, reading and writing tasks by people with dyslexia is reinforced (Dong, 2016). In addition, educators can facilitate their teaching when they use pictures, diagrammes and/or interactive activities as teaching tools (Gaskins et al., 2012). Thus, adult learners with dyslexia will be better able to succeed in the EFL classroom (Dong, 2016).

Ainscow and Miles (2008) give importance to creating a positive classroom climate where individuals with dyslexia feel valued, empowered, encouraged and confident. If teachers choose to incorporate these innovative teaching methods in their teaching, then it would be easier for them to create a more inclusive and effective learning experience for adults with dyslexia studying English as a foreign language (Boyle, 2010). Empirical research, case studies or examples from the literature can show how these methods lead to enhanced learning outcomes among adult learners (Boyle & Topping, 2010). In addition, it can be significantly given accessibility to education for diverse adult learners (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007) with various educational backgrounds, language knowledge and learning styles (Knowles, 1980).

5. Adults with dyslexia: Improvement in academic performance through economic perspectives

In the evolving area of education, the integration of economic principles and insights has become a really positive asset in order to promote learning outcomes (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). Our conceptual paper gives a meaningful explanation regarding the ultimate

relationship between economics and education by showing how economic theories and strategies have been strategically employed so as to improve the quality and effectiveness of educational practices (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2015). Having read relevant references and studies, we were able to understand in what ways economic insights have had an influence on the educational environment (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007).

Early childhood education investment is equivalent to developing roots for future economic growth. According to Heckman and Masterov's research (2007), there is an emphasis on the productivity argument for investing in young children's education. It is also discussed how targeted investments in early childhood education programs can yield substantial economic benefits, setting the stage for improved educational outcomes and enhanced economic opportunities in adulthood (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2015; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008).

The transition from *pedagogy* (teaching children) to *andragogy* (teaching adults) marks a significant transformation in educational practices. Strategies cater to the diverse learning needs of adult learners that ultimately enhance their educational experiences and improve their learning results (Knowles, 1980).

Lifelong learning is not just a personal pursuit but a cornerstone of economic prosperity. Drawing upon the comprehensive guide by Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007), there will be an examination on how lifelong learning practices contribute to enhance skills, adaptability and economic growth. Technology has redefined the educational landscape and its integration is informed by economic considerations. Through Musawi's exploration of technology's evolving role in education, it is examined how digital tools and innovative technologies have been

harnessed to enhance accessibility, engagement and learning outcomes in diverse educational settings (Musawi, 2011).

Effective teaching strategies grounded in research are instrumental in improving learning outcomes. Building upon Nilson's resource, there is an exploration in evidence-based teaching practices that have been proven to enhance learning experiences. All these above-mentioned pedagogical approaches leverage economic insights to promote engagement, critical thinking and skills development among learners (Nilson, 2016).

In this exploration of how economic principles and insights have been applied in educational contexts (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007), we recognise the transformative power of such integration. By understanding the profound impact of education quality, cognitive skills, early childhood investments (Heckman & Masterov, 2007), and lifelong learning (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008) on economic prosperity, educators and policymakers can adopt a holistic approach to educational enhancement.

6. Future research directions

There are lots of interesting sectors for further study and projects in the field of adult education that could involve including learning and teaching methods with economic knowledge. One of them concerns researches that have been carried out with the aim of determining consequences of inclusive educational methods and the incorporation of economic knowledge in the long run (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2015).

Another area for exploration lies in intercultural comparative studies, which focus on the way inclusive learning strategies and economic

insights, can be organised within diverse cultural contexts so as to meet the special needs of adult learners (Desombre et al., 2019).

In today's society where technology is fast-paced and evolving, the role and the impact of technological Innovations cannot be ignored. Future researchers are encouraged to examine how new technologies, including virtual reality, artificial intelligence and/or gamification, can be used to reinforce inclusive learning aptitudes for adult learners (Dong, 2016; Boyle & Topping, 2010). Teacher Training and Professional Development should also be taken into serious consideration. Additionally, educators should be encouraged and given the means and the right tools to apply inclusive teaching practices and integrate economic insights into their pedagogical approaches (Covelli & de Anna, 2020).

Policy Analysis (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007) emerges as a critical research domain that scrutinizes policies at various levels, ranging from local to international, to evaluate their alignment with inclusive learning principles and economic considerations. Finally, studying learner-focused approaches is giving adult students the freedom to actively develop their educational future (Dong, 2016; David & Meyer, 2007).

7. Conclusion

In a world that is constantly changing, adult education needs to be improved too. The integration and application of innovative teaching methodologies and economic insights are considered to be needed in order to create inclusive learning environments so as to respond to the multiple educational needs of adult learners (Dong, 2016).

Long term studies, such as those conducted by Heckman and Masterov (2007), are likely to reveal the significant influence of inclusive

learning strategies on the educational and career trajectories of adult learners (Merriam et al., 2007). For instance, the study that was conducted by Knowles (1980) unveiled how pedagogical approaches towards andragogy in adult education have changed. Emphasis in this study was given to the necessity for the existence of innovative teaching methods that will meet adult learners' specific needs, such as dyslexia (Knowles, 1980).

When it comes to inclusive learning models and economic insights in diverse cultural contexts, a different approach is necessary (David, 2007). This approach will aim to offer a global perspective of successful educational methods by recognising the need for personalised approaches so as to host learners from diverse cultural or educational backgrounds. In an era of constant change due to technological developments, as highlighted by Acemoglu & Autor (2011), adult learning is still an area in need of improvement and development (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Additionally, the comprehensive reference to learning in adulthood by Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) provides economic insights into how adult learners can engage with educational experiences over time.

Effective Teacher Training and Policies, a cornerstone of inclusive education (Rea, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008), equips educators with the necessary skills to implement inclusive practices. Concurrently, supportive policies play a significant role in ensuring that these practices are integrated smoothly into the educational system, creating an environment where every learner's needs are met. Learner Autonomy, a core principle of learner-driven approaches (Zigmond, 2003), encourages adult learners to take ownership of their educational journey. By granting learners

greater agency, these approaches form a sense of responsibility and self-direction, leading to more personalised and fulfilling learning experiences (Boyle, 2010).

Interdisciplinary collaboration encourages educators, economists and experts from various fields to collaborate in the pursuit of holistic and effective educational interventions (Boyle, 2010). Applying UDL rules in education can lead to improved learning outcomes for all students, including those with diverse needs (Zigmond, 2003). Furthermore, the application of UDL can become beneficial in the context of higher education, where student retention has significant economic implications (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Graduates who have experienced UDL may possess a wider range of skills, including problem-solving and critical thinking, which are highly sought after by employers. Countries that prioritise inclusive education and UDL principles are better positioned to adapt to the changing demands of the global economy. If educators start to design more accessible and flexible learning materials and activities, adult students will be involved in the process more effectively and acquire a better academic performance (Thomas & Collier, 2002). When students with diverse needs receive education that is closer to their individual requirements, they are more likely to become more productive and skilled in their work which can have a positive impact on their economic growth (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007).

To conclude, the integration and application of innovative teaching strategies, economic insights and dyslexia support, represent a significant evolution within the framework of adult education. Teachers, adult students and special educators ought to work together and create a more

powerful future for adult education, where every learner will have the opportunity to flourish and succeed.

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KEYNOTE ARTICLE 4

Effective Grammar Learning Strategies for Developing Intercultural Competence in Adult Learners of German and Spanish as L3 by Nikolina Božinović and Ana Havelka Meštović, *RIT Croatia*,

Abstract

The use of effective grammar learning strategies contributes to the development of grammatical competence, which represents one of the components of communicative language competence. Successful foreign language learners need to have intercultural communicative competence which requires an understanding of both the L1 and L2 cultures (Lim & Griffith, 2016). This study aims to explore grammar learning strategies used by German/Spanish language learners with Croatian first language (L1) and English second language (L2). Participants had Croatian as L1, English as L2, and were learning German and Spanish as L3. The use of grammar learning strategies was measured by the Grammar Learning Strategies Questionnaire (Božinović, 2012). The results have shown that there are statistically significant differences between German and Spanish in the frequency of the grammar learning strategy used. Strategies of active and visual grammar learning are more frequently used by Spanish learners than by German learners. German learners used fewer strategies due to lower motivation. Participants simultaneously use a number of different grammar learning strategies which they combine and adapt in new language circumstances in order to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultures.

Keywords: grammar learning strategies (GLS), intercultural competence, German and Spanish as L3.

1. Introduction

Foreign language learning is becoming more and more popular as the world is becoming increasingly globalised. The goal of acquiring a language, even a foreign one, is to engage in effective communication with others. Successful communication involves knowing when, where, to whom, and how to express oneself.

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) refers to the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It goes beyond simply knowing the language of another culture. In the 1990s, Byram, along with several researchers, introduced the concept of ICC as a framework for understanding the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural contexts. One of the key components of ICC includes language

proficiency. It involves the ability to communicate in multiple languages and to understand the nuances of language use in different cultural contexts. (Byram, 1997)

The connection between language learning strategies and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is significant, as both areas of development are closely intertwined in the process of acquiring effective communication skills in a multicultural context. When learning a foreign language learners use efficient problem-solving skills in intercultural contexts. Language learners often employ metacognitive strategies (Wenden, 1991; Cohen and Dörnyei, 2002), such as self-reflection and problem-solving, to navigate challenges in language acquisition. These skills can be transferred to intercultural contexts, where individuals may encounter communication barriers and need to adapt their strategies for effective interaction.

Language learning strategies serve as a foundation for the development of ICC by integrating language proficiency with cultural awareness, adaptability, and effective communication skills in diverse contexts. As individuals navigate the complexities of language acquisition, they inherently acquire skills and perspectives that enhance their ability to communicate successfully across cultures.

2. Background

2.1. Definitions and characteristics of grammar learning strategies

Grammar learning strategies (GLS), considered as a specialized subgroup of general learning strategies, play a significant role in the process of foreign language acquisition. The initial research of learning strategies began in the 1970s (Rubin, 1975; Savignon, 1972; Stern, 1975), and the systematic research addressing the use of language learning strategies took place in the 1980s and 1990s. These studies have shown that foreign language learners employ a diverse range of strategies that contribute to effective language learning (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). GLS has unquestionably become a new area of interest in the field of second language acquisition, given the pivotal role grammar plays in all language skills and in facilitating the functioning of language as a system. Despite its importance, the exploration of GLS, has not been conducted systematically thus far (Anderson, 2005; Ellis, 2006). In the past decade, however, there has been a more systematic examination of specific learning strategies,

including those related to grammar (Tilfarlioğlu & Yalçın, 2005; Kemp, 2007; Pawlak, 2009).

Oxford, Rang Lee, and Park (2007) define GLS as actions or behaviours which learners consciously use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable. Cohen and Pinilla-Herrera (2010), starting from the classic examples of GLS that rely primarily on conscious repetition of grammatical structures and imitation of language forms and memorisation, have defined GLS as intentional thoughts and actions that the student consciously chooses to facilitate learning and gain better control over the use of grammatical structures. These authors emphasised that GLS is used to enhance language expression and to assist in learning and using appropriate grammatical forms and structures. Therefore, the use of appropriate GLS contributes to more effective learning. There is no doubt that there are so-called "universal" GLS whose transfer from one language to another can be assumed and expected, as well as grammar-specific strategies that are specific to a particular foreign language, given the complexity and specificity of the grammar system of a particular foreign language. Tschirner (2001) emphasised that in order to develop grammatical competence, students need to develop effective GLS. Grammatical competence is not acquired exclusively by learning, applying and mechanically practising grammatical rules, that is, there is no direct path from meta-linguistic, grammatical rules to the construction of grammatical competence, but the emphasis is placed on the conscious use of specific GLS. Griffiths (2008) emphasised that learners who make visible progress in learning a foreign language are more likely to use GLS to improve their own grammatical knowledge. Griffiths (2008) summarised that the choice of strategies is influenced by a number of factors such as learner's proficiency level (Green & Oxford, 1995; Lan & Oxford, 2003), sex (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Ehrmann & Oxford, 1989), gender (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990; Kaylani, 1996; Liu, 2004), cultural background (Griffiths & Parr, 2000; Dickinson, 1996; Parry, 1993; Tyacke & Mendelsohn, 1986) learning style, previous experience in learning and motivation (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Braten & Olausson, 1998; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2001; Chang, 2005; Dörnyei, 2006), as well as personal beliefs and assumptions about language learning. (Bialystok, 1978). Rampillon (1995) pointed out that one of the distinguishing features of GLS is that it can be changed, i.e. the existing strategies can be adapted and transferred, new ones learned and

acquired, and unsuccessful ones abandoned. Pavičić Takač (2008) also emphasised that the strategies are oriented towards the broad goal of development of communicative language competence, i.e. they involve interaction with other students. As one of the distinctive features of learning strategies, Pavičić Takač (2008) states that in addition to the cognitive aspect, strategies also involve the metacognitive, social and affective aspects. In addition, the flexible use of strategies contributes to learning, and to strategy transfer (cf. Wenden, 1987, 1991).

Finally, strategies as individual differences can be practised until their use becomes automatic, i.e. until learners become skilled and efficient in strategy use. It is the fact that strategies can be taught that makes them most intriguing for both teachers and researchers. In a Scottish educational setting, Kemp (2007) conducted a study revealing a correlation between GLS and grammatical competence among multilingual speakers. This approach unveiled additional grammatical strategies employed by respondents in learning foreign language grammar. Results demonstrated that respondents with greater competence in multiple languages exhibited a higher frequency of using GLS. Those with proficiency in more than one language tended to contribute their own strategies, thereby expanding the list of grammar strategies. Notably, the use of strategies, known as the threshold effect, was more pronounced during the acquisition of a third language and continued to increase with each subsequent foreign language learned.

Building on the limited existing studies of GLS, this research deals with GLS employed by students studying two different foreign languages within the Croatian educational context.

2.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence and Language Proficiency

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) represents a key factor in effective intercultural communication. ICC requires not only that learners know about the target language culture but about their own culture and its effects on behaviour, thoughts, perceptions, etc. True competence in intercultural communication requires that an individual has active knowledge of both his/her own culture as well as that of the target language culture. In developing this competence, one needs to activate metacognitive strategies or higher order critical thinking skills to understand the effects of culture on individuals and promote self-awareness. Oxford (1990) pointed out that

metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their own cognition, enabling them to focus, plan, and evaluate their progress as they move toward communicative competence. In that sense, learners who are capable of using metacognitive strategies become aware of their knowledge and skills and are thus able to control their learning process, which in turn leads them towards becoming autonomous learners. Metacognitive strategies are higher-order strategies with executive functions which comprise analysis, monitoring, evaluation, planning, and organising one's learning process. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) point out that learners who do not have a metacognitive approach or do not know how to apply it remain without a real goal and direction, without the ability to plan their learning, monitor their own progress in learning, and their achievements, and future goals of learning. Byram (1997) stressed that these components are not independent entities but represent various facets of a unified concept. The framework of the six competences serves as a useful starting point and can be summarized as follows:

- Linguistic competence refers to the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with the rules of the specific language and bear their conventional meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when used in isolation.
- Sociolinguistic competence represents the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms is determined by such conditions as setting, relationship between communication partners, communicative intention.
- Discourse competence refers to the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts.
- Strategic competence refers to the ability to navigate challenging communication situations by employing methods to effectively convey our intended meaning or to comprehend someone else's message.
- Socio-cultural competence involves recognising that every language is situated in a sociocultural context and utilises a specific reference framework that may differ somewhat from that of the foreign language learner.
- Social competence involves both the desire and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to handle social situations.

3. Methodology

3.1. Aim

This study aims to analyse the role of GLS in the process of acquiring a third language (L3). The focus of this research is GLS in German and Spanish as L3 acquisition by learners with Croatian as their first language (L1) and English as their second language (L2). We assume that adult language learners use a different GLS when learning different foreign languages, which they partly transfer from their mother tongue or another foreign language they have previously learned. In alignment with the established classification of GLS by Božinović (2012), our research aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) Which groups of GLS are most frequently used?
- (2) Are there are differences in the use of specific groups of GLS in relation to two different foreign languages being learned?

3.2. Participants

There was a total of 150 students learning German and Spanish as L3 who participated in this study. 75 students were learning German as L3 and 75 students were learning Spanish as L3, all of whom were aged between 19 and 25. All participants were native speakers of Croatian, had learned English as L2, and were learning German or Spanish as L3 at the time of the study. All students were enrolled on the Intermediate German/Spanish course at the Rochester Institute of Technology's subsidiary in Croatia (RIT Croatia). They had the same number of hours of instruction (a total of 120 hours). They all stated that they had never been to a German/Spanish speaking country and that their first contact with the German/Spanish language had been when they enrolled on the Beginners' German/Spanish course. Students at RIT Croatia are highly proficient in English. They started learning English in their early childhood and their classes at RIT Croatia are all taught in English and all of them spent at least one semester in the USA.

3.3. Instrument

Data on GLS were collected through a structured questionnaire to measure the type and frequency of GLS used (Božinović, 2012). The first part of the questionnaire is used to elicit demographic information about the participants and about the language repertoire of the participants. The second part of the questionnaire is an instrument designed to measure GLS (Questionnaire on grammar learning strategies). The questionnaire contains 48 statements that correspond to the individual grammar learning strategies classified in the categories above. The frequency of using GLS is measured by a rating scale of 1 to 5 (1 - I never do it, 2 - I mostly don't, 3 - I sometimes do it, 4 - I often do it, 5 - I always or almost always do it).

3.4. Data analysis

The data were collected during regular foreign language classes at RIT Croatia. Respondents were not previously informed that the survey would be carried out. The questionnaire was administered anonymously to keep the respondents as honest as possible in answering the questions. Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. In analysing the data, in addition to descriptive statistics, we also used inferential statistical procedures. The data from the questionnaire were analysed using the statistical program SPSS 17.0. (SPSS Inc. Released 2008. SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 17.0. Chicago: SPSS Inc.)

4. Results and Discussion

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the use of individual groups of GLS. Table 1 shows that the most frequently used strategies are grammar self-discovery strategies (3.54), followed by grammar memorisation strategies (3.29) and active GLS (3.36). The least frequently used strategies are visual GLS (2.73) and social GLS (2.94). Examining the values of average arithmetic means, it is evident that there is a certain asymmetry of most average arithmetic means favouring higher values. This observation suggests that respondents might employ a greater variety of GLS simultaneously.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for individual dimensions of GLS ($p < ,01$)

Grammar learning strategies	M	SD
Strategies of grammar self-discovery	3,54	,785
Grammar memorisation strategies	3,29	,712
Active grammar learning strategies	3,36	,675
Social grammar learning strategies	2,94	,709
Visual grammar learning strategies	2,73	,854

NOTE: M = arithmetic mean; **SD**= standard deviation;

As indicated in Table 2, the results of univariate analysis of variance for individual dimensions of GLS indicate that there are statistically significant differences between respondents of different foreign languages in the dimension of active GLS and visual GLS. Spanish language learners ($M = 0.335$) differ significantly from German language learners ($M = -0.194$) in the use of active GLS, in the direction of higher scores for Spanish learners. It is also evident that Spanish language learners ($M = 0.214$) were statistically significantly different from German language learners ($M = -0.124$) in the use of visual GLS, in the direction of higher scores for Spanish learners. The results indicate that Spanish learners are more likely to use certain types of GLS, namely, active GLS and visual GLS, as opposed to German language learners. These results suggest that the self-motivational strategies (cf. Cohen and Dörnyei, 2002), which serve as an additional driving force for foreign language grammar learning, are the most developed or most frequently used among respondents, along with the group of grammar memory strategies. According to our expectations, respondents predominantly employ a combination of self-motivational and grammar memorisation strategies, indicating intrinsic motivation and a concerted effort to master the grammatical structures of a foreign language. Given that the respondents are adult learners of a foreign language, it can be assumed that they want to enhance their grammatical competence to achieve greater success in future business environments, emphasising the need for developing intercultural ICC.

Table 2. Results of discrimination analysis of individual dimensions of GLS questionnaire according to German/Spanish as L3

VARIABLE	Wilks'	Correlation with discrimination factor	F-test (1,399)	P	M German	German	M Spanish	Spanish
Active grammar learning strategies	0,935	0,802	27,864	< 0,01	-0,194	0,966	0,335	0,972
Grammar memorisation strategies	0,997	0,178	1,368	> 0,200	-0,044	1,087	0,076	0,826
Social grammar learning strategies	0,998	0,142	0,870	> 0,200	-0,035	0,945	0,061	1,090
Visual grammar learning strategies	0,973	0,502	10,896	< 0,01	-0,124	0,921	0,214	1,095
Strategies of grammar self-discovery	1,000	-0,061	0,161	> 0,200	0,015	1,030	-0,026	0,950

NOTE: : M = arithmetic mean; \square = standard deviation; p = probability of statistical significance

Through statistical analysis of the research findings, we obtained data that give us the answer to the basic questions of the research. Specifically, it reveals variations in the use of GLS between learners of two different foreign languages. Notably, individuals learning Spanish are more inclined to employ active and visual GLS compared to those learning German. However, it is evident that respondents simultaneously use a diverse range of GLS, combining and adjusting them in their language acquisition process.

The results of this study indicate that there are differences in the use of GLS in adult learners of German and Spanish as L3. Contrary to our expectations, statistically significant differences were found between German and Spanish students in the use of active GLS and visual GLS. Spanish learners are more likely to use active and visual GLS, as opposed to German language learners. One plausible explanation

is that, in recent years, respondents in the Croatian educational context have been more frequently exposed to the influence of the Spanish language, which is growing in global popularity. Consequently, the rapid increase in the intensity of learning Spanish may contribute to a more frequent use of active GLS, which is probably related to the inherent self-motivational nature of these strategies, since they belong to the group of self-motivational strategies.

As this study deals with two different foreign languages, belonging to the group of Germanic and Romance languages, the use of GLS differs with respect to the foreign language being learned. Potential explanations for these differences can be found in the unique characteristics of the teaching and extracurricular learning contexts for German and Spanish in Croatia, as well as potential fluctuations in motivation observed among German language learners. Some studies, such as Bagarić (2007), have suggested that the motivation to learn German tends to diminish over the years, taking on instrumental or extrinsic characteristics, leading to a decline in linguistic confidence (Mihaljević Djigunović and Bagarić, 2007). Interpretation of the findings obtained in this research shows that students may have already developed certain language learning strategies which they simultaneously use, combine and adapt in new language circumstances in order to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultures. In order to develop intercultural language competence it is beneficial to develop efficient multilingual learning strategies. Multilingual learning strategies and intercultural language competence share a strong connection as they both involve the acquisition and use of multiple languages within diverse cultural contexts. Multilingual learning strategies focus on developing proficiency in multiple languages through various learning methods and techniques. They also promote cognitive flexibility by encouraging individuals to switch between languages. Jessner (2008) pointed out that metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness play a significant role in developing learning strategies in multilingual speakers. Multilingual speakers use different strategies from monolingual speakers (McLaughlin, 1990; Jessner, 2008) and they use GLS with different frequency (Dolgunsös, 2013).

5. Conclusion

The study aimed to provide insight into which Grammar Learning Strategies are most commonly used by the participants and to identify differences in the use of GLS in relation to the foreign language being learned. The research findings reveal statistically significant differences in the frequency of certain strategies: self-discovery grammar strategies, grammar memorisation strategies, and active grammar learning strategies are most commonly employed, whereas visual GLS and social GLS are less frequent.

GLS is specific to general foreign language learning strategies as well as to the particular foreign language being studied. Furthermore, proficiency level is also a strong determining factor in GLS usage with multilingual learners. It would be useful to explore further some other aspects of GLS and to gain better insight into specific GLS used by students in two different languages - German and Spanish as L3, or to determine how the proficiency level affects the use of GLS. These are just some of the aspects that future research could address. Finally, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of conducting systematic research in the field of GLS and ICC, since such research leads to a deeper understanding of the foreign language acquisition process.

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WEBINAR 1

In this issue we summarise two webinars about William Shakespeare, the first is *Everyday Shakespeare in the Classroom* by David and Ben Crystal and the second is by Luke Prodromou. Here's David and Ben Crystal.

David and Ben went through all Shakespeare's plays and sonnets selected a saying a day taken from Shakespeare's work but leaving out all the famous quotes such as, 'Is this a dagger that I see before me, the handle toward my hand?' (Macbeth Act 2 Scene 1) or 'To be or not to be. That is the question.' (Hamlet Act 3 Scene 1) and focused on everyday statements about things that ordinary people could be doing every day of their lives or some emotion that they might be feeling. One such example is Friar Lawrence in Romeo and Juliet who gives advice to Juliet, saying, '*Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast.*' (Romeo and Juliet Act 2 Scene 3), a phrase that embodies one of the greatest rules that has influenced Ben Crystal's life. Its meaning is that if you do something too fast or without care you're more likely to break something or drop something or trip yourself up and fall over and this is the advice that Friar Lawrence gives. For David Crystal a most popular saying is, '*Better three hours too soon than a minute too late*' (The Merry Wives of Windsor Act 2 Scene 2) as he values being on time, or ahead of time. The great value of quotations from Shakespeare is that you can use many of them in everyday life although they were written in the sixteenth century! The great thing is that you can adapt statements from Shakespeare even if it means changing them a little bit. There's a lovely saying, '*He that sleeps feels not the toothache*'. (Cymbeline Act 5 Scene 4) It mainly refers to having no worries by sleeping. You can change the pronoun to match the speaker. 'She that sleeps', 'They that sleep', as wished. As David Crystal says, "Don't be afraid to play with Shakespeare. Just as he played with the language you can play with it as well."

One of the values of Shakespeare is that the actual words are actually not difficult and are quite easy to understand. David Crystal went through the plays and counted just under a million words in the plays and poems of which only 5% are words which have changed their meanings or which are words we no longer use. As he says, "Shakespeare on the page is not the way to look at him. It's Shakespeare on the stage", which brings the plays and the poems across so well. The commentary on each quotation cited date by date explains what makes them relevant in life and also relevant in the classroom.

Ben Crystal presented another quotation from the book, "In the night imagining some fear how easy is a bush supposed a bear." (Midsummer Night's Dream Act 5 Scene 1) Much of the language used in Shakespearean plays is rhythmical and students in

language class have asked, 'Does that mean that 400 years ago, people spoke in poetry?' No. Shakespeare realised that using the iambic pentameter, the rhythm of the human heartbeat, was an effective style and one we still often use in English today with a similar stress pattern. The lines above from *Midsummer Nights Dream* reflect common fears many experience today when walking in the dark.

Teachers can also use a citation from Shakespeare to start a conversation among students. For example, if you say this in your class, 'Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none', (*All's Well That Ends Well* (Act 1 Scene 1). Or another one, 'Live a little, comfort a little, cheer thyself a little'" (*As You Like It* Act 2 Scene 6). These can be wonderful questions to start a class discussion and students enjoy discussing the quotations without the teacher having to interrupt. In class if a teacher asks the question, 'Have you ever experienced fear?' you get some wonderful stories back from the class.

Each month in the book adopts a theme, for example, nature or politics, and groups the quotations under that theme. So, you may find a quotation from a history play, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." (*Henry IV Part II* Act 3 Scene 1) Originally the quotation applied to a monarch but today it could apply to any leader.

Another quotation celebrates the holiday period - which is just over a week away. "Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast." (*The Comedy of Errors* Act 3 Scene 1)

"The web of our life is but a mingled yarn, good and ill together." (*All's Well That Ends Well* Act 4 Scene 3) This shows Shakespeare's great skill in creating lighter moments in tragedies and darker moments in comedies to illustrate the concept of good and ill mixed together.

"Let all the numbers of the stars give light to thy fair way." (*Antony and Cleopatra* Act 3 Scene 2)

Exploitation in the classroom

1. Get the class members to say sentences from Shakespeare in their own accents. No need to insist on English accents.
2. Allow students to get interested in the topics that Shakespearian plays express without going into detailed academic study. Create enthusiasm. Study can follow.
3. Use lines from Shakespeare's sonnets to understand the feelings that are expressed and discuss their emotions which come from reading or hearing them and say what they feel.
4. How can we teach Shakespeare best in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Ben Crystal suggests beginning in class with the teacher summarising the story and introducing the characters and get the class to discuss their

characters and actions – and even act it out. Then students can watch the whole play on YouTube or other online services.

(www.icc-languages.eu/webinars Scroll down to: Everyday Shakespeare in the Classroom, December 13 2023)

WEBINAR 2

Luke Prodromou: Shakespeare: our contemporary? The bard in the age of AI

We are going to be looking at the huge creative ability of a human being and comparing it to the artificial intelligence designed by scientists and see where we stand in relation to Shakespeare's world over all but in connection with the world in which we live - sadly not just the age of AI but also the age of wars that are raging around the world, climate change and economic crises. So, what does Shakespeare have to tell us about all this? First of all let's go over to Shakespeare himself. Thanks to the magic of AI we can actually hear an interview with him. (You can hear the interview extract and follow the text of the interview in Luke's slides on the ICC-Languages website.) It's impressive but is it reliable and accurate? The language used is not all authentic. It is more a parody of Elizabethan English and no-one knows if Shakespeare expressed himself in that particular way.

The title of my talk comes from a book by Jan Kott, published 50 years ago, entitled *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (without the question mark) which has had a formative influence on theatre productions of Shakespeare plays and the interpretation of Shakespeare on a critical level. How does Shakespeare's natural intelligence compare with Artificial Intelligence? Two questions to be answered.

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? (T.S.Eliot *The Rock*, 1934)

How can we convert knowledge and information into wisdom? Is Shakespeare still relevant? Think of a speech from a Shakespeare play you know or have studied. Is it still powerful, relevant or beautiful? Luke Prodromou's favourite speech comes from King Lear Act 3 Scene 4 (*Poor naked wretches . . .*) in which he addresses the difference between the rich and the poor, a situation that we still experience today. Another speech beginning '*Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man, . . .*' (King Lear Act 4 Scene 1) supports the principle of generosity in supporting the poor and helping them live with dignity. A stimulating activity for teachers to use with upper intermediate and advanced learners studying more traditional literature can take lines from a book or a speech from a play or movie and explain it and get the class discuss how it can still relate to today.

Another exercise focuses on the most frequent common nouns used in the literature under study, in this case Shakespeare's plays. Get your students to think of the most common works of a particular author and the most common words they associate with her/his work. Then learners can discuss their conclusions with others in the class. As Luke Prodromou puts it, '*What does Shakespeare write about? Can you guess the most common noun in Shakespeare's plays?*'

The answer will give us an indication of the topics he was pre-occupied with. Asking the same questions of AI, a word cloud appeared with 'Love', 'Lord' and 'King' as the

most common nouns used in the plays. Do this and compare AI's statistical results with your students understanding.

Another activity focuses on Shakespeare's political views as he expressed them in his plays. In what is considered to be the first play he wrote, Henry VI Part II, the revolution which was led by Jack Cade (1450) features the demand for greater equality with the upper classes. An activity for students is to think of their own political views and what they would like to change and comparing them with the views expressed in the literary works they are studying. Another play which expresses Shakespeare's views about poverty and arguments about aristocracy and its role re ordinary people are expressed is Coriolanus.

Where AI can be useful is by producing a word cloud with words of different sizes as listed according to their frequency. This can be the basis of a useful vocabulary exercise, teaching new vocabulary appropriate to a particular context such as a description of war as used in Shakespeare's plays.

Another exercise is to show a picture of a scene in a Shakespeare play with two characters speaking and ask the class to suggest what each side is saying. Then they can listen to or read the actual exchange. Again, a good active way to practise and increase students' knowledge of vocabulary. Remember, as Luke Prodromou points out, Shakespeare's English was at the birth of modern English with far fewer older or medieval words or expressions than we might expect. He goes on to give examples of how war can act as a way of diverting national attention away from domestic issues, a concept which Shakespeare raised in a number of his plays.

In summary, what can AI do for us? It can supply data at the touch of a button. What it can't do is interpret that information but we can use it to build knowledge and to understand how human beings achieve wisdom – as Shakespeare does in his plays and poems - encouraging feeling, thinking and critical thinking and offering his interpretation of information showing compassion, empathy and other virtues that may involve fighting violent behaviour. Finally, Shakespeare advocates wisdom, being full human beings with passion, understanding and empathy and being fully alive.

(www.icc-languages.eu/webinars. Scroll down to 'Shakespeare: our contemporary? The Bard in the age of AI, July 11th 2024)

TEACHING TIPS

Nick Michelioudakis

TEACHING TIP 1

A GAMIFICATION TWEAK [INTERMITTENT REWARDS II]

[Psychology for Educators]

As the saying goes: 'If it works, don't fix it!'. Imagine you have a game you have used countless times in class. It's a very simple vocabulary revision quiz. You divide your class into two (or more) groups and then you read out the clues: 'What do you call someone who is always on time?' The

first person to raise their hand and answer correctly scores two points for the group. It's simple, it's easy and it's great fun. Why change anything?

Now consider the following study (Shen et al., 2015). Researchers organised an auction in which people could bid for a lot which contained five chocolate coins. On average, the bidding went up to \$ 1.25. They then organised another auction in which people could bid for a lot which contained either three or five chocolate coins (but the number was unknown). Incredibly, this time the average bid went up to \$1.89!! OK – let me say this again: people were prepared to pay *more* for *less* (on average, the mystery lot contained four chocolate coins). Why? The answer is that people were prepared to pay a certain amount for the chockies *plus some more* for the uncertainty! When it comes to rewards, uncertainty is motivating!

Consider a second study – one that involves students (Ozcelik et al., 2013). The latter were involved in a concept-learning game (gamification!). There were two conditions: in the first one, every correct response got a set number of points; in the second, the participants did not know how many points they had won – every time they got the right answer, the researcher rolled the dice and the points awarded depended on the number that came up! What did the researchers find? You guessed it: students spent more time in the game and they were more accurate too. Fantastic! But what about us teachers? Do we make use of what the researchers have discovered? Of course not.

The take-away here is obvious. Take a leaf out of the researchers' book: whenever you are playing a game with your class, don't just award the same number of points for each correct answer. Just roll a dice (you don't even need to have one – just click here: <https://freeonlinedice.com/>). Quite apart from the excitement generated by the uncertainty, there is also the added advantage that even if a team happens to be weaker or way behind in points, they are still in with a chance because, well – dice are dice!

There is one last, more general point I want to make. Remember the original game? Yes, it is good and yes, it will work again next time – even in the simple form. But why not tweak it? Why not make it better? As Wood writes, “...*only a few teaching games involve uncertain rewards, and, perhaps as a result, games are often no more effective than standard teaching programs.*” (Wood 2019 – p. 125) So here is the big take-away: ‘(Even) If it works – fix it!!’

Shen, L., Fishbach, A., & Hsee, C. K. (2015). *The motivating-uncertainty effect: Uncertainty increases resource investment in the process of reward pursuit*. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(5), 1301–1315.

Ozcelik, E., Cagiltay, N. E., & Ozcelik, N. S. (2013). *The effect of uncertainty on learning in game-like environments*. *Computers & Education*, 67, 12–20.

Wood, R. ‘Good Habits – Bad Habits’ [pp. 124-125]

TEACHING TIP 2 HOW TO GET INTO HARVARD

Adam Grant (an organisational psychologist and best-selling author) was not supposed to study at Harvard. For a start, he wouldn't be able to afford the fees. He was supposed to stay in Michigan. However, he did dream about Harvard and how great it would be if he were accepted there and, on a whim, he decided to apply.

One of the screening procedures Harvard uses, is to have candidates go through an interview with one of their alumni, so the latter can judge whether the applicant actually has what it takes. By his own admission, when he showed up on the day, Grant was shaking. The interview was supposed to take an hour, but in fact it went on for three. Two months later, Grant got an envelope from the university. To his astonishment, he found inside a letter of acceptance – which also came with some financial aid, too!

Grant, (who admits that he sometimes suffers from impostor syndrome) wondered what it was that made the interviewer think he was good enough, Grant always for Harvard. A few months later, he actually met the guy who had talked with him (a lawyer called John Gierak) and he got to ask him. John's answer was interesting.

When Grant had sat down opposite him, John mentioned that in his (Grant's) resume he said he had performed as a magician and he asked him about his favourite trick. Grant had apparently anticipated this, because he had brought a pack of cards with him, and he offered to give John a demonstration. He got John to shuffle the cards and then started telling a story; at various times he would mention specific cards which would magically appear at the top of the deck.

The trick was impressive. When it was over, most people would have asked 'How do you do it?' But John asked something else. He asked Grant how he had learned it. Grant replied he had seen a magician perform it on TV and he was so impressed he started looking up information about cards and magic (that was before the advent of Google) and he had taught himself to do this particular version.

That did it. In Grant's words '...John told me it wasn't the magic that helped me stand out. It was the initiative I had taken in teaching myself...' (Grant 2023 – pp. 225-229).

For me, there is a great lesson here – a lesson for us educators. Our role is changing. In the past, the teacher's role was to convey knowledge, explain facts or processes, and structure information. These days I believe, one of our most important roles is to encourage learners to seek out knowledge themselves, and to encourage them to experiment with various approaches to see what works best for them. In short, we want to help our students become active learners. How can we do this?

Well, we can...

- ...demonstrate to them some learning strategies;
- ...get them to share their learning strategies with each other;
- ...share with them stories like the one above – or like the next one!

This too is a true story. A few years ago, an 8-year-old boy in East Palestine (US) started feeling a little hungry. Naturally, his thoughts turned to... well, McDonald's! The problem was that his parents were asleep, so they couldn't drive him there. No problems. He decided to drive there himself! True, he had never been behind a steering wheel before, but he decided this was but a minor obstacle. A few minutes of watching videos on YouTube taught him all he needed to know. So, he picked up the car keys, asked his 4-year-old sister to come along so he'd have some company, and drove the two kilometres to the nearest fast food outlet.

The employee at the window where he pulled up thought that was a prank – and promptly called the police.... [to see what happened, just click here: <http://tinyurl.com/ms4s6dvs>].

Now, I don't know about you, but if I were the Harvard Admissions Officer, I would accept this kid without any questions – and offer him a full scholarship too!

[Read: Adam Grant 'Hidden Potential' – pp. 225-229]

Nick Michelioudakis (B. Econ., Dip. RSA, MSc [TEFL]) has been active in ELT for many years as a teacher, examiner, presenter and teacher trainer. He has worked for many publishers and examination boards and he has given seminars and workshops in numerous countries.

He has written extensively on Methodology, though he is better known for his 'Psychology and ELT' articles which have appeared in numerous newsletters and magazines.

His areas of interest include Psychology, Student Motivation, Learner Independence, Teaching one-to-one and Humour.

For articles, videoclips or worksheets of his, you can visit his YouTube channel (<https://tinyurl.com/k3scpams>) or his blog (www.michelioudakis.org).



BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: Using Wisdom Stories in Language Teacher Education

AUTHOR: Alan Maley

PUBLISHER Pavilion Publishers, UK
(www.pavpub.com)

‘Stories are universal. There are no human cultures without its stories. They are as old as language itself.’ (Maley, 2024 p1). This is Alan Maley’s introduction to a really entertaining and useful source of reading for developing language skills and for training teachers. *‘Stories can also be a teaching device’* (Ibid) he goes on to say and this book is aimed at TD (teacher development) and CPD (continuing professional development) of teachers of English as a foreign language and teachers learning to teach English on training courses. However, it will also be useful for groups of English language learners at a higher intermediate level and upwards.

Alan Maley, a highly experienced and leading figure in English language teaching, has provided stories, poems and quotations for teachers to use in class or for use in teacher training. It is an unexpected but extraordinarily useful aid for teachers to make their classes more enjoyable and to get students and trainees more involved in the language learning process. It’s also a great personal resource that you will enjoy browsing through at home when you are preparing lessons or relaxing.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One contains eighty-five one-page stories, many traditional and some modern, each one followed by a number of possible discussion prompts – questions about what the text tells you about yourself and how you operate and how, having read the story, you could improve things. The discussion prompts are designed for use in class in pairs or groups.. To give just one example, a story entitled ‘Who am I?’ is followed by three Possible discussion prompts.

- *What are the qualities a good teacher needs? Do you have them?*

- *How can they be developed? List all the ways you can think of. Are some more difficult to develop than others?*
- *Should we be aiming to make our students independent learners so that they no longer need us? (Maley, 2024 P.86)*

Part 2 has more one-page personal anecdotes written by well-known people in the ELT industry including stories by our Teaching Tips friend, Nick Micheliadoukis, already, as we know, a great stimulator of getting students (and teachers!) to think. Stories come from teachers in Brazil, China, Greece, India, the UK, Vietnam and other countries.

The final part of the book includes short poems, many by Alan Maley himself, followed by metaphors as a tool of thinking, offering new ways to see things we are familiar with, quotations (one or two lines) about teaching and education to stimulate discussion and a recommended list of non-specialist books. The overall message is, use books to activate discussion in your teacher training class to get your participants thinking, discussing their experience and learning lessons to help their development as teachers and as language students. A rich and varied resource for English teachers, teacher trainers and students and trainees.

But why is it so important and how can we as trainers make it work? At the beginning of the book Alan Maley describes why this is an important classroom method of teaching and lays out a simple and clear methodology for doing so. He lists the 8 'Rs', words beginning with R to help teachers and learners approach the wisdom stories: Read, Reflect, Relate, Respond, Recommend, Reinforce, Research and Record – 8 verbs, the function of each which is explained in the book. Alan Maley also offers ideas for using the Wisdom stories in the classroom with practical ideas for working in groups or with the whole class and involving the trainees or students actively in the process.

A really practical and absorbing book full of absorbing materials and practical suggestions of how to put them into practice in teacher training and by extension in the English Language Learning classroom.



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