



INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

International Conference

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Edited by Pixel

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Readiness of Education Students in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)

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Abstract

One of the most in demand professions in the Philippines is Teacher Education. However, becoming a professional teacher takes a lot of efforts to pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). This study assessed the readiness of Education students in taking up Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) at EAC-Cavite. This study was a pretest-post-test design utilizing the researcher's self-made questionnaires to assess the readiness of the participants in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers. The paired t-test was used to assess the participants' readiness in taking up LET at the beginning and at the end of the study. Results indicated that the post-test mean ($\mu = 53.042$) is higher than the pretest mean ($\mu = 51.153$) which means that the review program is somehow successful at the end of the study. The significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was observed with the p-value of 0.027 between the mean scores of the pretest ($\mu = 51.53$) and post-test ($\mu = 53.042$). Based on the result, the participants are ready to take the LET. The study recommends to pursue the mentoring and coaching program for the next batches of 4th year students; however, there is a need to modify some procedures and strategies in the program for further improvement and to meet the specific needs of the reviewees.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Licensure Examination for Teachers, Intensive Review Mentoring, Coaching

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Applying CLIL Model in Overseas Language Immersion

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Abstract

The purpose of launching Culture and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model in the overseas immersion program offered by Post-basic Chinese Program at Defense Language Institute (DLI) was to provide culturally based foreign language education to language learners via a culture-integrated immersive learning environment. The CLIL model aimed to engage learners in meaningful real-life tasks and to enhance learners' proficiency in the target language as well as cultural knowledge about the target-language-spoken regions and countries. The primary goal of the CLIL-model based overseas immersion program at a host university in Taiwan was to emphasize on social and cultural studies of the target-language countries and regions in order to enhance the learners' linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Pedagogical strategies employed included implementing content-based immersion curriculum, designing real-life scenario-based learning tasks, and creating a post-immersion cultural research showcase. An online Diagnostic Assessment tool was used to measure participating students' pre- and post-immersion listening and reading proficiency. The results demonstrate that the all 9 students' both listening and reading proficiency was enhanced after completing the 4-week long overseas immersion program. In addition, a post-immersion learning-attitude survey demonstrated the 9 students' accelerated learning motivation, confidence and risk-taking tactics. In conclusion, this program successfully equipped the participating learners with professional language and cross-cultural competence.

Keywords: Overseas immersion, culture and language integration, content-based learning

Design Exercises to Balance Input and Output in K-12 Classroom

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Abstract

Based on Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis, the author discusses how to design exercises/tasks in k-12 classroom to achieve students' proficiency level of the target language and communicative competence in four levels: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The author will explain the process of designing exercises by giving an example of how to teach the topic "sick". That is, how to design a series of exercises that are appropriate for students' language level. The exercises will cover linguistic (lexical, structural, etc.), discourse, and ultimately, real life perspectives of learning and practicing Chinese. Through the illustration, the participants will get to understand how to design graded exercises to promote students' Chinese language acquisition process by taking account 1. teacher's pedagogical tasks 2. students' developmental state and skill level and 3. social contexts of the second-language learning environment. Participants will develop skills on: 1. how to increase students' discourse output (not simply sentential output); 2. how to set up certain lexical and structural complexity as practice condition; 3. how teachers create scaffolding practices; 4. how to prepare practices from mechanical drilling to connecting to real world experience. The author will use PPT to show illustrate: some theoretical basis and then show a detailed process of how-to scaffolding students to achieve their language proficiency and communicative competence.

Keywords: Input, Output, Exercises

Integrating Microsoft Teams into English for Specific Purposes Course for Future Learning: A New Business English course Concept

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Abstract

What is a future scenario of English language teaching at Universities of Applied Sciences like? One of the essential shifts in English language teaching in connection to the general trend of informationalism is emphasizing learners' skills in online navigation, hypermedia analysis and all types of online communication; project-based content with possibilities of situational practice and critical thinking is to be the core of the new curriculum [8]. In addition, this change challenges English teachers to choose new tools to enhance English language learning for specific purposes. The present paper addresses the vital needs of the future English language teaching curriculum in the form of proposal for Business English course concept around project-based communication enabled through exploiting Microsoft Teams as a course platform.

Keywords: English for specific purposes (Business), Project-based communication, Microsoft Teams, Business-challenge simulation

Learning from Mistakes and Detecting Specific Training Needs: A CLIL Grid

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Girona University, Spain²

Abstract

The present study is a part of a broader research about the implementation of CLIL in Italy through ICTs, aimed to widespread this approach among teachers, mainly non-linguistic subject ones of Secondary schools and in particular of Linguistic Liceo, where CLIL is compulsory from the third year. With this aim, according to a review of the literature and the European Directives, which pointed out engaging results for involving non-linguistic subject teachers and encourage their collaboration with foreign language teachers, a guided CLIL intervention has been proposed in two Linguistic Liceo in Cagliari (Italy). The CLIL microteaching of ten volunteer teachers has been monitored by the authors during two hours per teacher of their implementation, through a grid, which will be illustrated. It can be regarded as a tool both for CLIL inexperienced teachers, so as to adapt their lessons to essential elements, according to the literature (such as the length of inputs, the interaction in foreign language and the use of codeswitching, the use of online tools, and so on), and for monitoring and tutoring CLIL implementations, in order to detect specific training needs. Indeed, video or audio, suggested with the same aim, are often not welcomed by teachers during their lessons and our grid tries to answer to the need to register several aspects during their CLIL practice and their results, so as to learn from mistakes with colleagues.

Keywords: CLIL implementation, monitoring grid, teachers' training



Mind-Mapping as a Tool in Teaching ESP/CLIL Presentations

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Abstract

At present, preparing presentations in foreign languages tends to be an integral part of teaching academic skills both in ESP and CLIL environments. One of the most important tools in achieving successful development of ideas in designing a presentation is through mind-mapping techniques. This method based on psychological theory was developed in 1970s by Tony Buzan, and later investigated by other educational specialists, as a powerful tool for enhancing learning process by building natural connections between different concepts and associations. It enables the students to organize the facts, visualize their ideas and find logical connections between various items. In language learning, mind-mapping technique can be used at lower levels, for example when teaching grammar, or presenting basic vocabulary in different ESP fields, such as physics, geometry, materials. However, it may become a powerful tool in making presentations in more complex Content and Language Integrated Learning, as well as teaching English for specific purposes. A non-linear graphical lay-out is used to create a web of relationships around the central concept, idea or problem. It might be employed in collaborative brainstorming, creative problem-solving, project planning and note-taking. As a result, mind-mapping may be also applied to the design of teaching materials to be used within the classroom, but students can use them also individually, for designing projects and making presentations. This can be pursued through designing slides with mind-maps during the e-learning process, which might boost motivation in the second language acquisition. In this study several examples of using mind-maps in ESP and CLIL environment are presented.

Keywords: academic language skills, ESP, CLIL, cognition, brainstorming, e-learning, mind-mapping, motivation, scaffolding

Multi-Relational Latent Lexicology-Semantic “LEXICOLSEM” Analysis Model for Extracting Qura’nic Concept

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Abstract

Al Quran is a divine text which represents the purest and most authentic form of the classical Arabic language. In order to understand the meaning of each verse, a deep knowledge of Arabic linguistic is essential. Therefore, our scholars have made their efforts by engaging themselves in the works of explaining al Quran’s words, interpreting its meanings into Arabic and other languages. Currently, more people are interested in knowing the content of al-Quran, especially for non-Muslim, after 9/11 tragedy. Thus, a flexible model that can represent Qur’anic concept is required for people to understand the content of the Quran. In this research, we propose a Multi-Relational Latent Lexicology-Semantic Analysis Model (LEXICOLSEM) based on a combination of Arabic Semantic and six multiple relations between words, which are synonym, antonym, hypernym, hyponym, holonym and meronym, to precisely extract Qur’anic concept. The existing literatures focus only on very limited relationships between words which could not extract the in-depth concept of Qur’anic without considering the importance Arabic Semantic. Therefore, the objectives of this research are:(1) to analyses and categorize Quranic words according to Arabic Semantic patterns,(2) to propose a new model for extracting Quranic concept using LEXICOLSEM,(3) to investigate semantic relationships between Qura’nic words, and (4) to validate the proposed model with Arabic linguistic, and Qura’nic experts. This research will be conducted qualitatively through content analysis approach a new innovative technological technique. It is expected that the model will come out with a precise analysis for extracting Qur’anic concept. This will be very significant in enhancing the overall Quran’s understanding among the society in Malaysia and Muslim’s world for sustainable society.

Keywords: Multi-Relational, Latent, Lexicology-Semantic, Model Extracting, Qura’ni

Pluriliteracies and LOCIT for CLIL

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Abstract

The paper is meant to describe the potential of the LOCIT (Lesson Observation and Critical incident Technique) model in Continuous Professional Development with particular reference to CLIL and Pluri-literacies, in line with the latest Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages (2019). The main principles of the Pluri-literacies approach promoted by the European Centre of Modern Languages in Graz (ECML) will be described as a new interpretation of CLIL. A study involving a sample of Italian teachers using LOCIT and video-annotation during a CLIL methodological course will be presented and commented as an example of an effective tool for self-reflection, meta-cognition and professional growth.

Keywords: CLIL, CPD, Pluri-literacies, LOCIT

The Heart Speak Project: Stepping out of the CLIL Classroom and Learning Language through Dance...

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Abstract

I created The Heart Speak Project in 2009 after many years of teaching two separate subjects; English and dance, in reply to what I saw ten years ago as something parents desperately wanted for their children in Italian state primary schools; the opportunity to experience English in a bilingual environment. In recent years the introduction of CLIL in classrooms in this country has seen a welcome explosion. This project goes a step further and specifically consists of dance classes conducted in L2. What began as a fun experiment has developed into a fully-blown mission. All Heart Speak sessions are structured using sound principles of dance technique and within a solid framework of English language-learning, combined with a wide variety of music, illustrations and storytelling. Children are encouraged to find a voice, in any 'language' other than the spoken word and in the beginning the emphasis is on listening and comprehension. They are then guided by pictures, story, music and characters with feelings to express what they have absorbed through any means in as many creative ways, gaining confidence and boosting self-esteem in the process. Co-operative learning occurs by way of pairing, small group and whole class activities, as does memory enhancement, co-ordination, spatial awareness and stamina within choreographies that culminate in real performances. By starting with our most basic tool, our body, learners and teachers alike experience how we can always create something both powerful and poignant from nothing. In fact, the Heart Speak Project prides itself on one simple, basic premise. All you need to take part is a body, some space, and (perhaps) some music. The fact the project needs very little resources in order to work is what makes it so viable. In a fast-moving and constantly changing world, increasingly dominated by high-speed technology, the development of an approach to teaching that encourages more connections and a deeper search within our inner world of the self through the creative arts, I believe, will prove vital. This article will outline very briefly the fascinating journey I have experienced in schools to see for myself the value of the arts as a channel for second-language learning, especially in the early years when language acquisition is blossoming at its fastest pace. But as children must absorb and learn slowly, so Heart Speak aims for a more nurturing approach, allowing children in the beginning to 'learn a language' without uttering a single word.

Keywords: CLIL, dance, creative arts, connections, language acquisition, bilingualism

Visual, Tactile and Motor Grammar Learning in the Project-Based Approach

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Abstract

The Project-Based Approach (PBA) to young foreign language learning has been introduced in primary teaching (children aged 5-11) to combine the lexical approach, project work and socialisation, while at the same time supporting the neurology of learning, which is the basis for academic learning. Since children up to 12 years of age cannot yet comprehend abstract thinking, the PBA introduces visual and tactile sentences, stories and grammar, created with flashcards. Visual-motor integration and hand-eye coordination are employed to execute the activities, which enable better procedural thinking and understanding, as well as enhancing imagination and divergent thinking. In order to comprehend the time concept, specific rhythmic and movement games are integrated and tailored to the context covered. Cooperating with peers makes the activities highly motivating (as a change from digital technology), and children enjoy the challenge of being able to understand abstract knowledge (grammar) by the age of 11.

Keywords: lexical approach, project work, socialisation, hand-eye coordination, visual-motor integration, primary school language learning

E-Learning Solution

Distance or Face-to-Face Education for Language Learning: A Case of English

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Abstract

Face-to-face education has a history that spans almost with the existence of humanity while the beginning of distance education goes back to the 18th century. Distance education started with basic correspondence through postal service and continued with the wide variety of tools available through the Internet. However, today, distance education is perceived as an umbrella term because it covers a wide range of concepts such as online learning, e-learning, synchronous and asynchronous learning. However, in Turkey, distance education refers to the education in which higher education institutions are planned and carried out on the basis of information and communication technologies, and the courses are given simultaneously by the instructor without having to be in the same place on the basis of the interaction between the student and the instructor and between the students. Nowadays, distance education application and research centers (DEARC) are responsible for the efficient running of distance education in Turkish Higher Education Institutions. Courses generally known as “common courses” such as Atatürk’s Principles and History of Turkish Revolution, Turkish Language and Foreign Language (e.g., English) are controlled and authorized by DEARCs. Since the number of students enrolled in these courses is thousands, it highly deemed to understand whether distance education differs from face-to-face education in terms of learning language (i.e., English). The purpose of this study is to compare student success in the two areas: distance and face-to-face education. 4308 and 6071 students are enrolled in the English course respectively in the spring term of the academic year 2017-2018 and fall term of the academic year 2018-2019. The number of students enrolled in English course are categorized into distance and face-to-face groups. To achieve the aim of our study, first, the grades of students in their mid-term exam, final exam and resist exam are calculated and then compared. With the support of the trial version of the IBM SPSS Statistics, descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Independent-sample T-Test are used to compare the success of the distance group with the face-to-face one.

Keywords: Distance, Online, English, Face-to-face

Practice and Development of Oral Skills through Self-recordings in EFL

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Abstract

The University of Veracruz considers the educational experiences (EE) of Language 1 and Language 2 as mandatory for all its students. One of these EE is English 1 which is offered in different modalities such as in-person, blended, virtual and autonomous.

The virtual modality has become relevant in recent years due to its flexibility in time and schedules. However, the practice of oral expression in this type of learning environment is often complicated for some students who have difficulties to practice the language synchronously.

Therefore, this research paper aims at describing an intervention project designed to provide asynchronous oral practice opportunities for virtual students. The strategy was carried out through the qualitative action research methodology and consisted of performing self-recordings of different conversations with the basic contents of the course in the target language to improve the pronunciation and fluency of the students.

The strategy resulted in a significant improvement of the participants' oral production as well as a good level of performance in their final exam and a positive opinion about this pedagogical intervention.

Keywords: Self-recording, oral production, pedagogical strategy

Sundanese, Arabic and English Phonology: Introducing a Classless Linguistic Learning

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Abstract

The uniqueness of teaching phonology in English Literature, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati – located in Pasundan, West Java, Indonesia is the integration among sounds of native (Sundanese), daily prayer (Arabic) and foreign (English) as the main courses. These three sound systems are used frequently in daily activities in the campus. As time flies, the method of teaching adapts the condition of the era. The method of teaching gets many changes; beginning from using chalk and blackboard, then board marker and white board, then using laptop, projector and screen then now transformed to the latest version: android. When the lecture provides the materials in android, all students could easily access it anytime, anywhere. By doing so, the students can follow and attend the lecture fully without any reason of being absent or having other activities outside of the class. This teaching of phonology today is aided by today's technology development. Besides having been completed all materials, videos and other multimedia, the lecturer and the students can develop other creative task in order to reach the peak of the learning goals. In other words, it could be said that the subject of this phonology serves the students digitally by using the apps provided at play-store to have the experience of the classless linguistic learning.

Keywords: Sundanese, Arabic, English, Sound System

ICT Based Language Teaching and Learning Approaches

A Cross-Cultural Study of Students' Attitudes towards Digital Language Learning Tools

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Abstract

In this study, we explore students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools in the learning of English in Sweden and Germany. English is the first compulsory foreign language in both countries. In both countries, there is also a new national strategy with proposals for actions to better exploit the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education. The hypothesis of this study is that there will be differences in the treatment of, and attitudes to, digital tools between the students, and between the two countries. Data was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire answered by 155 German and 185 Swedish students, aged 15-16. Our results show that the attitudes towards digital tools for language learning differs between the two countries. While the Swedish students use a variety of tools, there is a lack of access to digital learning tools in Germany. There are stark differences in the students' attitudes towards how they seek value from the learning tools for English. The study shows differences in user behaviour and related appeals and challenges and discusses possible reasons for these differences in a cross-cultural context. The results give implications for the development and enrichment of digital tools in language learning.

Keywords: Student Attitudes, Digital tools, European, Language classroom, Sweden, Germany

A Simple Blueprint for Using Oculus Rift in the Language Learning Classroom

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Abstract

For the past three years, I, as the director of the Cyprus University of Technology's Innovation Centre and a language lecturer and academic member of the Cyprus University of Technology's Language Centre, have been experimenting with various Virtual Reality systems in order to enhance the language learning environment and make the language learning experience more effective. Although, this innovative technology has a lot of potential to transform and revolutionize our 21st century language learning classroom and the learning environment overall, Virtual Reality is surrounded by a complex technology that requires the user to have specialized knowledge of the hardware and the software that he or she is about to use. A lack of such knowledge can turn an exciting VR experience into a frustrating nightmare for the language lecturer. Furthermore, it will also fail to become an effective technological learning tool for the language learner. This lack of knowledge has discouraged many language instructors and instructors overall to adapt VR as a learning tool in their courses [1]. Taking this issue into account, I decided to create a simple manual where all the technical and non-technical issues a lecturer might face when trying to set up and use an Oculus Rift VR system for a language learning class. This paper focuses on the simple errors and pitfalls that can be avoided prior to introducing and using the Oculus Rift VR system in a language learning classroom or course. It could also function as a simple blueprint for training language lecturers in order to use it effectively and stress-free.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, ICT, Teacher Training, Learning Approach, ESP

Advancing Scholarship in Immersion Teaching and Learning through Blogging

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Abstract

In immersion education, teachers concurrently address content, language and literacy development through their students' second language. To do so effectively, requires significant teacher preparation and professional development [7]. Scholars have argued that in addition to native or near-native proficiency in instructional language(s), immersion teaching requires a particular knowledge base and pedagogical skill set [6]. Immersion teacher preparation, therefore, is essential for the continued success and growth in language immersion education. Despite our increased awareness of the importance of providing a balanced instructional focus on form and meaning across the immersion curriculum, immersion teachers' understandings of how to design and implement the most effective and efficient blend remains incomplete [8]. This paper reports on how blogs were used in intense and multifaceted ways to cultivate interconnected aspects of immersion teacher knowledge. Collaborative blogging was used to enable twenty-two Irish immersion teachers to understand the critical connection between language and content and to develop the mandatory linguistic competencies and associated pedagogical practices of immersion. Data were collected from a variety of sources e.g., an extensive online questionnaire, reflections, assignments and focus groups. Findings provide unique insights into the knowledge demands related to designing and implementing content lessons and reveal the challenges for Irish immersion teachers in providing balanced language and content instruction. Findings suggest that the collaborative nature of online interaction was central to developing teachers' linguistic resources in the immersion language and extending and transforming immersion teacher knowledge. Blogging enabled immersion teachers to engage in on-going, in-depth, systematic, and reflective examinations of their teaching practices and cultivated learner autonomy, motivation and success. Collaboration, motivation and challenge in turn promoted self-regulated language learning and advanced scholarship in immersion teaching and learning. This paper will conclude with a discussion on implications for designing meaningful and effective professional development experiences for language immersion teachers through collaborative blogging.

Keywords: immersion, blogging, linguistic competencies, scholarship, form, meaning

Assessing the Capacity of the Machine Interpreting Technologies: The Russian Experience

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Russian Federation¹*

Abstract

The role and efficacy of various machine interpreting technologies are widely discussed nowadays.

These technologies are viewed from both theoretical and practical angles. Technical characteristics, the potential and prospects of their development are considered in research papers. As far as the practical application is concerned, the study of machine interpreting technologies and their use is integrated in the curriculum of higher education institutions. Interpreters-to-be are trained to use machine interpreting technologies in their professional activity. The output of machine interpreters is compared to the output of human interpreters. The specific features of machine interpreters; the ways of their use in practice are the subject of professional analysis of interpreters-to-be. The current paper provides the findings of the research held by the Department of Foreign Languages of Law Institute, RUDN University (Peoples' Friendship University of Russia). The research had the following purposes: first, to examine the fidelity of the samples interpreted from a foreign language into Russian made with the help of machine interpreting technologies and second, to present some aspects of training interpreters-to-be in legal setting. The paper shows the results of the practical experiment.

Keywords: machine interpreting, modern interpreting technologies, experiment findings

Beyond Marginalized Fragmentation: Technology and Innovation in English-Language Learning in Palestinian HEIs

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Abstract

Advanced ICT and digital learning platforms are not just wondering of modern technology. They exist in contexts of real human relationships, mirror prevailing systems of power and control and extend the possibility of transformative educational practice if deployed well. This paper examines the critical need for innovation in teaching and learning English in the exceptionally complex conditions of Palestine. For socio-political reasons, English language learning in Palestine is fraught with challenges and difficulties. The ineffectiveness of traditional lectures, outdated curricula, psychological factors, and teacher centered classrooms are the norm. Academics struggle to communicate and interact with international peers. The exchange of knowledge, skills and culture with others poses huge problems for Palestinian institutions. ICT supported English language teaching can create a new dynamism regarding quality education by encouraging local HEIs to update methodologies, strategies and contents. The occupation in Palestine impacts the movement of people, divides the territory geographically and fragments social relations. This has led to inequitable access to quality education for all students in Palestine. This paper describes the TEFL-ePAL capacity building project funded by the EU. This builds on the results of Emancipatory Action Research on 21st century skills initiated in 2015. This confirmed that teachers felt insufficiently motivated, with inadequate ICT resources and developmental programs. The results accorded with the findings of the policy paper on Teacher Education Improvement Project funded by the World Bank, and developing inclusion for global education [UNESCO, 2005]. Palestinian educators are now striving to use advanced technologies and new trends that focus on principles of personalized-differentiated learning, student-centered instruction, and constructivism. There is the wider issue to adapt technology to facilitate student engagement and participation, and allow students to be more interactive inside the class and have wider opportunities that “can help English language learners further develop their academic language proficiency and confidence in using the language”. The wider objective of this project is to implement initiatives that develop learners’ linguistic capacity, skills, and English language excellence, to bridge educational and socio-political gaps, enhance modernization, internationalization and lifelong learning. To achieve this goal, European and Palestinian partners will share their knowledge, experience and expertise, and will support the process of developing and implementing new curricula to be taught in innovative approaches. Internationalizing the context and contents of Palestinian English-language learning is but one step in a process to circumvent the fragmentation and underdevelopment of Palestinian educational institutions as they try to engage with the wider world as equal players.

Keywords: Technology; TEFL; Innovation; Palestine



Classification of Games to Be Used in Virtual Learning Environments: Some Reflections Based on the EU-Funded GUINEVERE Project

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Abstract

In the context of the EU-funded GUINEVERE Project (Games Used IN Engaging Virtual Environments for Real-time language Education, 2017-2019), research has been undertaken to define different categories of games used in virtual language teaching environments. This paper aims to analyse and categorise selected games for language learning, created and provided for 2D and 3D virtual learning environments and identify their suitability for use in 3D immersive virtual language learning. The field-testing events within GUINEVERE offered sound evidence of the effectiveness of selected games according to levels, categories, needs, and their adaptability to a variety of language learning contexts, as well as different virtual learning platforms such as Second Life, Open Sim, and Minecraft. The models of game-like activities described in this paper show many examples of good practice that indicate how important it is to encourage learners to become actively involved in the learning process [1], [2].

Keywords: Categorising games, Language Learning, Virtual Worlds, Minecraft, Second Life, Open Sim

EFL in the I-City and ii-Learning Community Lab: A Class in a Cyber-Metropolitan City to Address Education Inequality Stemming from Economy and Geography

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to present an idea to address education inequality stemming from economy and geography, especially in English education. Schools on small islands in Japan serve very small numbers of students. While they have advantages in English education because of the small teacher-to-student ratio, they have disadvantages given the limited interaction they have with people of various cultures and with various Englishes to improve academic skills in English and to cultivate the ability to understand and respect others. This is true of other countries as well. Numerous people in large cities come from rural areas. Therefore, a joint class in a cyber-metropolitan city (i-City) created by connecting schools on small islands in several countries could be beneficial, especially by utilizing Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Such a class could help address the problem of educational inequality. We set up an English class as a project with the use of Zoom and large screen displays. Analysis of the answers in the questionnaire conducted after classes showed that students felt stimulated and empowered by each other which led to an increase in their levels of motivation to learn more English and also to learn more about each other's culture and the people themselves. For the sustainability of the English class, we set up the online portal community for teacher's collaboration between islands and islands where teachers in the world can call for a partner of English class. This community fulfils the i-City project that addresses inequality in EFL stemming from economy and geography.

Keywords: Inequality of Education, Compulsory Education, Islands, Secluded Areas, ICT

EFL Teachers' Perception of Internet Assisted Language Teaching

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Abstract

To meet the requirements of the world rapid high-tech growth, it has become imperative to use technology in EFL classrooms to enhance language learning and to equip students with the necessary skills and competences. Although many researchers [1, 2, 3] recommended the use of computer-assisted language learning, little attention has been paid to how teachers perceive internet assisted language teaching (IALT) in EFL classrooms. In fact, without technologically qualified teachers able to integrate IALT in the classroom, the outcome will not improve students' learning skills. The current research aims to investigate Moroccan teachers' perception of and self-efficacy on IALT. A quantitative analysis was conducted, and a questionnaire was designed for the English department teachers at different Moroccan universities. The major finding indicates that most EFL teachers view IALT positively and believe in its role to promote English language learning; however, about one-third of the respondents are unsure about their ability to use it adequately in the classroom.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), internet Assisted language Teaching (IALT), Teachers' English perception, self-efficacy

From CALL to MALL in the Context of the Internet of Things

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Abstract

Over the years, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has provided teachers with various tools to be used in the educational process, thus leading to major changes in the learning and teaching methods. Lately, the emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) technologies has brought new insights into the use of various devices, such as computers, mobile devices, wearable sensors, etc. in educational settings. Taking into account that mobile devices (i.e., smartphones, tablets, laptops) have become near-ubiquitous, the education stakeholders have noticed the potential of these mobile devices for improving teaching and learning. Nowadays, there are various free, readily available tools for using mobile devices in the education field, some of them being geared towards language learning. In order to better understand the way language learning classes could benefit from the use of mobile technology, we focus on providing an overview of the mobile technology, its use and advantages for the language learning environments. However, at the same time, the continuous development of technology poses complex challenges for teachers, some of them being revealed in this presentation. We believe that the findings highlighted in this presentation can have important implications both for foreign language teachers as well as for teacher trainers, for the improvement of the teaching process.

Keywords: Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Internet of Things (IoT), mobile technology/applications

ICT Learning Advantages for English Language Learners

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Abstract

Innovation should now be viewed as a necessary and positive change. Human activity whether it is industry, business or education needs for constant change and innovation to be sustainable. The general perception has been that they would increase levels of educational attainment by introducing changes in teaching and learning processes and strategies, adapting them to the needs of the individual student (Sunkel, 2006).

Everything that is new today is getting obsolete tomorrow and becoming an old trend. Due to these changes, the demand for modern information and communication technologies is increasing day by day. In particular, the demand for these technologies is growing in the education system (in our case teaching foreign languages as a second language), and the interest of the humanity to information and communication technologies in the education system is increasing. In the period of intensive development of information technology, especially computer, the relevance of this topic is the comparison of traditional textbooks with new types of textbooks of the new generation, which are displayed on the computer monitor.

The development of mankind depends on inventions created in its history. The more significant the invention, the more it affects the development of society. During a relatively short period of development of oral based, written based and printed based didactic texts civilization has reached such horizons that are incomparable with achievements in dozens, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of years of mankind development. Each of these didactic texts at the same time with its unique opportunities to reflect the thoughts of a person has a number of shortcomings too.

Now we have the opportunity to use the new big invention in the field of information technology – a computer, E-mail, Internet, etc. Thanks to computer technology, which provides with enormous speed the transfer of huge volumes of information from one point of the globe to any other, today's civilized humanity enters a new, information era. Research shows that the text displayed on computer monitor is neither a written speech nor an oral means of communication but it involves interactive features of all types of didactic texts. It embraces both the features of oral means of communication and a written speech.

According to the results of conducted interviews toward learning English using available online resources were very positive. Moreover, this allowed them to work independently, without the teacher being involved. This result has been reinforced by the online use of the English language course that is useful for language learning and independent online learning resources as an additional component of the English language course.

Keywords: IT, computer, paradigmatic and syntagmatic nature of the text, written, oral speech and computer-based didactic texts

Inclusive Foreign Language Learning through Digital Tools

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Abstract

Learning foreign languages, in particular English nowadays is a necessity for individuals as our world citizens. Although a wide variety of languages spoken in Europe, and around 7000 in the world, only a few of these are studied in schools as foreign languages due to the role they have in our daily professional, cultural, social and political life. “English is unquestionably the main foreign language learnt in Europe” as stated in Eurydice Key-Data-on-Teaching-Languages (2017). Acquiring a new language can be somehow difficult for any student, further more for students with peculiar learning difficulties. The students, who can be classified as Special or Different needs, cannot be set apart in a world pushed towards change by constant varying emigrational streams. A global education in a multilingual world requires a quest for the most effective and “different” methodologies to overcome the learning gap each student, facing a particular learning situation, can go through. In this sense, digital instruments offer a variety of methodological approaches, which can help them to acquire a proper level of competence in foreign language. According to this, I have been experiencing 10 years of teaching English as a foreign language, using mainly digital tools to create personalized contents in order to break away from the one-size-fits-all models and meeting the student’s “unique” special needs.

Keywords: ICT Based Language Teaching, Learning Approaches, Language Learning, International Mobility

Learning Languages via Telecollaboration: “Variation on the Theme”

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Abstract

The Teletandem method of learning languages is a kind of telecollaboration of two native speakers, agreed to help each other in reciprocal learning of their mother tongues. In the course of their tandem interaction they constantly rotate their functions of teacher and learner. Their collaboration is autonomous, they are equal and equally interested in learning their partner’s language (principles of reciprocity and parity of languages). MSU (Russia) and VCU (USA) adapted the Teletandem method to enhance their students’ mandatory foreign language learning (English and Russian, accordingly). Tandem partners communicate via Internet video services. A free independent tandem is transformed into an institutional one (i.e., included into the students’ curricula as an elective learning activity). The article discusses the results obtained from students’ feedback, suggesting possible objective and subjective causes of advantages and limitations of the Teletandem project and also some ideas how to increase the efficacy of the method.

Keywords: Teletandem, telecollaboration, online learning, distance learning

Mobile Applications in the Russian Language Class: Revisions and Reflections

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Abstract

The use of mobile technologies becomes a common part of the Second Language Curriculum and learning-teaching activities. It can facilitate the teaching process, increase general motivation and attention of students, expand their contact with the language outwards the classroom among other advantages. Based on the authors' teaching experience, interviews with colleagues and students, the paper revises the potential of the popular applications for Russian Language Acquisition, in the non-Russian speaking environment.

The article has been created with the support of the system Motivační system UJP (the Motivation System of The Institute of Applied Language Studies, University of West Bohemia).

Keywords: ICT in Language Learning, m-learning, MALL, Russian Language Learning and Teaching

New Opportunities for Young People to Fight Unemployment: The “Digital Competences for New Jobs” Project

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Abstract

The article is based on the European DC4JOBS project (under the Erasmus + programme – 2017-1-DE04-KA205-015273), which joins the efforts of the European Union to promote digital literacy among young people and fight skills mismatches and young unemployment. The project introduces its interactive and dynamic platform for young people with fewer opportunities in order to up-grade, up-skill or re-skill their digital competences to meet the needs of the labour market. The paper presents a summary of the project’s objectives, activities and outputs. It also gives insights into its six learning modules and into an ICT training course aimed at facilitating young people’s transition from school to work as well as re-skilling and up-skilling their digital skills and career guidance. The modules enable young people to improve information and skills in information and data literacy, digital communication, digital content creation, safety, soft skills and problem solving. The paper centres on the analysis of the feedback received from participants in the training course and aims at exploring their views on the content of the course and the project’s platform. The feedback shows clear strengths of the DC4JOBS training course and platform which were appreciated by participants as opportunities to exercise their independence in learning and to use state-of-the-art technology.

Keywords: ICT training course, digital literacy, communication, young people, jobs

Effects of Using the Google Search Engine, the Trello Learning Management System (TLMS), and Classroom Form-Focused Instruction on Developing EFL Learners' Grammatical Knowledge

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of employing the Google Search Engine, the Trello Learning Management System, and classroom form-focused instruction on developing EFL learners' knowledge of simple past and present perfect tenses. The participants consisted of 45 pre-intermediate level female language learners within the age range of 19-35, randomly assigned to three experimental groups. Before the treatment, a PET and a teacher-made grammar pre-test were administered to the three groups to homogenize them in terms of language proficiency and knowledge of the target tenses. In the course of treatment, the first group (EXI) received form-focused instruction; the second group (EXII) searched for the target tenses in the related texts in Google and performed the required activities to learn the tenses, and the third group (EXIII) worked with the uploaded grammar lessons and tips in the Trello forum. At the end of the experiment, a post-test similar to the pre-test was administered to all the three groups to check the effectiveness of the treatment. The findings indicated that, although all the three groups had improved their knowledge of simple past and present perfect tenses, the form-focused group (EXI) had significantly outperformed the other two groups on the post-test, thus raising some doubt regarding the efficiency of using technology in teaching L2 grammar.

Keywords: FLL, Form-focused Instruction, Google, Grammar, LMS, Trello

The Success and Challenges of ICT Utilization in Armenia

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Abstract

The paper touches upon the implementation of ICT tools in Armenian education centers, in particular, the utilization of Google Classroom in language courses at the Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), the challenges that have been identified during this experiment.

The global digitization influenced all spheres of our life. And nowadays, education in Armenia has been gradually tailored due to this significant impact.

Armenia has recently stepped into the era of digital education. Yet in 2015 ARMAZEG report (“State of The Art Regarding E-Learning and ICT for Lifelong Learning”) stated that “E-learning as an official learning form cannot be considered as conventional in Armenia.” However, the issues specified in the very report have been considered, and certain steps have been taken in this respect. Thus, the ASPU after Kh. Abovyan was one of the pioneers in the country to acknowledge the necessity to embrace the digital turn by implementing Google Classroom initially as a pilot program (2015-2016) and then as a mandatory component of all courses.

The contemporary European approach of student mobility and its major requirements of language and ICT competencies present substantial challenges for a vast number of students in Armenia.

The added value of Google Classroom is in the flexible management and pedagogical design of the education process. The platform turned to be quite efficient for language education, which had been manifested by many professionals too. The platform which was initially used for full-time education, recently, namely from the fall semester of 2018, was launched for distance education and extension department and in general, turned to be applicable and efficient.

However, the following issues have been identified:

- 1. Lack of relevant infrastructure and lack of ICT literacy.*
- 2. Insufficient information mining and analytical skills at the students’ end.*
- 3. Legal issues in terms of copyright and plagiarism.*

We think that exploration of the best practices of the European countries in terms of digital literacy initiatives will further help to fix and overcome the specified issues.

Keywords: ICT, education, e-learning, digitization, Google Classroom

Transforming the ICT Learning Environment for English Language Learners

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Abstract

English Language Learners (ELLs) enter online or hybrid classrooms endeavouring to unlock the mysteries of learning English. These students are in search of a quality learning experience leading to English language acquisition defined by new opportunities that will transform their lives and open doors for future accomplishments. In order to meet their needs, a variety of educational strategies and considerations are required that extend beyond traditional expectations. Reading, writing, speaking and comprehension expanded to connect the classroom with the global learning environment is essential. A key component of these endeavours is developing and utilizing state of the art technology and coursework, while incorporating outstanding resources and methods to positively impact educators and students.

Keywords: Environment, ICT, Online, Hybrid, Transformational

Using Modern Technology to Improve English Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The advance of modern technology has unprecedentedly changed every aspect of our life, including education. Governments from all over the world have attached much importance to technology implementation in education, investing substantial funds in education to improve information technology infrastructure and systems and support increased access to educational technology. It has become an irresistible trend to integrate modern technology in education. Teachers at different teaching levels are demanded to be competent in using modern technology in teaching [1]. However, research has indicated that classroom technology integration is not satisfactory [2], [3]. This paper analyses the theoretical aspects of using modern technology in English education, the shortcomings of the traditional teaching methods, and the advantages of using modern technology in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The previous studies published in journals and conference proceedings included in Web of Science and SCOPUS, regarding the benefits of using modern technology for English education, are discussed as references for integrating modern technology in teaching for English teachers. The aim of this paper is to provide English teachers and educators with a better understanding of the scientific aspects and the benefits of using modern technology in English education and encourage English teachers and educators to integrate modern technology in teaching practice. In addition, this paper also addresses the factors affecting the effective integration of modern technology in educational settings, giving educational policy-makers enlightenment as to the effective integration of modern technology in education.

Keywords: English; technology; teaching; learning

Language and Identity

Breaking the “Cultural Bubble” through the Immersive Model

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Abstract

This paper is based on an observation conducted on a population of around 700+ US students (yearly) in some study abroad programs based in Florence, mainly Kent State University Florence Center (KSUF). KSUF is the program abroad of Kent State University whose central campus is in Kent, Ohio. Observing KSUF students for over a decade has allowed to conduct some reflections about their way of reacting when they enter the host culture and activate immersive strategies. Approximately 70% of these students have never travelled outside the United States. Some have not experienced significant cultural differences and most have not studied Italian prior to their arrival in Italy. The official language of the program is English, and students share apartments and courses for the entire semester. The result is that students tend to reproduce their original framework of reference in a sort of “cultural bubble” which functions as a transitional setting. In order to help students, abandon the “bubble” KSUF has developed a model based on the idea of immersion focused on the city of Florence as academic, cultural and social context. The immersive model is centered on two different perspectives: using the city as a learning framework and connecting students to local institutions following their request to act as volunteers. This paper describes the model used by KSUF to bridge the inside of the program to the outside, guiding students towards adaptation using the language as a tool to penetrate the new context.

Keywords: cultural bubble, immersive model, volunteer, language

Ethnosemiometric Parameterization of Diachronic Core of the Concept TRUTH and its Profiles In the British Axioconceptosphere

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Abstract

The article deals with the diachronic core of the value concept TRUTH, which is a mental construct, a model with a complex network of conceptual and motivational features demonstrating a variety of primary semantic features of the designated concepts firstly for a person of pagan consciousness and later for a Christian one. These signs are detected by ethnosemiometric parameterization of the internal form of the name of the concept which holds their primary origins. This objectifies the concept in the value dimension and reflects the collective archetype representation of the British about the concept. Also, the reconstruction of cognitive mechanisms of transfer of its diachronic conceptual features from one sphere to another (established order – faith) is carried out. Therefore, the value is always the center of the concept, since the concept is a “bundle of culture”, which is based on a value and significance principle. There are grounds to assert that the axioconceptosphere of each ethnic group is ontological and epistemological synergetic-evolutionary entity, in which their archetypal signs are transformed as historically and evolutionarily, as culturally, socially, spiritually, individually. Depending on the type of values that the concept TRUTH objectifies, some of its features become central, while others are marginalized. To verify this assumption, we propose the 2-stage algorithm of ethnosemiometric parameterization of the value concept TRUTH: the first stage – the analysis of Indo-European and Proto Germanic forms and meanings of its name – the lexeme truth with their semantic transitions, and the second stage – analysis of etymological and semantic profiles of the lexeme truth with the words trust, belief, faith, which have the meaning of faith in the English language. We have made a preliminary conclusion that in the long search of an answer to “What is the truth?” the researchers assert that mentalizing of this concept in consciousness is determined by the peculiarity of national worldview and axioconceptosphere where primary senses of the value concept TRUTH were formed in ontogenesis as its diachronic core. The conceptual and content features are best realized within the framework of separate models of the world: scientific, naive, religious.

Keywords: concept Truth, axioconceptosphere, ethnosemiometry, diachronic core

Graduate and International Students Explore Language and Identity within a Win-Win Learning Partnership

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Abstract

Our paper documents three years of learning partnerships that involve two groups of participants: 1) international students enrolled in the preparatory year and 2) language graduate students enrolled in an Intercultural Studies Master programme at the University of Ploiesti. The first have an overall objective of obtaining the B2 level in Romanian for the certification exam allowing admission for any academic programme in Romania; the second are to explore identity and otherness while developing a cultural project focused on supporting the international students' language acquisition and integration in their new community. For both groups there is an opportunity to meet learning needs in meaningful contexts and to offer support to one another in order to attain their respective academic goals. The design of this approach originates in identifying solutions to the various learning problems of the two groups, namely the cultural shock and the effort to build the progression from scratch to B2 in only two semesters of intensive study (group 1) and the overcoming of cultural stereotypes beyond the knowledge sanctioned in the classic exams (group 2). The project-based design relies on team teaching and the community of practice among faculty members who work with the two groups and who jointly organize learning situations as part of the academic curriculum and in outdoors and extracurricular activities. On the other hand, the graduate students in group 2 are invited to further extend their autonomy as they connect via social media to discuss, plan and develop their project and make decisions about teaming with international students in group 1. After three years of monitoring, the results of the learning partnership are constantly win-win: 80% of the international students pass their exams; the language graduates develop good projects and are very satisfied with the outcomes; last but not least real friendships develop among the two groups and more innovative faculty members revise their methodology.

Keywords: cultural dialogue, student-centred approach, learning partnership, contextualized language acquisition

uugot.it: Solving Challenges of Integration with the Power of TV

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Abstract

uugot.it is solving the obstacles of language learning by giving people an innovative approach to access television. Students often find language courses dull as textbooks and learning videos are based on curated and not authentic content. At the same time course participants are being taught the standard language and cultural as well as societal peculiarities cannot be covered within language courses which leaves them with a stereotypical picture and often old-fashioned view of the country and its society. But language learning is more than just learning a language – it's about understanding the culture, it's about tearing down prejudices, and TV is the best source for that as it's a reflection of society. In fact, uugot.it is able to solve societal challenges through the medium of television. Highly acclaimed by experts uugot.it solves obstacles of integration of migrants with a low threshold in a fun and easy way: Instead of attending integration courses people watch TV and thereby learn about the values and traditions of the host society. uugot.it thereby overcomes language barriers: uugot.it is a smartphone/tablet application that streams TV-broadcasts and equips them with interactive intralingual subtitles. If the user comes across a word he or she does not understand, the user can click on it and a contextual translation of the word is being displayed. Each word clicked is stored in the user's personal word catalog and can be retrieved later for learning purposes. uugot.it is designed as well for autodidacts as well as for language courses. Educational institutions like Wiener Volkshochschulen, VHS Linz or bfi OÖ and universities like UNAM (MX), UFRP (BR) or UNRC (AR) already implemented uugot.it in their language courses or as a complementary source. In a meta-study on "Language Learning with Subtitles", the University of Vienna highlighted this approach as an essential tool for learning languages. Even today, 82% of those who learn English as a foreign language are also learning by means of TV and are using television as a medium of support. uugot.it optimizes this process.

Keywords: TV, interactive subtitles, integration, authentic content, broadcasts

Language Learning to Support International Mobility

Foreign Language of Work: New Challenges for Serbian as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Being an alien in a country where one lives and works is a common phenomenon at the beginning of the 21st century. Apart from English as the language of global communication, to learn and work in a foreign language becomes a necessity. It is a phenomenon that has long been happening in most countries of the world. Based on data from the European Commission, 57 million Europeans reside in countries in which they were not born. The need for knowledge and learning of the language of the host country, different from the mother tongue, is one of the requirements for successful inclusion in the working world or for a shorter, longer or lasting residency. It should be standardized and matched with measurable requirements and offered under the language support program for work needs.

In Serbia, as a result of migrant movements from east to west, migration of highly qualified population of Serbia towards developed countries of Europe and the world, demographic crisis, but also European and other integration and work needs, labor mobility and the ability to function in a universal or domestic work environment is a clear need, and it is becoming an increasingly common reality. Within working frameworks, communication can take place in different languages, depending on the needs of employers, in English as lingua franca, or in some other foreign language, but also in Serbian as a foreign language of the environment. Serbian is used as the language of the environment, as well as a language of efficient integration into the working and other domains of everyday life.

Different models of language support are defined in the paper and encourage the need to create the Serbian Framework as the language of the environment for the needs of work.

Keywords: Language for work, Serbian L2, Serbian for work, framework of language support

Language Skills Development

Creativity of the Polish Students in Foreign Language Learning: The Benefits of English in the Process of Acquisition of German

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Abstract

The authors present the results of their research done among the Polish students of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics who learn English as a first foreign language in addition to German as a second foreign language. The authors focus on the use of creativity in the process of the effective learning of foreign languages. The creative aspect of language use that can be observed in the foreign language acquisition is frequently limited to occasional playful activities with language and its structures. As the result, however, such an activity can support the process of acquisition as such, as could be recognized, for example, on the level of the pronunciation, the grammatical structures or the lexical structures. The point of departure here could be the confrontation between two parallel acquired foreign languages used by the students. The study shows through many examples e.g. how English can help and facilitate learning of German, how it can be an opportunity to enrich the knowledge of German, to succeed in learning it well, to use German grammar structures and vocabulary in appropriate contexts, to improve memorizing of taught material during German classes as well as be a source for positive transfer into German.

Keywords: creativity, similarities, benefits, English, German

Enhancing Chinese Literacy Skills through Drama Activities: A Case Study of Mandarin Chinese for Beginners' Course at the University of Nottingham

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Abstract

For many English-speaking learners studying Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language in the UK – due to its logographic Character writing system, which is very different from the Roman alphabetic system of English writing – it is more challenging to develop Chinese literacy skills. In order to address this challenge, I integrate drama activities in the curriculum of the course Mandarin for Beginners at the University of Nottingham by asking learners to complete a drama project. This assignment includes novel reading and discussion, as well as play scripts writing and performing. This paper discusses how to integrate drama activities in a language curriculum by sharing and reflecting my practice of implementing a drama project in the academic year 2018-19. Details such as specific scaffolding steps, the benefits of adopting a project-based learning approach are being discussed. My research follows a teacher action research paradigm, which according to O'Brien consists the cycle of diagnosing (identifying a problem), action planning (considering alternative courses of action), taking action (selecting a course of action), evaluating (studying the consequences of an action) and specifying learning (identifying general findings). Research data is drawn from a wide range of sources: class observations, students' reflective journals, student survey results and individual written feedback, as well as student writing samples all form part of the overall analysis.

Keywords: Chinese literacy skills, drama activities, project-based learning, action research

E-Sports in the ESL Classroom: Can they Help Students Overcome Language Transfer Issues?

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Abstract

The Government of the Canary Islands has recently passed a law to by which English is introduced in the curriculum of all the public university degrees in the autonomous region. This has evidenced even more the struggle Spanish students usually go through when expressing themselves in English. It is widely acknowledged that a learner's first language (L1) has a considerable influence on both the acquisition and use of the second language (L2) vocabulary. Yet there is not a very clear and definite relation between language transfer and the learner's age. However, adults seem to be more susceptible to transfer than children; whereas an adult learner will always have his/her first language structures internalized and then try to apply them in the L2, children are seldom conscious of using different languages. In this paper, we will focus on the use of e-Sports to help higher-education students overcome one of the most common struggles for Spanish learners of English: language transfer issues, particularly in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course.

Keywords: e-Sports, English for Specific Purposes, language transfer, methodology

How to Stage a Theatrical Production of a Spanish Play with 0 Prior Experience and Very Minimal Budget

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Abstract

In the Fall of 2018, I staged a production of Spanish playwrights Enrique García Álvarez and Celso Lucio's one-act farce "El palco del Real" in its original language on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for a cost of \$495. Prior to this, I had never acted, directed, stage-designed, costume-designed, or done anything of the sort. The intention of this paper and poster presentation is to describe the process as it unfolded to me, including its roadblocks and its happy accidents, in the hopes that anyone with a similar desire to bring theatre in Spanish (or in any foreign language, for that matter) to their college or university may see that in spite of the challenges that can crop up, it can be done and you don't have to be a professional actor or director to do it.

Keywords: Theatre, Comedy, Spanish, Amateur, Stage, Foreign Language

Teaching and Learning Arabic Vocabulary

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Abstract

Within the frame of structural approach to language teaching, research has mainly focused on how to teach and learn language rules and systems and little attention has traditionally been paid to vocabulary teaching and learning. The general idea about vocabulary has been that words are just words, implying that learning new vocabulary is just a matter of mnemonic exercise. However, during the last 30/40 years, vocabulary learning and teaching has emerged as a newly recognized aspect of language acquisition, with vocabulary learning strategies as one of the main research topics. Research in this field has so far mainly focused on English vocabulary acquisition, with a few single or comparative studies involving European languages and even fewer about non-European languages. The almost total lack of research about Arabic language acquisition for non-native speakers is striking, especially when considering the importance of morphology and lexicography within the Arabic tradition. This paper is a contribution to the field from the Arabic language acquisition perspective. The topic is introduced by a brief outline of the field's central definitions and theoretical framework and an attempt is made to put them into a learning and teaching Arabic vocabulary perspective. An ongoing research project is then presented, involving two beginners' courses for non-native speakers (Arabic 1 for beginners and Arabic 2) taught at Dalarna University, Arabic Department. The frequency ranges of the words taught in the courses are first outlined, and an account of the way(s) chosen to measure the students' vocabulary proficiency follows. The spring term results for the vocabulary proficiency tests are subsequently presented, together with a discussion on how more focused vocabulary teaching, including training vocabulary learning and learning strategies, can be implemented next term in order to improve these results.

Keywords: Arabic, vocabulary, strategies, language learning, foreign language acquisition

The Use of ICTs to Enhance Students' Speaking Skills

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Abstract

Speaking is part of the language skills which is important for language learners to be developed. It is a crucial part of foreign language learning and teaching. In education, improving the speaking skills of students has always been a challenge. In the 21st century several new technologies are being introduced to teach speaking skills in the classroom. The use of technology has become an important part of the language learning process to achieve successful and better teaching outcomes. This paper focuses on the role of using new technologies in enhancing students' oral performance. It highlights the effectiveness and the positive outcomes of using ICTs to improve speaking skills which is primordial in English language learning. The paper emphasizes the tremendous role of ICTs in improving students' oral performance in and out of class. According to Means (1994), "the primary motivation for teachers to use technology in their classrooms is the belief that the technology will support superior forms of learning" [1]. Thus, teachers need to be aware of the merits of the effective use of ICTs. And, therefore, consideration needs to be given to develop ICT-based activities in oral classes, which enable students to learn and experience at the same time.

Keywords: ICTs, use, enhancing speaking skills, outcomes

Understanding Language Acquisition Based on Research in Language Learning Styles

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Abstract

The paper presents a current research project on language learning styles or preferences, as they are called nowadays, focusing on students of a technical university in Brno, the Czech Republic. The project aims at identifying students' English learning styles in order to innovate and adapt English lessons to match them. The main goal of the project is to understand how students of a technical university acquire language, taking into consideration their primary orientation on technical subjects. The research will use Ehrman and Leaver Questionnaire (2003) which identifies language learning styles based on psychological and personality types and traits. The research consists of two phases. The first stage will use the Ehrman and Leaver questionnaire whose results will also help to identify, apart from the learning styles, students who show a strong preference for some style. These students will be given a second questionnaire where they will be asked how difficult it would be for them to change it. This second stage of the research is aimed to identify how rigid and flexible the students are in their learning preferences, which the author of the research believes to be crucial for understanding learning styles in general. It is obvious that flexible students do not have problems adapting to teaching styles that do not match their learning styles. On the contrary, students with rigid preferences have many more difficulties in language acquisition if the styles do not match. The author's 14-year-long teaching experience suggests that there is a high percentage of students with rigid preferences among the technical students. The research will help to understand common features technical students share and the results will be reflected in an innovation of language education at the Department of Languages. Thus, the project also hopes to raise students' motivation in language learning and willingness to cooperate.

Keywords: language learning styles, rigidity, flexibility, technical students

Using TED Talks for Updating and Customizing the Learning Experience

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Abstract

The article contains the analysis of current trends in education that should be taken into account when teaching ESP students. In particular, the author underlines the necessity to develop students' discursive competence as well as their ability to present the results of their research in a foreign language. The existing learning materials in form of textbooks often become outdated rather quickly. What is more, the majority of them often overlook developing students' public speaking skills. For these ends, on-line TED conferences can be employed. In the course of working with TED talks students learn to analyse authentic video clips and make up their own presentations and lectures in accordance with the speech patterns they have learned. They develop the skill of impromptu speaking skills on a variety of professional subjects they major in. The work with TED talks in a classroom, though, requires a thorough preparation and a careful planning on behalf of the teacher. Successful integration of talks into an ESP course, on the other hand, will provide students with a readily available updates in their areas of expertise as well as entertaining and motivational learning material.

Keywords: Public speaking skills, ESP classes, Ted Talks, impromptu speech

World Languages in High School: The Freedom to Discover the World (A Practical Example in the French Class)

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Abstract

There is a general unanimity in the need to make learners demonstrate an intercultural communicative competence. Interculturality as a pedagogical approach aims to enable learners to get out of a unique vision of culture and to accept cultural plurality. In some way, the cultural proposals of the school programs often limit the real possibilities of language classes. Why not use the new language as a tool to discover and understand the world around us without further borders? Learning a new language includes the knowledge of the language system as a tool to communicate, but also the ability to express people's cultural thoughts and beliefs. Therefore, it is also a way to understand how the speakers of the target language see the world and to open our minds. Planning the language lessons without limitations of cultural contents allows the students to discover, compare, analyse and reflect on a large variety of topics from a wider cultural context, to make connections between previous and new knowledge, to choose topics for research and at the same time, provides teachers and students with multiple possibilities for practice, assessment and specially for differentiation. The practical example proposed in this paper aims to demonstrate how a simple proverb in the French class ("La plume est plus forte que l'épée.") becomes the conductive thread among multiple topics related to Art, Literature, History and real news, offers learning experiences in writing, listening, speaking and reading, interconnects contents of other subjects and increases substantially the student's motivation. As a result, the vocabulary, the topics, the opportunities of reflection, comparison and interaction as well as the activities carried out by the students covering all areas of the language, become much more enriching and meaningful than limiting the contents to a series of topics. World languages represent the perfect tool to make connections and, linking the classes to real life makes students take an active part in learning that goes far beyond the language itself, offering them a better understanding of the world.

Keywords: cultural plurality, borders, perceptions, differentiation

Language for Specific Purposes

Approaching Learner Differences with Learner-Centred Teaching in Higher Education

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Abstract

Learner differences are expressions of individual students' personal characteristics and their social contact groups. Biographical and personal differences include age, gender, ethnicity, physical qualities, nationality, languages, education, and the like, whereas further differences stem from a person's involvement in and identification with social and cultural communities. On the one hand, such differences may challenge teachers who may feel overwhelmed by very heterogeneous groups; on the other hand, they can provide a rich source of interactive potential in the tertiary foreign language classroom. This contribution reviews selected literature on classifying learner differences and revisits learner-centred teaching as a means of accommodating diverse needs of learners. It is the goal of this review to sensitize teachers to the individuality of their learners and approach the global foreign language classroom from the perspective of learner-centred teaching. A crucial construct to that end is learner interest, which teachers should capture with their materials, activities, and courses. Particularly in higher-education English for specific purposes (ESP) settings, course designs require a focus on learners' individual and professional interests. This contribution, therefore, further reviews good practice of learner-centred teaching to share techniques applied in higher-education language classrooms. Such a learner orientation in educating future professionals may eventually yield mutual gains in teaching, research, and industry for both the educational institution and its students. Well-educated, professionally literate, and self-confident graduates and alumni in global businesses will seek networking opportunities with their home universities and thus promote cross-cultural and transnational cooperation in classrooms, joint projects, and internships.

Keywords: ESP, learner differences, learner-centred teaching, interest, context, higher education

Evaluation of an ESP Coursebook Quality: Design-Based Research

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Abstract

This contribution deals with the research methodology and results of one phase of design-based research (hereinafter referred to as DBR) of an ESP coursebook – evaluation of the coursebook by means of a questionnaire survey. The ESP coursebook was designed for the course English for Information Technology taught at Brno University of Technology in the Czech Republic. The main objective of DBR is to establish a link between the design of the coursebook and its iterative testing for the purpose of its evaluation and re-design so that it would be the most appropriate teaching and learning tool for the target group of students. Besides the optimisation of the coursebook quality by means of the production of substantive design principles (characteristics of the coursebook design itself) and procedural design principles (characteristics of the coursebook design approach), the research results should lead to the verification and development of the existing theories of the ESP learning materials development. The first part of this contribution focuses on research methodology, the coursebook and samples characteristics and development of a research tool. The second part provides data analysis and interpretation. Besides the recommendations concerning the coursebook redesign, the research findings reveal similarities and differences in teachers' and students' opinions about the ESP coursebook quality.

Keywords: ESP coursebook, design-based research, iteration, evaluation criteria checklist, questionnaire survey, design principles

Language for Work – Tools for Professional Development

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Abstract

Europe is home to many millions of adults – migrants (including refugees) and ethnic minorities – whose first language is different to the majority language of the country where they live. The ability of these adults to secure employment and then progress at work is essential both to their wellbeing and, more broadly, to social stability and economic development across Europe. The recent arrival of large numbers of refugees in Europe makes the issue of integration all the more urgent. Key to this is support for these adults to learn the majority language, particularly in relation to work. (Vermeulen, H., 2002) Labour market inclusion is a primary goal of integration policy. For millions of adult migrants in Europe, learning the language of the country of residence (L2) is a key enabler of access to and progression within the labour market. The Language for Work Network (LfW) aims to promote and develop this important area of linguistic integration. Created through a project funded by the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, this international network brings together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and others from the field of vocational learning and skills. Through its website and programme of activities, LfW shares research, policy and practice across Europe, supporting the full range of practitioners engaged in this field. Language for Work – Tools for professional development uses the European learning network created by the ECML project, Language for Work – Developing migrants' language competences at work (2012-15), to make these approaches accessible to practitioners involved in work-related majority language learning. It creates a professional development framework to help teachers implement these new approaches. To support refugee integration, the project also develops a 'quick guide' with key underlying principles and a selection of effective approaches (including non-formal and informal approaches) to support work-related majority language learning. The project's 'Quick guide' tool offers an at-a-glance overview of the key principles and approaches used to deliver successful work-related linguistic integration of adult migrants, including refugees. (Vermeulen, H., 2002)

Keywords: foreign language, professional development, international network

Main Characteristics of Establishing and Maintaining Rapport in an ESP Classroom

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Abstract

The target goal of the current paper is to thoroughly analyse and introduce the main characteristics of establishing and maintaining rapport in the ESP classroom. The term “rapport” refers to the good working relationship in a classroom: either teacher-student or student-student. It is not primarily technique-driven, but grows naturally when people like working with each other and mostly get on together. On the part of the teacher it basically embraces a number of popular techniques, such as being welcoming, encouraging and approachable, treating each learner as an individual, concentrating on positive features of learner character, expressing empathy, not faking happiness and avoiding sarcasm. However, the ESP context implies and entails another set of personal and professional factors which should be taken into close consideration by the teacher as they may directly influence the quality of the rapport in the ESP classroom. It is a well-known fact that ESP teaching is extremely varied, and ESP work involves much more than teaching. We see the ESP teacher as having key roles of a course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher, evaluator, facilitator and consultant. These roles are difficult to adopt for any teacher, especially an inexperienced one and in many cultures, these might seem alien to traditional views of the role of the teacher. However, ESP teachers should be well-aware of some factors which can considerably improve or worsen the quality of rapport in their own lessons. Thus, the role of the ESP teacher in building and maintaining positive working relationship should be implemented considerately and skilfully with ESP learners who have a clear and specific set of purposes in language learning.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, rapport, teacher’s role, technique

On the Use of Authentic Materials in a Legal English Class

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Abstract

The use of textbooks and/or authentic materials in an ESP class has been debated over decades. In the context of learning languages at the tertiary level, the use of authentic materials related to students' disciplinary areas does not need any justification, the benefits of their use, in terms of professional development and motivation, are recognized by theoreticians and practitioners. In the digitized global world, the overwhelming amount, availability and accessibility of authentic materials (e-files, audio and visual sources, etc.) and students' overall exposure to the information sources in English, which dominates in most areas of academic studies, highlight the necessity to raise the effectiveness of authentic materials in language acquisition progress in general, as well as what regards specific learning environments (classroom, blended, self-studies). The present paper has been triggered by the results of the on-line questionnaire offered to the teachers of language for specific purposes who teach at several universities of Lithuania. The research incorporates the analysis of the collected 'field data' (63 respondents) regarding LSP teachers' attitudes and preferences in terms of textbooks and other teaching aids, including authentic materials, the most common practices in using authentic materials, their advantages and drawbacks, as well as the authors' conclusions on the effective ways of the use of authentic materials in a legal English class, specifically while applying the task-based approach to language teaching. Although the presented courses and activities are mostly based on the authentic materials from the legal area of knowledge (laws and legal acts, lawyers' and judges' opinions, academic articles on legal research etc.), the recommendations on the use of authentic materials in LSP classes and other learning environments at universities go beyond studying law and law-related disciplines; they will be of use to teachers of languages for other professional areas, course developers and material designers.

Keywords: Authentic materials, languages for specific purposes, effectiveness, learning environment, course development, material design

Project-Based Learning (PBL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL): A Perfect Alliance to Foster Employability

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Abstract

Although the relevance of PBL to enhance both cognitive and social aspects in the learning process is unanimously stated in the literature, it has been hardly used in language teaching. Recent methods such as Communicative Language Teaching have failed, as Task-Based Learning did too, because they lack practice time or autonomy, among other problems. Consequently, there is a clear process of demotivation that results in students not achieving their learning goals and being reluctant to carry on with their learning. This is the case in Spain where students start learning English already in primary education and carry on until they finish their secondary education. However, when starting at university, a high number cannot manage in English and what is worse, they hate learning it because of the evident unsuccessful outcome. The objective of this paper is to present a case in our institution in which the use of PBL has significantly improved Engineering students' learning goals: they must develop a compulsory interdisciplinary project in which all the subjects are involved and share 25% of their assessment. The challenge has been to develop a perfect coordination among all the teachers to establish the project goal together so that students can understand the rationale behind it and what is expected from them (the design of a prototype robotic arm). Concerning EFL, engineering degrees have Technical English in their curriculum and its role in the project has been to simulate the presentation of their innovation project in a real robotic international fair. In order to do that, they had to create their company, make a deep analysis on the international fair, create the promotional material and make an oral presentation. In other words, they learned how to search for specific information in English, read technical material, acquired the required vocabulary to describe their project, and used their oral skills to present it to a simulated audience of potential investors. The outcomes were very successful: firstly, students improved their language skills significantly; and secondly, they were extremely motivated as they could see the actual application of their learning.

Keywords: PBL, students' motivation, skills improvement, employability

Students as Experts and the End Result of SSR Performance in an ESP Course for Psychology

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Abstract

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) during the English for Specific Purposes course (ESP) is a suitable activity for the students in Psychology as it improves their reading skills, vocabulary and critical thinking. Moreover, setting up a digital space for our students provides easy access to resources, but also to other learners, creating a networked community in which the level of informality makes them feel comfortable. As such, organising analogue and digital projects as follow-up activities of SSR contribute to building a database of specialized terminology for the ESP under focus and to the formation of a learning community that lasts over time and may provide important resources for the language course. This study analyses the students' performance and feedback at the end of one academic year, giving us insight into our students' engagement in reading activities (stative activity) and follow-up activities (dynamic projects) in which they contribute with information extracted from the texts read during SSR.

Keywords: sustained silent reading, ESP course, specialised terms

Teaching English for Tourism: Fostering the Development of Field-Specific Skills. A Case Study

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Abstract

The present study is part of a larger research on the impact of ESP acquisition among graduate students in Tourism at Babeş-Bolyai University. It reports the findings of a quantitative analysis carried out during the academic year 2018-2019 whereby the author seeks to identify a correlation between the field-specific language preparation (English for Tourism) of the graduate students in question and the rate of their employability in the travel trade or related (sub)fields. Additionally, the study provides information on both the professional and personal impact that the use of English for work and everyday life have had on the respondents.

Keywords: ESP, hard skills, soft skills, language instruction, tertiary education

Teaching the Specific Language of Italian Lyric Texts to Future Opera Singers

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Abstract

Future opera singers at conservatories in the Czech Republic study Italian as a foreign language but they also need to understand completely lyric texts related to the scores they interpret; on that account their language education should include translation activities. This paper includes a theoretical part, which analyses linguistic aspects that influence translation related to the specific language of lyric texts, and a practical part based on research conducted with students at the Conservatory of Pilsen, which aims to show all the concrete aspects of such a specific translation. The linguistic analysis is based on the corpus of lyric texts commonly used during the training of future opera singers. The research is based on texts actually interpreted in the current school year. The aim of the research is to provide a comparison of the linguistic knowledge obtained as a benefit of modern teaching methods and the specific knowledge required for the translation of Italian lyric texts. The research questions to be answered are: Do modern teaching methods help the translation process? In what way and to what degree? Finally, the research is extended by a comparison of the declared and performed language knowledge of the participants. The future application of the research presented is the modification of teaching methods used in the language education of future opera singers.

Keywords: Translation, Italian, Language education, Opera singers, Lyric texts

Language Teacher Training

Developmental Stages of Good Mentors: Comparison between Novice and Experienced Mentors

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Abstract

The present study focuses on mentor teachers' awareness before and after supervisory experiences of mentees' teacher portfolios for professional development. In the context of developing mentors' communication skills and reviewing strategies through the course of a three-day intensive workshop, six consecutive meetings were conducted. The data of the discussions and reports among 11 mentors (three novice mentors, four experienced mentors, and four supervisory mentors) were recorded and analysed by quantitative content analyses method using the Tiny Text-Mining tool (TTM). In collected textual data, 1,484 different types of words were found during mentors' reflections on their consultations with their mentees. The analysis revealed the following three points: (1) distinctive words appeared on the reports of the experienced mentors who could explicitly reflect on and explain their difficulties and satisfaction as mentors; (2) novice mentors often confessed their worries and difficulties about their mentoring styles and communication skills; (3) regardless of their mentoring experiences, several mentors often mentioned mentees' progress during teaching portfolio creation and consulted the mentoring process to discover the mentees' educational philosophy.

Keywords: Faculty learning, Interdisciplinary collaboration, Quantitative research, Professional development

Integrating Self-Assessment in Higher Education for Developing Master's Students' Self-Reflection and Autonomy in Learning

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Abstract

“Assessment for learning” has recently been at the center of instructors’ attention in educational contexts since it is not only goal-oriented, but it also helps students and instructors regulate their learning and teaching according to course objectives and students’ progress. Among the various types of assessment for learning practices, self-assessment is a practical technique that enables students to reflect on their learning, develop practical learning strategies, and discover useful ways of compensating their learning problems, which turns them into independent and responsible lifelong learners. The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of self-assessment in masters’ level French Language-Teaching seminars in order to investigate whether this type of assessment promotes improvements in students’ practical knowledge and skills as well as self-reflection and autonomy. Two groups of French Teaching Master’s students at the University of Tehran in Iran participated in this research over a period of two semesters. During the first semester, both groups were assessed by the instructor. During the second semester, however, the first group (control group) continued to be assessed by the instructor whereas in the second group (experimental group), students were responsible for assessing their learning throughout the semester. The overall students’ performance in the two seminars was compared and analysed at the end of both semesters, along with a questionnaire distributed among the experimental group students at the end of the second semester in order to examine whether self-assessment enhanced students’ learning, and whether it helped them develop self-reflection and critical thinking regarding their learning and learning strategies. Results indicated significant improvement in the experimental group students’ performance, and made them more conscious about their learning strategies, more responsible for their learning, and more independent and autonomous in their educational career.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Higher education, Self-Reflection, Autonomy, Iran

The Importance of Implementing Soft Skills into Business English Classes

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Abstract

The demand in developing teaching skills and soft skills has become “just-in-time” necessity. In this article we would like to signify importance of soft skills in professional development of teachers and business learners. It is revealed that leadership, risk taking, competitive spirit, great communication skills, creativity, personal and professional skills are common for both teachers and business people. Our experience at the Republican Graduate School of Business and Management shows that soft skills are more effective in teaching Business English, where a teacher serves as a role-model. Listeners of Republican Graduate school on the example of their companies make research, which includes teamwork, leadership skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, work ethic, adaptability and flexibility, and interpersonal skills. As a result of this experience the specialists from different business sectors get equipped for future business activities.

In order to improve learners’ knowledge teachers should themselves acquire soft skills or 21 century skills in order to cultivate these in learners and provide the society with skilled professionals. Our research is based on the experience and employs descriptive and analytical-comparative methods.

Keywords: teaching skills, business skills, soft skills, experience

Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: Transnational Practices in the Saudi TESOL Teacher Education Landscape

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Abstract

In the age of mobility – a mobility of knowledge, languages, cultures and practices – hundreds of female TESOL teachers from Asian, African, American, and Arab neighbouring countries and Europe are now teaching English language in Saudi higher education institutions. These teachers often join Saudi public and private schools with different language pedagogies and ideologies as well as various forms of capital (e.g., symbolic, economic, linguistics). Conceptually, these transnational teachers have created a learning environment in which transnational discourses have been deeply penetrated into the TESOL policy, curricula, and classroom pedagogical practices. Through a 14-week ethnographic study, this paper critically examines the ways in which a number of 15 female pre-service teachers or student-teachers from the Department of Applied Linguistics at Union University (a pseudonym) negotiate, enact and justify their classroom pedagogical practices during their practicum course at public schools, where curricula, students, and teachers are all local (i.e., Saudis). Throughout the course of this study, the portfolios are utilized to document the empirical record of student-teacher's attitudes, teaching strategies, material design and management, and course expectations. Classroom observations, semi-structured interviews coupled with analysis of weekly experiential journals, bi-weekly reports, e-portfolios and reflective essays are utilized to further explore the underlying assumptions behind their classroom pedagogical practices. Before the analysis, this part of the study argues that due to the conflicting discourses between the transnational TESOL curricula these students had received at their university and the national English language teaching (ELT) curricula they are required to teach at public school, they have been put at multiple crossroads, including tensions, contradictions, paradoxes, ambivalent positions and other state of mind. It also highlights several inconsistencies between the student teachers' performance and the real-life teaching practice and models. Based on this paper a chapter will close with pedagogical implications for TESOL teacher education in the transnational world and some critical questions for the TESOL teacher education community.

Keywords: TESOL, ELT, Transnational

Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Teaching and Learning

A Systematic Review and Annotated Bibliography of Second Language Learning Formative Assessment: An Overview

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Abstract

This paper is a summative overview of a Systematic Review and a descriptive and evaluative Annotated Bibliography (AB) of Second Language (L2) Formative Assessment (FA) covering the period from the very first published work on the subject in 2000 to 2017. The aim of the SR was to systematically research and examine work published over the 17-year period mentioned, describe and analyse the data and derive some conclusions. The SR synthesized different studies which were related to L2 Learning FA. From an initial search resulting in 2284 sources, only 108 met the predefined inclusion/exclusion criteria set. These studies were then systematically reviewed. The qualitative design findings gave insights into information such as the types of FA in L2 Learning research publications, the type of study designs, research tools, methods used in the studies, the research location, the level of educational institutions the research was carried out, the languages and the language skills researched and the role of technology in L2 FA. The SR was complemented and reinforced by an AB of L2 FA. The content of the AB was arranged chronologically from 2000 to 2017. The AB followed the same source research and inclusion/exclusion criteria processes. The AB consisted of a series of bibliographical entries and citations. According to the findings of this research, there is no AB in L2 FA for this particular period. This AB aimed to fill in this gap. The combination of the SR and the AB aimed to obtain more unbiased conclusions and give a more rounded overview of the research conducted during the designated period of time. It also aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of the research. The findings also identified some aspects of L2 FA of concern that could serve as topics for future research.

Keywords: systematic review, annotated bibliography, formative assessment, second/foreign language

Articulating Learning Objectives and Outcomes in the ICT English Language Classroom

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Abstract

The timeless continuum of learning often expands beyond specific and concrete building blocks of expectations for measurable outcomes and accomplishments. Language learning is rather a pipeline with essential connections welded together to transport knowledge and information that will serve the learner well and lead to pathways of success and achievement [1]. How do we measure these endeavours and ensure that we are achieving valuable outcomes and objectives, particularly in the online language integrated classroom? This study will explore the strong commitment to student success through educational experiences and the measurable attainment of specific outcomes and objectives. The spectrum of educational activities in the ICT classroom lends itself well to the cognitive development and personal success of students asking essential questions and incorporating engaging activities [2]. This study is divided into three sections that include planning and preparation for lessons in the online classroom, design and incorporation of specific course and learning objectives, and assessment of learning outcomes utilizing in-depth analysis models. Each one of these areas will be discussed as it relates to language learning and ICT focusing on priorities and student success. Further exploration and accompanying methodology explore the details and implications of these emerging expectations and are addressed by supporting materials, data, and recommendations focusing on the challenges of diverging language pathways as we articulate objectives and outcomes of online education in the English language virtual classroom.

Keywords: Articulating, Objectives, ICT, Outcomes, Language

Developing Digital Literacy in Online Grammar Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The rise of network use as a global phenomenon entices language teachers and learners to modify acquisition patterns towards an increasingly learner centered approach, with grammar learning partly taking place outside the classroom. In this paper we present a digital literacy project which investigates the potential of audio-visual learning and teaching (L&T) resources for the acquisition of grammatical knowledge and understanding in mother tongue and foreign language education. We focus on evaluation literacy, the cognitive and social skills that determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use evaluative information in ways that contribute to achieving learning goals (adapted from Rogers, Kelly & McCoy 2019). To achieve this aim, we first administered two questionnaires to 28 linguists and EFL teachers to establish and adapt existing evaluation criteria for the selection of grammar resources. Second, we applied these evaluation criteria to 345 existing online audio-visual grammar videos. This resulted in illustrations of evaluation literacy, as well as ready-to-use information on such resources for both learners and teachers. This information includes learner level for both native and non-native speakers, previous knowledge required to benefit from the resources (e.g. terminology), and accessibility. Third, we developed concrete examples of learning activities which blend online instruction with face-to-face communication. This approach is expected to help learners generalize through use rather than memorizing, and thereby transform them from passive listeners to active learners. The concrete examples of L&T will furthermore function as a framework for further discussion about digital pedagogy i.e. ways of approaching digital L&T tools from a critical pedagogical perspective.

Keywords: learner-centred approaches, digital literacy, grammar.

Developing Web-Based Testing Software for LSP. The PUSTULKA Project

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Abstract

PUSTULKA is web-based testing software for foreign languages. It was originally developed to cater for the needs of ESP teachers. PUSTULKA emerged as there was no freely available, or inexpensive, software that would be ideal. The imperfections consisted mainly in the lack of cloze/gapped tests or let teachers create databases whose content they could use at any institution they teach.

With PUSTULKA we went even further, and the hidden agenda of the Project was to form a collaborative innovation network (COIN) where teachers learn from one another and develop their digital competence and which goes beyond the confines of one institution. Within the COIN teachers would contribute content and share their exercises with the other contributors so that they all benefit from the growing database of exercises, simplifying their own and one another's work and could use the content anywhere they run their courses.

PUSTULKA was created by a two-person team composed of a programmer, and an ESP teacher. PUSTULKA uses MySQL database, is hosted on Linux server (Debian), and has been written in .NET Core. It works in all browsers and on all devices. Students do not need to create accounts but do the tests on: pustulka.edu.pl.

PUSTULKA is flexible software with which teachers can create various types of exercises that comprise cloze texts, multiple choice, drop-down list, checkbox list, matching, listening, true/false exercises as well as short and long answers. A unique feature of PUSTULKA is that it saves all students' answers automatically and eliminates the risk of losing their work when the internet or equipment fail. PUSTULKA works on a website, so it does not require teachers to download it, to invest in a server or a web domain, and is not confined to the premises of one university.

Keywords: online language testing, computer-based language testing, English for Specific Purposes, ESP, collaboration, COIN, collaborative innovation network, innovation, web-based language testing, communities of practice.

Effective Learning Material for English (L2) Assessed in Terms of Brain Activation Using Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS)

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Abstract

In this study, an effective teaching method for Japanese students in tertiary English (L2) classroom lessons was assessed in terms of brain activation (BA) using functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS). Participants performed a word recognition task, listening task, oral task, and shadowing task in English (L2). Four factors presumably associated with cortical activation, the level of target words (higher/lower), task (listening/speaking/shadowing), and learner's English proficiency based on their TOEIC score (higher proficiency group/lower proficiency group, HG/LG) were investigated. The suggestions for effective teaching/learning are to choose an appropriate word level, to focus the target words or sentence with blanks, and to design the tasks depending on individual WM capacities.

Keywords: Effective learning method, task, proficiency level, brain activation, fNIRS

Online Learning

Sign Language Learning Material for Undergraduate Students: Brazilian Sign Language Glossary

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Abstract

In 2005, the teaching of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) became compulsory in Brazilian public universities for undergraduate courses that include a teacher preparation program (Federal Decree 5626). After the decree, the Brazilian universities had to adapt to the new reality. During the process of implementing Libras disciplines, a number of educational and pedagogical challenges emerged. One of the challenges was to provide easily accessible video material for the students since Libras is a visuospatial language. This project arose with the purpose of facing this challenge. The main objective of the project is the implementation of an online searchable video glossary of Libras – the Brazilian Sign Language Glossary. To facilitate the learning of the language the signs are searchable in two ways: by sign name or by semantic category. Currently, the glossary is composed of about 2,000 signs. The Brazilian Sign Language Glossary is publicly available on the Internet (<http://libras.fee.unicamp.br/>) and provides a meaningful platform for those who may teach deaf students after graduation and furthermore can be useful for research in the area of deafness.

Keywords: Sign Language, Libras, Glossary, Material, E-Learning

Teaching Teacher Students through Innovative Teaching Approaches in Online Learning

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Abstract

Innovative teaching and new teaching and learning approaches are needed in order to prepare the language teachers of tomorrow. As an alternative to asynchronous online instruction, teacher students have teacher-led online seminars every week. In addition to these seminars, several different ICT-tools and language teaching and learning approaches are used in order to prepare the teacher students for a digital future. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how digital resources and online teaching are used both for teaching university students, but also as examples of pedagogical approaches that these teacher students can use in school. The net-based courses on English language learning and teaching for future primary, secondary or upper secondary school teachers are structured in a similar way around online seminar. An online learning platform with course information and assignments is used for communication with students outside of the seminars. What makes these courses different from other net-based courses are that the additional tools that are used are tools that can be used in language teaching with younger pupils as well. For example, multi-modal resources such as video and audio recordings are used both for giving feedback and as an alternative to written assignments. In addition, free, readily available online tools for flipped classroom are used both for teaching the course, but also as examples of what our teacher students can use them for with their own pupils. Through collaborative writing projects where shared documents are used, university teachers gain a better insight in how students work together. In the online seminars, the teacher students discuss how these pedagogical approaches can be used in primary, secondary or upper secondary school. The aim is to let the teacher students experience an innovative approach to language learning in addition to reading about it.

Keywords: net-based learning, language teaching, online learning, teacher training, ICT

Technologies for Teaching and Learning Intercultural Competence and Interlanguage Pragmatics in L2 Italian. Experiences of Implementing an Online Language Course on Moodle Platform

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Abstract

Pragmatic competence is one of the main components of communicative ability in a second language. Recently, a great deal of research has been done regarding the acquisition and teaching of pragmatics of Italian as a foreign language. However, resources and teaching materials dealing with this aspect of the Italian language are still very scarce. This article describes the experiences in creating an Italian online language course, focusing on the tools available through the Moodle e-learning platform, selected to enhance the learning of this ability in language learners. Finally, the study indicates some future directions for the development of an effective language teaching online.

Keywords: online Italian language course, Moodle, interactive language learning, intercultural pragmatic competence

Language Learning in Primary and Middle School

Gamification in a Homo Zappiens Class: Levels and Rewards to Improve Students' Behaviour and Increase their Involvement

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Abstract

This paper looks into how an online-like game that is integrated during the English class can improve the students' behaviour and their involvement in learning. The target group of this research consists of 18 students, third graders (9-10-year-old), from Olga Gudynn International School from Voluntari, Romania. The children possess a very good level of English, but they have some behavioural problems and a lack of involvement in the class. The research was conducted during the school year 2018-2019. In order to address the class issues – behaviour and lack of involvement – a game was developed by drawing inspiration from the online games design. The game makes use of two categories of buckets and drops that “measure” good behavior and involvement. During the English class, the teacher draws a bucket on the board and, if the students properly behave for 10 minutes, a drop is drawn in the bucket. The students also have a paper bucket and five paper drops. At the end of an English class, five drops in the bucket on the board bring a paper drop in the paper bucket. When the students manage five paper drops in the paper bucket, they pass a level and receive an award. During the school year, the students' behaviour and involvement was observed with grids. All the students managed to improve their behaviour and 90% of the students were more involved during the English class. In order to explore the students' perception about the bucket-and-drops-game, a group interview was applied. Results show children were unanimously enthusiastic about it. There is also the case of two students who confessed that, because of this game, they find the English class funnier and they love English. Communication competence has been measured with a progress test and observation grids, that highlight an A2 level overall.

Keywords: behaviour, involvement, games, rewards

Learning English through Drama – A Partnership Project

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Abstract

A practical experience in Creating a Partnership with the local Middle school, students were exposed to a variety of Drama workshops to enhance their vocabulary. As a result, they were presented with 8 plays over a period of 8 weeks, with over 5000 key words and sentences in English written by the British school of Orvieto. The students took each play and performed all plays at the local theatre in Orvieto, Italy. A total of 200 students performed. The Project was a huge success. The Partnership was developed through Teacher training sessions. The teachers observed lessons and carried out workshops as part of their teaching and learning process. The Students were exposed to a variety of scripts written for them, around the theme of Sherlock Holmes. They were asked to learn all scripts to ensure a deep understanding of all vocabulary, sentence structures and tenses. The middle school students rehearsed the pronunciation of words through recordings and practice with native mother tongue English speakers. The Plays became a huge part of the school community, students made constant references throughout the 8 weeks. Songs were incorporated throughout the 8 weeks to also enhance the learning of English. The process was extremely successful. The enthusiasm of the whole school community prompted a performance at Teatro Mancinelli, as well as the creation of a film trailer. The Partnership project is an example of excellent practice between The British school of Orvieto and the local Scuola Media in the town. It is an innovative project which needs to be celebrated and shared.

Keywords: School Partnership, Drama, learning English, creative teaching, Theatre, confidence



Let's Get Motivated!! Teaching Languages in Changing Scenarios

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Abstract

Over the past 15-20 years the world has changed immensely and if we look back, we realise that today the world is a completely different place than it was then. Changes have occurred in all aspects of our lives, from the society we live in to the family, from the way we communicate with each other on an individual basis to mass communication, from the characteristics of youth then and now, from mobility to employability. Needless to say, all these changes have left a huge impact not simply on the composition of our classrooms but, above all, on the teaching and learning processes and the everyday demands and realities language teachers have to face in class. There has been a change in what “learning a language” implies, moving from simply learning the grammatical/linguistic notions to learning how to use the language in everyday life, to learning a language as a life skill for integration purposes. All this has enormous implications on the changing role, or rather roles, that the teacher of languages plays within a scenario where technology has literally taken over. At the same time students long for personal contact. As a consequence, more than ever before, the teacher has become essential in class, not to impart knowledge but to create a stimulating environment in which the students feel empowered and motivated to learn a relevant and practical language that addresses their needs.

Keywords: motivation; changing scenarios; language teaching; empowerment

School Box Office, Season 2: The Past and the Future of a Project within a Project to Teach Middle School Students

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Abstract

Our paper is a “sequel” to a previously presented research in the 11th edition of the Innovation in Language Learning International Conference. The teaching approach that started in 2017 with two grade 5 classes focuses on contextualized meaningful learning that evolve around films for youngsters. The latter engage students in authentic communication while scaffolding their A2.1 level. During the school year 2018-2019, the project has been revisited for two new grade 5 classes and progressed with grade 6 for the previous two groups. The methodology has been preserved to a large extent: a group of teachers share a project design around a film that is a context and pretext for communication; the project is discussed and amended according to the various groups characteristics (rural disadvantaged school and average urban school); learning resources are developed and applied in order to support students design their own exploratory projects; students work on their projects and present them. In the second year of implementation more autonomy has been given to the students who select their project topic under the umbrella of the respective film theme as well as the product/artifact they are to develop and present after a month’s work. At the same time, the progression of the language acquisition within the A2 level expanded on the time axis: according to the Romanian curriculum for grade 6, past and future references determine students to make plans and also to do some storytelling. In order to contextualize these abstract grammar matters we used films like Alpha or The Martian that dilate the time frame from the beginning of the human civilization to some future space adventure. Our conclusion is that, beyond the glamour of “Season 1 applause”, “the producers” should periodically review and adapt their project to the “market” dynamics and decide if/ how the show could go on.

Keywords: project work, film-based methodology, student-centered approach

Quality and Innovation in Language Teaching and Learning

A Digital Storytelling Laboratory to Foster Second Language Acquisition in Higher Education: Students' Perspectives and Reflections

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Abstract

Today's technology-suffused society is inevitably changing and transforming the learning process as the role of technology in our lives is progressively increasing, thus making 21st Century teachers and educators face the challenge of both learning and understanding how to best integrate technology into the classroom and equipping students with the skills necessary to live and work in our digitized world. These skills, described by the Framework for 21st Century Learning are especially critical thinking, learning motivation, information literacy, media literacy, and language competence, considered as key competences for lifelong learning.

In particular, as "The Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages" has recently stated, nowadays the lack of language competences represents a barrier in increasing productivity and collaboration across borders. As a consequence, to attain contemporary educational objectives, second language pedagogy needs to be integrated by the use of today's digital tools that should not be considered as replacement of the traditional teaching method but as powerful, active support in fostering Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Specifically, Digital Storytelling (DST) is progressively emerging as an innovative instructional tool to enhance SLA together with students' motivation, collaboration, reflection, and academic achievement. In fact, by combining traditional storytelling with digital multimedia, DST perfectly embodies the constructionist idea of learning by making, thus making students active participants in their learning process instead of passive agents as in face-to-face learning. Although various researches describe the use of DST in primary and secondary language education, to the best of our knowledge, very few studies have been conducted on the use of Digital Storytelling in Higher Education, especially in Italy where DST is a major innovation. As a consequence, a Digital Storytelling Laboratory has been enacted at "L'Orientale" University of Naples starting March 2019. It was addressed to 24 Bachelor's students in the second year of their course in English Language and Linguistics. Firstly, the students have been introduced in the field – almost completely new to them – and then involved in a Digital Storytelling Process that required the assimilation and completion of goal-oriented tasks, finally resulting in the production of a series of Digital Stories. This paper aims at exploring the impact of DST on academic development, learning motivation and collaboration of University students learning English as a second language. To that end, quantitative data were collected describing students' perspectives and reflections about the effectiveness of DST in learning.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Second Language Acquisition, English as a Second Language, Multi-Word Expressions, Innovative Learning Environments, Higher Education.

Applying the “Project Method” in Second Language (L2) Teaching. A Multidimensional Interaction with Authentic Input in Autonomous Modes

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Abstract

Learning through the Project Method is somehow like an individual traveller walking in an unknown city following her/his own map. It is not even a method neither a philosophy. It offers merely a structure on which to build your knowledge and experience, a way to work, not a ready-made recipe for learning. It is only an “approach” in the essential meaning of this word: coming closer to the learning objective, with a strong will to learn, to conquer the unknown city you always dreamt of traveling to. In this sense, it represents a student-centered pedagogy, and, at the same time, it embraces multidimensional interaction with authentic input of any kind, as vital component of second language acquisition processes.

This paper presents the Project Method, as an authenticity and autonomy - centered approach and as an experiential learning tool within L2 acquisition context. It describes the implementation stages of this method, and analyses the way each project is prepared, designed, realized, presented and evaluated. The role of the teacher as facilitator, as well as the skills developed throughout the project, are epigrammatically presented. In order to illustrate, as clearly as possible, the terms and conditions for integrating Project Method in second language settings, this paper is enriched with specific examples from the Hellenic Culture Centre (HCC), a leading educational organization, where the Project Method is deployed as a beneficial approach in teaching Greek as L2. HCC has applied hands-on projects to insert creativity into the L2 curriculum.

Keywords: project method, second language acquisition, authenticity, autonomy, experiential learning, student-centred

Applying the SPEAKING Model to Classes of Immigrants for Residence Permit in Italian Formal School for Adults

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Abstract

This paper, by taking into consideration the experience of the author as teacher and researcher, deals with the challenges in an illiterate and uneducated adults class at CPIA (formal school for adults) where immigrants have to learn Italian language as a second language in a short term course in order to obtain a certificate for residence permit in Italy. The typical class at CPIA is strongly heterogeneous in terms of literateness and vehicular language. Most of them are considered vulnerable population. Other critical aspects are the limited number of hours (200) defined by the Italian Education System (IES) and the difficulty in attending the lessons even if they are provided with e-learning tools, due to long working hours, distance from the school and lack of devices. Finally, teachers are not always adequately prepared. To cope with these difficulties, a lesson plan is proposed by considering some basic theoretical principles: speaking model to try and increase the percentage of success in achieving the level A2 according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference).

Keywords: Language education for adult migrants, Italian L2, Second Language Acquisition, Migration and Language Testing

Changes in Intensity of Primary and Secondary Motivation in a Senior Language Learning Programme

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Abstract

Seniors as a target group of our research are considered to be specific in terms of needs and wants influencing their decision to take on the role of a learner. Our aim is to analyse their approaches to learning a foreign language. The study focuses on four factors that influence differences between approaches of senior learners to English language learning. These are: lecturer's personality, age-related social aspects, processes and techniques in language teaching and the personality of the senior learner. A questionnaire of 25 closed response items was designed and respondents chose a point on the scale from strongly agree, partly agree, partly disagree to strongly disagree which best represented their view. On the one hand the results we obtained showed a very positive approach of seniors to language learning. On the other hand, senior learners have very low self-confidence negatively influencing their progress in language learning. Due to the size of the sample, our results are informative but can be considered a challenge for further research in the field of senior education. The study is the outcome of the research project KEGA 003UMB-4/2018 Language education of senior learners.

Keywords: specifics of language education, approaches to learning in senior age, factors of change in approaches to learning

Cooperative Learning as an Engaging Strategy among Compulsory Education Students

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Abstract

Research agrees on the need to help students develop relevant skills and abilities, such as intellectual curiosity [1] (Baehr, 2013); openness to the world [2] (Conole, 2013); autonomy and responsibility [3] (Boud, 2005); creativity [4] (Cropley, 1995); critical thinking [5] (Strohm and Baukus, 1995); and teamwork [6] (Kyprianidou, Demetriadis, Tsiatsos, and Pombortsis, 2012). More specifically, cooperative learning (CL) is widely accepted as an effective educational practice [7] (e.g. Peterson and Miller, 2004; [8] Kirschner, Pass, and Kirschner, 2009, among others). In this context, the educational opportunities of CL are recognised by the scientific community [9] (Gillies, 2014), whose practice is encouraged in the 21st century classroom. This work explores the impact of cooperative learning on a heterogeneous group of 100 Spanish compulsory-education students (aged 8-14) who participated in a project-based implementation of a specific CL technique (Lesson Study) on the frame of DICO+ (2018-1-FR01-KA201-047904). The study research questions focused mainly on students' answers to a questionnaire (pre- and post-) regarding their opinion on their preferred disciplines for CL. By applying quantitative research method students' views were analysed. Findings revealed that students prefer Maths over any other subject (among which first and second languages were included). Overall, data provide evidence that the adoption of CL practices enhances teamwork, leadership skills and critical thinking. Our discussion draws on the idea that teachers should implement CL more frequently in line with the results of this research, as the importance of structuring cooperative work benefits learning [11] (Buchs, 2017).

Keywords: Cooperative Learning, DICO+, Quantitative Analysis

Digital Language Teaching and Learning: A Case Study

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Abstract

Digital learning is reshaping education in unprecedented ways. However, as far as language learning is concerned, the burden of innovation has mostly relied on the good will of individual teachers who have decided – sometimes in perfect isolation – to take advantage of the new technologies made available. Although institutions have increasingly offered their support so that language teachers could incorporate new technologies into their syllabi in a more organic way, e.g., by making use of either open-source or proprietary platforms installed in the institution’s systems, the “interaction” between the “container” and the “content” has been left to the individual teacher’s expertise until recently. Language textbook publishers have previously been reluctant to join the digitization of the learning experience, providing only a limited set of online tools (e.g., flashcards and tests) linked to their own textbooks, and waited until numbers would justify their complete involvement in the business. Some of them have now made up for their delay or absence, offering language teachers an integrated set of tools capable of relieving them from the most demanding and time-consuming tasks. This paper draws on the English classes taught to BA students in Economics in the past two years, and analyses the fully-fledged platform provided by the publisher of the adopted textbook, investigating its research-based design, ready-to-go activities and customizable content, and evaluating its impact on the development of digital learning and teaching skills.

Keywords: Digital learning, online learning, language learning platform, language learning innovation, technology-enhanced language teaching and learning, CLIL

Digital Storytelling as Support for Teaching Greek as FL/L2 to Adolescents. A Teacher Action Research Project

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Abstract

Teaching Greek as a Foreign Language can be a challenge for every educator. Students usually lose motivation because they cannot bother to practice all skills, especially writing. This was observed from six foreign language students' academic performance which included tests on essay writing, grammar and vocabulary exercises as well as daily feedback received from the instructor. This Teacher Action Research Project aimed to investigate whether six Secondary School students who attended a Private Secondary School in Cyprus, benefited from the use of new technologies for the creation of digital stories and whether working in pairs to write their stories motivated and encouraged their experience. Data were collected during the three weeks of using Microsoft Sway, Microsoft's latest presentation tool as well as word clouds. These technologies were employed because students needed to use vocabulary they had not used before along with correct use of sentence structure. The new features that Sway provides in comparison with PowerPoint Presentation, can be used to create interactive presentations and content that enables students to write their stories in a more fun and engaging way. From the observations, semi-structured in pair interviews and follow-up questionnaires, two emergent themes were the main findings. Theme one was referring to the benefits of utilizing a technology approach to create digital stories for enhancing the learning of foreign language and theme two pointed out how much students enjoyed working together. The main output of this Teacher Action Research Project is that Digital Storytelling and specifically Microsoft Sway can be used to support students' writing skills when learning Greek as a Foreign Language. In addition, when students work in pairs to create their digital stories, they learn how to work cooperatively, which is a substantial competence for the 21st Century.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Microsoft Sway, Word clouds, Cooperative Learning

The Efficient Communication in Kindergartens (Organization) Affects the Psycho-social Development of the Children

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Abstract

To make this research more meaningful, I have worked with the kindergarten staff to evaluate their communication and the impact of these communicative abilities in the psycho-social development of the children. The aim was to understand the main communicative barriers at work and the level of psycho-social development of pre-school children. Also, to discover what strategies were commonly used to overcome the barriers or conflicts that arise as a cause of work. As we will see below, it is significant and there is a strong link between the effective communication variable in the organization (kindergartens) and the children developmental level variable. The gender variable has no correlation with the communication in kindergartens and the developmental level of pre-school children. And there is no meaning between gender and developmental level variable. The purpose of the study is: The identification of the advantages and discovery of the strategies used by organizations (kindergartens) to overcome differences, conflicts in the workplace and the promotion of the psycho-social development of preschool children. Kindergartens as a professional people organization with a view to achieving a common objective have a human resource unit that takes care of the organization and performance of their work. Organizations (kindergartens) are a mix of people who need to understand each other and cooperate every day. Those who have good communication do their job well and are usually mind-open, curious, patient, and aware. These basic skills help in nurturing a friendly, personal and intuitive approach to organize.

Keywords: communication, psycho-social development, kindergartens, human resources, organization

Formative Assessment: a 20th Century Relic or a 21st Century Solution?

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Abstract

The paper presents some practical cases of application of principles and methods of formative assessment in teaching in general and more specifically in teaching English Essay in grammar schools. The aim is to monitor student learning by providing ongoing feedback which makes not only teaching but also learning more effective, structured and focused on problem-solving. It helps students as well as teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that could do with improvement. Peer assessment, which is presented as an example, is intended for both peer evaluation and self-evaluation, as students can apply the same technique for their own essays; with its students receive double feedback. Students are thus not only in the role of the author but also the assessor and can later transfer their experience to their own work. Although the peer assessment of essays in the form of a handout/questionnaire is designed for a group of students, the support they receive is tailored. The emphasis is on the feedback which is not in the form of grades or points yet it is very precise, specific and clear. As a result, students who do utilise their feedback comments improve in the areas previously criticised, the reasons for engagement or non-engagement become apparent, they develop self-perception of their ability and potential as writers. This method also involves students in self-reflection of learning which they can apply to any subject at any stage of their education process. The paper argues that formative assessment should have a stronger role in our education system since it provides immediate feedback to students, informs them of their progress in a constructive and stress-free manner and in the case of essay writing – enhances students' writing performance. In conclusion, formative assessment allows students and teachers to obtain a more detailed understanding of the students' work so that summative assessment can confirm the improved results.

Keywords: formative assessment, English essay, peer assessment

Integrating Virtual Reality in Language Learning Settings

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Abstract

Technology-enhanced learning environments provide language educators access to tools that offer students engaging second and foreign language academic experiences. Through these types of activities, educators are able to teach content in meaningful ways in which students are able to further explore and immerse in the target language and culture they are learning. Virtual reality is one type of technology that is becoming more commonplace in classroom settings since the inclusion of this technology offers students enriching learning experiences. Further, by engaging in virtual reality apps, students are able to practice the target language in an immersive environment in which they receive immediate feedback on their productive language skills. They also are able to virtually visit another country in which they are able to explore the geography and culture that they are studying. In addition to providing engaging lessons, the inclusion of virtual reality activities can help students acquire higher levels of target language proficiency and become more motivated to learn other languages. This presentation will introduce the idea of virtual reality in a language learning setting as well as provide specific platforms and tools that educators can use with language learners.

Keywords: virtual reality, language learning, education, educational technology

Interactive Listening – A Can-Do Paradigm

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Abstract

Two decades after being called “the Cinderella skill” by Nunan (1999), listening frustratingly still very much deserves the dubious honor of such a metaphor. Results from the recent national Invalsi tests for school leavers in Italy, as well as anecdotal evidence from several other countries, underline the lack of progress made in listening at secondary schools – what is sorely needed is a solution, a new paradigm. But where is that going to come from? Much of the difficulty of listening in English comes from deciphering sounds in a stress-based language as opposed to a syllable-based one, and when we also factor in such variables as language-specific vowel and consonant sounds, speed, local/national accent, clarity of enunciation, choice of lexis, and background noise, the huge variety of combinations of sound possible are a constant source of frustration to language learners’ self-efficacy (except for those select few who reach autonomy). Add to that of course an idiosyncratic spelling “system” (for want of a better word) in English, and learners struggle to connect sound and meaning, sometimes of even the commonest words. Current listening approaches based almost wholly on “comprehension” questions are thinly disguised tests, and thus often counterproductive, seeking to find out what the listener cannot understand. New smartphone technology, which almost every student now has, can provide that new paradigm, encouraging the comprehension of even a single word or phrase, and enabling each user to work at their own comprehensible input i+1 level as Krashen (1982, 1985) put it so long ago – come and try it out for yourselves!

Keywords: Listening, comprehensible input, smartphone technology, interactive, self-efficacy

International Cooperation for the Promotion of Multilingualism

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Abstract

This paper presents and describes the funding opportunities in the field of education, training, research and innovation managed by the European Commission.

The paper presents and describes the main characteristics of the most important funding Programmes that can be interesting for researchers and higher education institutions to finance their researches, their mobility and their career development, Erasmus+ providing funding opportunities in the field of Education, Training, Youth and Sport and Horizon 2020, providing funding opportunities in the field of Research and Innovation.

The paper presents each of the mentioned Programmes main objectives, funding schemes and budget.

Then issues related to quality project planning are addressed together with an overview of the main quality and assessment criteria used to select successful project proposals.

Finally, some examples of initiatives, already funded by the European Commission are provided.

Keywords: European Projects, Erasmus+, Language Learning, Initiatives

LightVerb-Quest: An Adventure Storytelling Game to Foster Second Language Acquisition and Verbal Multi-Word Expressions Assimilation

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Abstract

In today’s ever-changing society, Second Language Teaching (SLT) is becoming a challenge for language learning teachers and educators as the increasing availability of digital tools – to whom 21st Century students are constantly exposed – can cause the traditional face-to-face language learning process to be boring and/or ineffective. Nevertheless, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) researchers have recently stated the potential for serious games as innovative support to traditional educational methods.

In effect, Game-Based Learning (GBL) could have a strong impact on achieving educational objectives in language learning as it stimulates learners’ autonomy and cooperation and promotes language acquisition through goal-oriented activities.

Moreover, when gaming is accompanied by a good narrative structure, motivation and engagement are further enhanced.

In the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), Multi-word Expressions (MWEs) play an essential role in enabling language fluency but, at the same time, they usually represent a challenge for L2 learners as, unlike native speakers, they tend to paraphrase or produce word combinations instead of multiword sequences.

In particular, Light-Verb Constructions (LVC) pose a problem for processing due to the non-compositionality of their meaning that cannot be easily deduced from their constituent parts.

In fact, as a light verb is formed by a verb plus a nominal complement (take a nap), it actually presents some information on the event but has abstract semantics, unlike heavy verbs that have full lexical meaning (sleep).

Therefore, this paper aims at presenting a class-interactive adventure game called LightVerb-Quest (LVQ) or “The Story of WordLand” aiming at teaching English LVCs to Italian secondary school students.

The game is based on an original adventure-story whose highly narrative nature allows the creation of a flow that fosters students’ intrinsic motivation and learning as they face their learning challenges by interacting with the game through their Smartphones. Accordingly, Multiple-choice questions (MC) related to the chosen LVCs gradually appear during the story narration, thus making students understand their meaning and assimilate their usage.

Furthermore, the story has been syntactically and grammatically constructed according to CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) levels for

secondary school students (A1-A2), so to make them learn and fix other grammatical structures.

This paper also aims at responding to today's latest methodological guidelines about students' needs for digital skills by creating an innovative instructional product.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Storytelling, Game-Based Learning, Multi-Word Expressions, English as a Second Language, Computer Assisted Language Learning

Making a Difference: English Learning, ICT and the School Library Hand-in-Hand

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Abstract

Teaching English as a foreign language to students who are 8 to 11 years old (especially when you are used to working with teenagers) can be really challenging, but also highly rewarding. You must definitely leave your “comfort zone” and risk new approaches. Introducing ICT in the scenario and making use of the school library space conditions and resources (books, iPads, digital tools) can lead to countless ideas and initiatives, which arise gradually as time goes by and imagination takes the lead. As an English teacher and librarian teacher of a joint group of schools in the centre of Portugal, I developed this project with about 100 primary school students (plus 20 kindergarten children), in the course of two school years (2016-2018). The project became “Merit Idea 2016”, supported by the Portuguese School Libraries Network. Not to lose its dynamics, it has been reconfigured and further developed with the previous primary students, later attending the 5th (2018/2019) and 6th grades (2019/2020).

In this project, ICT tools are not an END, but a MEANS to learn English and become digitally (cap)able in a modern world. English children’s books and other school library resources are also great instruments to develop one’s vocabulary, pleasure in reading, creativity, sense of citizenship and opinion about the world. Songs, nursery rhymes, videos, English apps and games are also on the core of this project, which I consider worth spreading to other teachers around the world. A lot of effort, but also a lot of pleasure, are definitely involved in the process. There were steps forward and some backwards, but motivation to learn a foreign language and the pleasure of playing and sharing were/are always present in the English classes.

Keywords: English, ICT, school library, motivation, children’s literature

Neuro-didactics: A New Approach In Learning Processes

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Abstract

Over the last thirty years, research on the human brain has provided teachers with new tools about the relation among how our brain works, the important role of our thoughts and emotions and the capability to be efficient. Thus, the main target of this article is getting a closer approach to the implementation of neuro-didactics in class, outstanding the importance of a cognitive training in which new concepts will be built on the base of the old ones offering intellectual relevant activities to promote neuroplasticity and neurogenesis among my students. Since learning is a cognitive and motivational process, I have worked on implementing socioemotional learning with varied challenging activities in class to stimulate the functional diversity in our brains for cooperation and to develop prosocial attitudes and develop their growth mindset (Moser, J.S. et al., 2011). Throughout this article, we will deal with the cognitive components in learning together with the interrelations among three constructs of motivation in my class, considering self-concept and goals in learning. I will focus on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in class, the impact of prospective and retrospective emotions in learning and efficiency and the contextual variables in motivation applied in my groups at the Official Language School in Spain and how to maintain attention, wakefulness and alertness in memory processes and learning. Thereby, the present article is meant to critically evaluate the implementation of neuro-didactics in class to work on students' motivation and goals in learning to fulfill their potential (Dweck, C. 2008).

Keywords: Neuroscience, Neuro-didactics, Motivation, Attention, Learning

Peculiarities and Advantages of Teaching English through Games

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Abstract

*Games and fun activities are a vital part of English teaching classes. Embracing rules and elements of fun, they must be an integral component of the language syllabus, as a technique with clear goals, objectives, tasks and expected outcomes. Games are a good way of practicing language. They motivate learners, promote classroom interaction, improve learners' language acquisition and their communicative skills. Games can be used at all stages of the language instruction from controlled to free practice. Games can also serve as a diagnostic tool for teachers to note and specify the areas of difficulty and take appropriate constructive actions. Sometimes students are lazy and none motivated to do their tasks. So, for this account games lead the learners for participation in different activities, they get a chance to practice or use the new language items (vocabulary, grammar structures and rules, phonetic items) they have just learnt eagerly and willingly instead of forcing them to do as a task. The most particular effective point is that learners play and learn at the same time. Games motivate learners, encouraging their teamwork solidarity. So, while considering games as a technique we come across with the following factors, such as **rules, competition, relaxation, learning**. The main focus of using game in class is not only to help students learn more effectively but also have fun. So before playing game in the classroom, it is necessary to explain clearly its rules to the learners.*

Keywords: teaching technique, classification of games, linguistic games, communicative games, interaction, learner motivation, language acquisition

Problematizing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

In light of students' international mobility, learning modern languages has become the key to unlocking new opportunities. Within this global mobility, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has become a new buzzword in language teaching and learning. Generally, it is defined in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills which supply language learners with "the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own" [1]. Despite several attempts in contemporary literature to establish an encompassing model of teaching ICC, a coherent understanding of how this concept relates to classroom pedagogical practices is still lacking [2]. This paper, therefore, addresses two interrelated facets of teaching ICC. First, the theoretical framework underpinning ICC models in foreign language learning is critically discussed. Secondly, the practical facet of teaching ICC will be further examined through discussion of findings from teachers' interviews. In this respect, teachers' perspectives about ICC are explored to highlight the challenging nature of teaching ICC and the pedagogic issues it raises given the inconclusiveness of existing teaching models. Finally, practical considerations are suggested for teachers to implement the intercultural dimension into their language classroom.

Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence, language and culture teaching



Reading Out Loud: Perceptions and Practices of Primary School Teachers

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Abstract

The reading competence has a determining influence on personal, social and academic success. To read aloud it is necessary that the child develops a fluency in reading. For Walker, Mokhtari and Sargent (2006, in Tristan, 2009) [1] there are three key attributes for fluent reading: performance attributes, which include aspects such as precision, speed, and prosody; competence attributes, namely phonological and morphological awareness, knowledge of syntax and structure of discourse, and metacognitive competence regarding reading; and, finally, dispositional attributes, that are, attitudes towards reading, self-perception as a reader and reading habits. Esteves (2013) [2] summarizes three dimensions of fluency in reading aloud: accuracy, speed and prosody. The precision refers to the correct decoding of the words of the text, that is, for correction in the reading. Speed, in turn, is related to the decoding of words, using the minimum of attention resources; finally, prosody corresponds to the rhythm and expressiveness used when reading a text, while extracting its meaning. From here it is possible to see the advantages that the practice of reading aloud can bring to the students, namely the development of questions related to the oral expression, the motivation to the reading; and reflection on the need to understand the text read, since this understanding (or lack thereof) will be mirrored in reading aloud (Silva, 2013) [3] It is understood that reading aloud should, for the reasons given, take a prominent place in the classroom. The present study intends to know the perceptions of 1st CEB teachers regarding the importance they confer to the practices of reading aloud in the classroom, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to know the practices they develop, even in the sense of to see if they know changes due to the year of schooling taught.

Keywords: fluency, reading aloud, perceptions and practices of teachers

Teachers' Attitudes towards Theatrical Laboratories and Experiential Learning: Lithuanian Case

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Abstract

This article reports the general findings of a survey study designed to extend knowledge about secondary school teacher attitudes and experience toward the Theatrical Laboratories implemented in the project OFF-BOOK (Erasmus+ programme) in non-formal education. Teachers use Theatrical Laboratories as pedagogical methods to create a better understanding and environment in classrooms, thus enhancing teachers' capacity to involve and motivate students in their learning processes actively. Specifically, the study examined extension to which and how secondary school teachers apply the methods of Theatrical Laboratories, in which manner, what results they noticed, and what problems arise. The participants included 19 teachers from 7 secondary schools in Klaipeda (Lithuania), voluntarily completed the diary and participated at the focus group discussions. The data was collected and analysed using qualitative diary research design and focus group discussion. The results suggested that in general teachers have positive attitude toward Theatrical Laboratories as pedagogical instruments. Teachers who reported less experience in drama teaching was found to hold more positive attitude toward Theatrical Laboratories. Teachers who already have positive attitudes towards students with special need may be predisposed to seek out additional experiential education practices and be more willing to be use theatre/drama methods.

Keywords: Theatrical Laboratories, experiential learning/teaching, teachers' attitude, method, students

The Pedagogical Potential of MOOCs for Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment

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Abstract

Many educators argue today that MOOCs present new educational opportunities for face-to-face language classes. With the increasing popularity of MOOCs and OER among learners and due to the innovative trends in higher education in the Russian Federation, college instructors today are confronted with a lot of challenges. The objective of this action research is to work out the possible ways of MOOC integration in a blended Content and Language Integrated Learning course to create an authentic online collaborative community. The theoretical framework of the intervention is based on current MOOC theories, connectivism, and the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition model by R. Puentedura. Thirty bachelor students from Moscow State University, enrolled in a Methodology of English Language Teaching blended course, participated in the first cycle of the research. The analysis based on the quantitative data (questionnaire) demonstrated the learners' positive attitude to this intervention due to the following possibilities: getting familiar with the theories and terminology on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, sharing experiences on the MOOC forums with the learners from all over the world and developing writing skills, etc.

Keywords: MOOC, CLIL, collaborative language learning, interactive environment, collaboration skills, language skills, digital literacies

Studies on Language Acquisition

A Study on Impoliteness Encountered by Chinese EFL Students Studying in English-Speaking Countries

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Abstract

With the acceleration of globalization process, an increasing number of Chinese students begin to learn English as their second language and further their education in English-speaking countries. Unavoidably, Chinese students may face with some occasions where foreigners say something impolite to them. The study mainly discusses the verbal impoliteness that Chinese students may encounter in all sorts of occasions during the period of studying in English-speaking countries.

The paper adopts a qualitative questionnaire-based study. According to the results of the survey, it is true that impolite discourses commonly happen. Then this paper sorts out statistical results and combine methods concerning Spencer Oatey's rapport management framework to further analyse these impoliteness phenomena.

Keywords: Interlanguage Pragmatics; Second Language Acquisition; Impoliteness; Rapport Management Framework

Communication Competence Related Skills in the Context of Student Performance and Teaching in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Communication skills related to general communication competence are frequently placed in the context of foreign language acquisition (L2) and learning English as a foreign language (EFL). For instance, self-disclosure was investigated in relation to writing and discussion assignments in an online course [1], (un)willingness to communicate was explored in association with the frequency of communication in an L2 environment [2], [3], interaction management was observed in the context of CALL [4], and listening skills were analysed in the mobile language learning environment [5]. In this paper an overview of topics associated with communication skills that appear in literature on L2 learning is presented, along with a model of students' communication competence in an L2 and EFL learning contexts that was adapted from the computer-mediated communication competence model by Spitzberg [6] and his intercultural competence model [7]. A number of potential uses and benefits of communication skills instruction that is integrated in EFL teaching and learning is briefly outlined and explained. Assessment instruments for measuring communication skills of L2 and EFL learners are cited and their potential implementation in measuring learners' skill level, as well as in L2 and EFL instruction, are briefly explained. To conclude, communication skills can be used both for the assessment of individual differences of learners and as a subject of L2/EFL instruction. They are an important tool for delivering and displaying L2 and EFL competence in a practical real-world environment and can be used to facilitate both learning and enactment of L2 linguistic competence.

Keywords: EFL, L2, computer-assisted language learning, communication skills, communication competence, intercultural communication

Enhancing the Use of the Spanish Language in a Service-Learning Environment

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of teaching Spanish to Physical Therapy students while on service-learning trips in Peru and Mexico. The study focused its attention on practical uses of Spanish while delivering Physical Therapy services. A secondary purpose was to enhance students' cultural competency during service-learning projects. By implementing the Spanish program, we hoped to improve the exchange of information between student and patient, ideally leading to overall improved cultural competency of the students. Researchers hypothesized that students, subjectively, will report to exhibit a better command of Spanish at the end of their trip as opposed to their performance at the beginning of the service project.

Methods: *Doctor of Physical Therapy students and medical personnel who participated in service-learning trips to Spanish speaking countries were asked to engage in an intensive, practical application language program throughout the trip. They participated in 20-minute language modules at the beginning of each day and each evening. In order to assist students in remembering the vocabulary and phrases, a number of reminders were provided to participants. Participants were asked to rate themselves on his or her ability to speak the language and interpreters tested the participants by quizzing them on common words and phrases both at the beginning and end of the trip. The scores were compared.*

Results: *Fifty-five DPT students and medical personnel met the inclusion criteria, and averaged 31-years of age. The average intake rating on the participants ability to speak Spanish was 1.73 out of 10; and at the end of the program, the average outcome rating was 4.25 out of 10. This demonstrated a significance between the pre and post-test scores ($p \leq 0.05$) on the participants ability to communicate in Spanish. After instructors completed the objective analysis of the participants' ability to speak Spanish, the mean difference was 14.67 ($p \leq 0.05$). Researchers also found no difference between different interpreters' ability to teach by comparing the different groups' pre and post-test scores.*

Participants reported a common appreciation regarding the repetitions of the newly acquired words and sentences, the practicality of the information taught, and group interactions throughout the language program.

Conclusion: *Learning modules were found to be an effective tool of acquiring Spanish in a Physical Therapy setting. By the end of the week, students increased their communicative proficiency and required less assistance from the interpreters. This demonstrated that the program significantly improved results objectively as well as subjectively.*

Keywords: Language acquisition, service-learning, proficiency, full immersion, Physical Therapy

Learning German as a Foreign Language: An Empirical Investigation of Motivation Based on Self-Determination Theory

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Abstract

The role of motivation in L2 learning is widely acknowledged. Hence, motivation in foreign language learning has become a focus of interest of several researches and various motivation theories have been provided. One of the leading theories within the category of the cognitive approaches in motivation is the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2003; Noels et al., 2003). Starting from this point, the present study explored the motivation of Greek learners of German as a foreign language in the light of self-determination theory. 152 students of the School of German Language and Literature of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki participated in the questionnaire study. Its research tool was based on previous similar investigations in international settings (Noels et al., 2003). The study explored aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as amotivation and basic orientations in language learning. Perceived competence and anxiety were also investigated. Exploratory factor analysis of the items of the questionnaire and correlations among the motivational subscales were carried out in order to examine various parameters of self-determination in the Greek context of foreign language learning.

Keywords: Foreign Language Learning; Motivation; Self-Determination Theory; German as a Foreign Language

Low-Immersion versus High-Immersion Virtual Reality: Definitions, Classification, and Examples with a Foreign Language Focus

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the Digital Revolution in the 1950s, the influx of rapidly evolving technologies has posed a challenge to those trying to keep pace. This challenge is compounded by ever changing terms which can lead to confusion, including concepts related to virtual environments, virtual worlds, and virtual, augmented, or mixed realities.

A detailed analysis of previous publications (e.g., Berti, 2019; Lin & Lan, 2015; Peeters, 2019) reveals that scholars have been using the same term, “virtual reality” (VR), to describe several distinct educational settings, ranging from low-immersion virtual environments (LiVR) to high-immersion three-dimensional spaces (HiVR). The intention of this manuscript is three-fold: (1) to define and classify the main types of VR, as they have been used in educational research, (2) to outline the differences between the two main types of VR, and (3) to provide examples of VR language learning research.

Keywords: embodiment, immersion, language learning, virtual reality, virtual environments

Modern Scientific Communication and its Efficacy through the Prism of Science Education: Dialectic Interaction between Cognition and Discourse Phenomena

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Abstract

In recent decades, in the light of globalization processes particular role attributed to scientific articles as one of the most efficient means of cross-cultural cross-linguistic scientific communication dynamizing creation of new concepts, categories, theories, and scientific values, including those based on interdisciplinarity, has reinforced complex issues concerning equivalence of thesauruses of communication participants and structuring of the information flow, which are of special interest in what regards science education. Intensified multidimensional dialogue of cultures, scientific schools, and fields of knowledge inevitable requires flexible tools and instruments designed to standardize and structuralize written scientific discourse, inter alia, standardized connectors and compositional formulas or recurrent lexical and grammar constructions to be adequately perceived and efficiently applied by Ph.D. students. Analysing the instruments and tools referred to above, what represents the aim of this article, we apply the following methods: comparative analysis, the method of translation and the questionnaire method which engaged Ph.D. students of RUDN-university (n-95) from different countries learning academic writing in different scientific fields where the English and the Spanish languages are used as a second foreign language by learners with different mother-tongue backgrounds. We conclude that, while providing a map for researchers' creativity or discretion in interpretation and linguistic representation of accumulated research data, recurrent standard constructions, which form part of the structure of text mechanism that reflects universal schemes of the processes of perception, comprehension, and representation of scientific phenomena and processes in their integrity and dynamics, enable the forming of Ph.D. students' own theoretical projections, models and approaches, as well as focusing on polylogue with other scholars in the context of scientific communication. This article is of practical value for cross-linguistic studies, language and translation teaching, foreign language acquisition, translation and interpretation studies.

Keywords: scientific communication; cognition; discourse; equivalence of thesauruses of communication participants; interdisciplinarity

Non-Native English: In Search for Rhythm

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Abstract

One of the key aspects of English an EFL learner needs to master is the specific rhythm that has traditionally been described as stressed-timed rhythm and opposed to syllable-timed rhythm. Despite emerging criticism and the lack of scientific evidence for the stressed-timed isochronous nature of English some relevant acoustic cues still remain relevant for EFL learners: the alternation of strong and weak syllable sequences, vowel reduction, stress placement and other rhythmic aspects of connected speech. The aim of the current study is to examine the significance of rhythm in the intelligibility of speech by non-native speakers as well as to report on a didactic experiment conducted in order to suggest and test music techniques for the enhancement of English rhythm by Lithuanian EFL learners. The findings of the study showed that the respondents faced major problems in the implementation of weak syllables as well as vowel reduction and elision in English utterances since Lithuanian is not characterized by large spectral and durational differences between tonic and atonic vowels as English is. Additionally, the experiment disclosed that EFL learners may benefit from music instruction: the respondents demonstrated superior overall performance to reproduce sample English sentences rhythmically and employ the tested variables to full extent. Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between the EFL learners with musical aptitude and the implementation of the tested variables.

Keywords: Non-native, rhythm, music

Pronunciation Accuracy in L2 Speech across Different Production Tasks

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Abstract

This study focuses on the realization of geminates in Italian as L2 by French learners of two different competence levels (low vs. high proficiency) and across different production tasks in which the amount of information available to speakers varies. The aim is to observe: 1) how the L1 and the competence level affect the production of geminates; and 2) if the pronunciation accuracy varies across different production tasks. The hypotheses are that: 1) both L1 and proficiency affect accuracy, as it is expected a lower accuracy by learners than by natives, above all by beginners; 2) accuracy varies across tasks, as a lower accuracy is expected when the context is rich of information, since other elements can help to disambiguate the target word, and in case there is no specific need to foresee possible meaning ambiguities. Nine subjects participated in the experiment: six French learners (three beginners and three advanced learners) and three Italian speakers as control. L2 target sounds (/t, d, s, n, l, r/ both as singletons and as geminates) inserted in words were read: a) in isolation; b) in minimal pairs; and c) in two interactional contexts, that is i) poor context – a carrier phrase which does not facilitate meaning disambiguation; ii) rich context – an appropriate phrase which does help disambiguate the meaning of target words. Target consonant segments were segmented in PRAAT and their duration was measured. Results show that French learners' productions are influenced by L1 phonetics and phonology as well by the competence level: advanced learners distinguish geminates from singletons as control speakers do, while beginners show a lower degree of accuracy. In all cases, accurately produced geminates are longer than singletons. In line with our expectations, speakers produce more accurately geminates when the context is poor of information and in minimal pairs.

Keywords: L2 pronunciation, Italian L2, geminates

Relationships between Students' Grammar Acquisition, Computer Literacy and Self-Regulation Variables in a Virtual Learning Environment with Wiki-Based Grammar E-Tivities

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Abstract

The literature on CALL (computer-assisted language learning) indicates that various psychological characteristics of learners may determine the process of language learning and its outcomes [1], especially in constructivist, learner-based paradigms [2]. It has been argued that hybrid learning settings offer increased opportunities for individualization and collaboration [3]. However, research on the interrelationships between individual variables that may affect students' grammar development in a hybrid English as a foreign language (EFL) environment supported by web 2.0 tools is fairly scarce. The aim of the study in this paper was to establish the correlation between the acquired knowledge of five morphosyntactic structures, two learner characteristics associated with computer literacy and three self-regulation variables in EFL grammar instruction within the socio-constructivist paradigm. The subjects in our study were students of Information Systems at a Croatian university enrolled in a hybrid EFL course. They were engaged in collaborative out-of-class e-tivities using wikis and other web 2.0 tools to describe and illustrate advanced grammar topics. The acquired grammatical competence (GC) was assessed by a written test. The data on learner variables were collected by a survey questionnaire. Both instruments were administered after the completion of e-tivities. The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant associations between the outgoing GC and two variables: (1) students' perception of self-efficacy and (2) their perceived effort in using the computer (negative correlation).

Keywords: Computer-assisted language learning, EFL grammar, computer literacy, self-regulation

Teaching and Learning L2 Spanish Intonation: Technology and Classroom Instruction

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Abstract

The present study investigates the effects of explicit instruction on the production of dialectal differences in information-seeking yes/no questions (There is a meeting tomorrow?) and neutral broad-focused declarative statements (There is a meeting tomorrow.), which can be distinguished using intonation cues. For example, in Puerto Rican Spanish yes/no questions end with a low tone, while in North-Central Spain they end with a high tone. While learners of Spanish have been known to increase accurate production of target-like intonation patterns in study abroad contexts ([1], [2], [3]), it is unclear if they can do so as a result of training in the classroom. To address this question, 10 advanced L2 Spanish (L1 English) read 14 short scenarios, and after each one produced a target utterance for a total of 14 utterances including 7 absolute interrogatives, 3 information-seeking pronominal interrogatives (distractors), and 4 neutral broad-focused declarative statements. These recordings occurred before and shortly after receiving 30 minutes of in-class instruction on intonation as part of an advanced Spanish course at a large university in the USA. This instruction utilized visuals (map and Praat spectrograms) and their accompanying recordings from the Interactive Atlas of Spanish Intonation housed online. The instructor explained the differences in the intonation contours of the three types of utterances eight macrodialects of Spanish. While the participants listened to the recordings, with the help of the labelled spectrograms, they identified the high and low tones throughout the utterances. Comparisons to English were also made. The participants also completed a Spanish proficiency test and a background questionnaire in which they indicated the dialect they were attempting to speak. The data are compared to eight L1 Spanish speakers of different varieties of Spanish who read the same scenarios and produced the same utterances. The results show a high degree of individual variation, with some effect of instruction on the production of these variable intonation patterns. This presentation will also address ways to improve this instruction and incorporate it in the language classroom.

Keywords: L2 pronunciation, Online atlas, L2 Spanish intonation

The Mosaic of Ecological Discourse in the Light of Translation Studies and Cognition

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Abstract

Built around complex doctrinal approaches to interactions among human and natural systems and characterized by increasing dynamism, ecological scientific discourse tends to set sights on the interdisciplinarity facet of researches and has its own relevant specificities of language use that are to be paid special attention in what regards science education. In the context of cross-border scientific communication and polylogue as to environmental concerns and agenda suffused by emanation of new concepts, neologisms, and innovative theories, particular relevance is acquired by potential symmetry of presuppositional conditions, including linguistic, cultural, and scientific competencies of communicants that determine the common background of knowledge, essential for ensuring that the information is adequately sent and received, as well as the spatio-temporal limits of a given discourse, in terms of analysis, at which this article is aimed, within the frames of comparison of specificities that characterize the way in which certain parts of knowledge or human experience is reflected in language throughout the process of mediated cross-cultural cross-linguistic scientific communication, along with efficiency and scope of translator's choice and creativity. The methods of semantic and comparative analyses, as well as the method of translation, and the questionnaire method are used in this study. Ph.D. students of RUDN-university (n 78) from different countries with different mother-tongue backgrounds learning academic writing in the English and the Spanish languages participated in the questionnaire. By way of conclusion, cognitive approach to semiotic and functional potential of ecological discourse, to the structures of knowledge and conventional ways of objectivization thereof within cognitive environment, to linking or relating knowledge of field data with language competence enhance motivation of Ph.D. students to participate in cross-linguistic cross-cultural scientific communication. The practical value of this study can be relevant for language teaching, language acquisition, translation studies, intercultural communication and discourse researches.

Keywords: translation; ecological discourse; presuppositions of scientific cross-linguistic cross-cultural communication; conceptual transparency

The Role of EFL Teachers in Decreasing Learners' Reticence

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Abstract

Willingness to communicate (WTC), as a prerequisite for improving communication skills, has garnered special attention in second and foreign language classes. It is believed that high tendency to become involved in communication activities may expose learners to much more input and as a result more intake. Several factors, some of which are situational and some others trait, have been identified in promoting learners' WTC or reticence. This study set out to unravel the role of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, as the main facilitators of communication, in these classes in encouraging learners' WTC. Data for this study were collected using a focus group interview. For this purpose, 48 EFL learners, with the age range of 17-45, who were taking general advanced and high-intermediate English courses in one of the popular English Schools, were selected to participate in the study. The results of the analysis revealed that both teachers' socio-affective strategies and teaching style have a determining role in learners' WTC. What was more interesting was that these learners found teachers' socio-affective strategies even more influential than teaching style. The findings of the study have important implications for teacher trainers and EFL teachers to improve their pedagogic strategies to foster WTC in learners who prefer reticence to talk.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate, Reticence, Socio-affective Strategies, Teaching Style

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