

Raluca Pop

An Intercultural Perspective in Teaching the Didactics of the English Language

Presa Universitară Clujeană

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Introduction

Content and aims

The intended audience for this book targets pre-service teachers, teacher trainers and practicing teachers who teach English as a foreign language. This book provides, to every audience group, relevant theoretical groundings that support the need to build intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom. Throughout this book, emphasis has been placed on the need to redesign teacher education programmes in order to address the pedagogical changes that multilingual and multicultural classrooms generate. Various practical activities included in this book are meant to develop readers' content pedagogical knowledge and reflective attitudes towards possible research directions that can foster an understanding of how theory can impact practice.

This book addresses also practicing teachers and teacher trainers who teach other subjects but who make use of a foreign language as a tool to teach the subject matter. These teachers use language, implicitly or explicitly, as a *cultural tool* and therefore, they should become more cognizant of the social and cultural context that might influence both their teaching and choice of tasks and resources. Reference is made sometimes to the Romanian National Curriculum when discussing some theoretical aspects.

Finally, this book is useful for all those who interact with culturally and linguistically diverse people and for those who are concerned with issues of intercultural communication. The book provides to all stakeholders interesting insights into how to become more reflective of how learners' diversity influences learning and teaching practices. Moreover, the topics tackled and the practical and theoretical aspects integrated in this book constitute a blueprint for a mindful redesigning of teacher training programmes infused with an intercultural perspective. Likewise, this book seeks to present good teacher education practices and to emphasize the constant need to tailor teaching to today's educational requirements.

Structure

An Intercultural Perspective in Teaching the Didactics of the English Language is comprised of eight chapters, various subchapters and an index at the end of the book. The first chapter provides details about various international and national directives and educational policies regarding the need to develop an intercultural dimension in language teaching. In addition, it is presented a new approach to train pre-service teachers in order to develop their competence to manage a multilingual and a multicultural classroom. The implications of today's globalized world pose new challenges both to the educational system and to teachers. Learners as well as teachers should acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to communicate appropriately and efficiently in any given international context.

The next chapter is comprised of two sections: *the professional profile of a foreign language teacher* and *the profile of a foreign language learner*. These two different perspectives provide details about the characteristics of a good language learner, various points of view regarding the new challenges for foreign language teachers, issues of identity and learner characteristics that might influence the process of learning a foreign language.

The third chapter entitled *Managing the learning environment* provides details about way of organizing and creating a positive and inclusive foreign language environment. Questions related to managing the learning environment and managing teaching are also dealt with in this chapter. The next part of the book is concerned with the *design and evaluation of teaching resources*. Several criteria for evaluating different learning resources are indicated as well as strategies to exploring these materials by applying cultural lenses.

Chapter five sheds some light on the various ways of teaching receptive and productive skills from an intercultural perspective. Chapter six depicts the challenges that reside in assessing intercultural communicative competence. The next chapter indicates some opportunities for teaching a foreign language by using digital

technology both in view of enhancing intercultural communication and in working with authentic materials. The last chapter suggests possible paths for continuing professional development.

Layout

As regards the layout of the book, each chapter begins with a section of *Theoretical underpinnings*. This section gathers current and relevant literature that provides valuable data regarding the topic under discussion. Thus, the audience is given the opportunity to analyse and reflect on the theoretical groundings, various research results and concepts that are presented here. This part of each chapter provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about academic discourse. In addition, readers are encouraged to develop their critical thinking and understand how the method, the purpose and the results of a study can influence and provide a new direction in teaching foreign languages. Keywords are provided for each chapter in order to visualize better the key terms encountered in the chapter.

A second section entitled *Questions and tasks* requires readers to be reflective and answer several questions that have a practical application and which are related to the details provided in the theoretical underpinnings stage. The *Summary* section is intended to sum up the main ideas that have been presented in the entire chapter. A fourth section entitled *Takeaways/Afterthoughts* has the shape of a blank space and intends to develop readers' reflective practice. Readers are invited to include there relevant items of information or perspectives that are worth being remembered.

Each chapter contains a section for *Suggestions for further reading* in order to provide readers with the possibility to explore different perspectives on the same topic. The next section contains the *References* that support the theoretical groundings.

The layout of the book contains these special features in order to help readers to identify, in a quick manner, a particular section that is relevant to them.

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Keywords and abbreviations

Keywords for the entire book: *intercultural communicative competence, intercultural perspective, identity, the intercultural speaker, intercultural knowledge, intercultural skills, intercultural attitudes, teacher roles, multilingual, multicultural, authentic materials, multimodal resources, formal learning, informal learning, mother tongue, foreign language, digital skills, individual differences, linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, student-centred learning, professional development.*

Abbreviations

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

EPOSTL - European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages

ICC – Intercultural Communicative Competence

L1 – Mother tongue

TL – The target language (the foreign language intended to be learned)

1. An intercultural perspective in teaching the didactics of the English language

Introduction

Foreign language learning is expected to play a more active role in enabling learners to engage effectively and appropriately in intercultural dialogue both with peers and teachers but also in diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers are expected to undergo a change in their mind-sets so that they would develop skills, attitudes and knowledge that support an understanding of the implications that multiculturalism and multilingualism bring in the formal classroom setting. Language is understood as a tool used not just for communicating but also as a means of understanding different cultures and world views, and of enabling learners to analyse and interpret their own culture and other cultures.

This chapter intends to address the topic of the intercultural perspective as emerging in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. In this respect, teacher training programmes need to include and consider adapting curriculum and pedagogical aims to the requirements of today's multilingual and multicultural classroom setting. In order to offer a context for this intercultural perspective a brief description of the English didactics course, taking place at the Faculty of Humanities in Cluj-Napoca, is also provided. A discussion about the components of the intercultural communicative competence emerges in the last section.

Keywords: *intercultural perspective, didactics, foreign language learning, intercultural communicative competence, teacher training programme.*

1.1 The conceptualization of the intercultural perspective in the context of foreign language teaching

In the context of a globalized society, of increased mobility and technological advancements, more and more emphasis is placed on managing efficiently communication in a foreign language, both for personal aims and as a job requirement. Nardon (2017, 4) suggests that working in a multicultural world leads one to the understanding that “intercultural encounters are a pervasive feature of our modern workplaces and affect most of us”. In addition to being knowledgeable in one’s domain of activity, one should also be able to communicate across cultures and languages.

In the last two decades, the educational arena has undergone considerable changes in order to accommodate teaching and learning to the requirements imposed by a globalized society. Foreign language learning is expected to play a more active role in enabling learners to engage effectively and appropriately in intercultural dialogue both with peers and teachers in diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ET 2020* (European Commission 2015, 9) indicates in this sense a top educational priority: to improve quality and efficiency of education and training.

The acknowledgement of the fact that language is a “social practice” (Kramsch 2003, 21) and that communication always occurs in a certain context (social, cultural, political, etc.) led to the understanding that language represents a way of expressing, implicitly or explicitly, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perspectives on life. In addition, Tudor (1996, 278) makes reference to the complementarity between language and culture and suggests that “language teaching is a complex social and cultural activity”. Thus, the learning of a foreign language implies the need to cover “both a linguistic and a cultural gap” (Collie and Slater 1997, 6).

A shift has emerged in the last two decades in foreign language teaching and learning in view of the fact that language is “part of and bears our identity” (Skjækkeland 2012, 69) and is not merely a linguistic

code. This new shift was given the name of “intercultural turn” (Byram, 2007) because it intended to view foreign language learning as an intercultural endeavour that requires learners to acquire certain abilities, knowledge and attitudes in order to understand and relate to otherness and to demonstrate positive attitudes towards other cultures. The teaching of a foreign language, in a formal learning environment, has demanded a change due to the multitude of variables it usually engages: students’ perspective on the foreign language and culture, learners’ different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, learners’ needs and their diverse learning styles, the quest for identity and approval both for learners and teachers etc. The intercultural turn expected from teachers a change in mind-sets so that they would develop skills, attitudes and knowledge that support an understanding of the implications of multiculturalism and multilingualism in the formal classroom setting.

The intercultural turn in foreign language learning is much more a perspective than a method. Usually, methods are comprised of prescriptive rules, as “unified bodies of practice” (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013) targeting to achieve homogeneity in practice. Still, the mechanics of methods tend to “constrain the options for practice and the involvement of the teacher as a decision-maker factor” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013). As a consequence of this intercultural shift, the teacher is expected to exhibit culturally responsive teaching and take personal decisions with respect to the particularities of the classroom (reflect on the types of linguistic interferences made by learners who have different mother tongues, consider the learning outcomes and the students’ expectations within a multicultural classroom, choose wisely authentic teaching resources and course books in view of avoiding the use of biased materials).

As a matter of fact, where the context does not impose a certain teaching method, teachers are eclectic in terms of the methods they use. Thus, they select only those elements that are relevant and appropriate for conducting their teaching. In this respect, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003 in Liddicoat & Scarino 2013, 5) concludes that language education

is no longer confined to method as a “basic organizer of practice” and that “the post-method condition gives more recognition to the role of the teacher in the act of teaching”. Consequently, the teacher has a hands-on experience of adapting teaching to match learner’s expectations.

The intercultural perspective and the intercultural language learning

Most often, the term *intercultural perspective* is used in the literature in order to suggest a frame of reference infused with cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. Cucoş (2000, 265) considers this infusion as a non-invasive integration of an intercultural dimension in the curriculum. The difference between a method and a perspective is explained by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, 6): the method follows some established rules in contrast with perspective which is “a way of understanding lived experiences of language and culture” and entails the “self-awareness of the language teacher as a participant in linguistic and cultural diversity”. Thus, the foreign language teacher is required to reflect on the close and interdependent relationship between the target language and culture. The starting point for such a perspective is the acknowledgement of the fact that “language learning is fundamentally engagement in intercultural communication” (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013, 6).

We also consider that intercultural learning has some points in common with an ecological approach in view of the fact that learners, as ethnographers, perform a “systematic observation and description of how a community behaves” (Corbett 2003, 34). An ecological approach “aims to look at the learning process, the actions and activities of teachers and learners, the multi-layered nature of interaction and language use, in all their complexity” (Van Lier 2010, 3). In our view, these common aims and traits refer to: taking deliberate action to become more knowledgeable of the particularities of the learning context, seeking to reach mutual understanding, aiming to find out and construct meaning together (the teacher and the students), focusing on

developing responsibility for all the parties involved in the educational process. This reconsideration of the principles that guide foreign language teaching and learning provides a glimpse into the multifaceted intercultural perspective that focuses on the following core values: “active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection and responsibility” (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013).

One major characteristic of intercultural language learning is that it engages actively the individual to interpret *self* (intra-culturality) and *other* (inter-culturality) (Scarino 2009, 68-69) in diverse contexts of social and cultural exchange. In this context, the purpose is not to achieve a native speakers’ competence, but a more realistic goal: that of an individual who is able to adapt to intercultural settings and interact effectively with diverse interlocutors.

As regards formal education, a growing recognition of the fact that there is a need to address an intercultural focus in language teaching and learning led both researchers and teachers to asking questions such as: How to teach? What to teach? How to evaluate language learning from an intercultural perspective? Do the roles of teachers and students change in light of this intercultural turn? As follows, we intend to provide answers to these questions.

Because language is deeply rooted in the culture to which it belongs to, the process of learning a foreign language becomes an intricate matter. The teaching of the four language skills (both the productive and the receptive skills) should be infused with an intercultural perspective since according to Kramsch (1993, 1) culture is the fifth skill, always present in the classroom, even from the beginning of the lesson. The teaching of a foreign language encompasses a different dynamic in comparison to teaching other subjects (e.g. chemistry, physics), because whenever one teaches a language one also teaches a “complex system of cultural customs, values and ways of thinking, feeling and acting” (Brown 2001, 64). In addition, language learning represents in Brookes and Grundy’s (1991, 9) view a total experience comprising the whole body and mind and influencing one’s “self-image, sense of cultural belonging and lifestyle general”. In

addition, Valdes (1990, 20 in Corbett 2003, 33) argues that “any method of language teaching and learning is inevitably cultural” given the fact that culture is taught either explicitly or implicitly. Thus, the language is understood as a tool used not just for communicating but also as a means of understanding different cultures and world views and of enabling learners to analyse and interpret culture (their own and other cultures).

Both general and specific elements of culture should be tackled in the foreign language classroom. In either of the cases, the idea that no culture is better than another should be enforced. Biased views should be disregarded in the foreign language classroom and learners should understand the concept of stereotyping and its flaws. A modern perspective views culture as dynamic, not confined within some physical borders, always “evolving and not easily summarized for teaching” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 77). Each individual might have multiple memberships to various sub-cultural groups they belong to and thus, different cultural norms they operate with. Liddicoat and Kohler (2012, 77) suggest a transition from knowing factual elements of culture to engaging with culture. According to this perspective, cultural knowledge should not be “limited to knowing information about a culture; it is about knowing how to engage with that culture” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 77). Consequently, the emphasis is placed on the procedural knowledge, namely on what one is able to perform after one has acquired that knowledge.

Issues of pragmatics in foreign language learning

The realization of the fact that communication in a foreign language is inevitably cross-cultural led to an inclusion of an intercultural dimension in the framework for attaining communicative competence. Thus, a competent speaker is, according to Sercu (2005, 88), a person who has acquired the necessary “linguistic, pragmatic and discourse competencies to be able to communicate successfully in intercultural contact situations”. Knowledge of language is of paramount importance in order to speak accurately a foreign language.

Pragmatic competence is needed in order to understand societal expectations, namely the norms and the linguistic conventions of interaction performed in a foreign language. Discourse competence is relevant because it enables the learner to combine language structures into a coherent and cohesive message, either orally or in written form. By integrating in their oral or written communication discourse devices such as turn-taking, back-channelling, discourse markers (*by the way, anyway, therefore, moreover, etc.*) or natural fluent markers (*like, well, I mean etc.*) learners of a foreign language become competent interlocutors. Since conversation is jointly constructed, these discourse devices keep the conversation afloat. Learners have already acquired discourse competence in their mother tongues and thus, this knowledge has to be transferred to the foreign language intended to be learned.

The acknowledgement that language represents a medium for expressing culture and that “it is not a culture-free code” (Kramsch 1998, 8) had implications for foreign language learning and teaching. Learners of a foreign language are expected to be able to evaluate contextual information, to manage the pragmatic rules of interaction or to know what polite and impolite speech is in certain situations. According to Taguchi (2012, 4), transferring mother tongue sociocultural norms to the foreign language practice might lead to failure in communication because the two languages operate under different norms and conventions. In case of such a transfer, the intended meaning would not be conveyed because the speaker had not demonstrated socially appropriate language use. In this respect, pragmatics “involves sociolinguistic knowledge” (Shaffer & Kipp 2007, 381), namely an awareness of the way in which culturally specified rules regulate language in use. In addition, Liddicoat and Kohler (2012, 76) suggest that “culture gives specific, local meanings to language by adding shared connotations and associations to the standard denotation of term”. Therefore, an intercultural perspective in teaching a foreign language, coupled with an intensified awareness of pragmatics, would help learners utter the right words, in the right context, at the right time.

For the field of foreign language learning the following question is relevant: *Can the formal classroom setting provide appropriate pragmatic development?* Taguchi (2012, 23) suggests that this aim is achievable if the “institution offers abundant opportunities to use English for authentic purposes, both academic and interpersonal” and that the foreign language is used in order to perform real-life functions that depict social language use. Individual variation in pragmatic development occurs due to differences in learning opportunities, in the resources used or in the immersion context. Still, pragmatic competence should be demonstrated in two different settings, both in the safe environment of the classroom and outside the classroom. Either way, pragmatic development is a lengthy process “because it requires abilities to manage a complex interplay of language, language users and context of interaction” (Taguchi 2012, 2). But mastery of pragmatic competence enacted in “linguistic ability and sociocultural sensitivity” (Taguchi 2012, 3) leads to a deeper understanding of the degree in which culture can influence communication. Therefore, language learning might then be rethought in terms of understanding the ‘other’ and not only communicating with the ‘other’.

Another relevant aspect to consider in foreign language teaching is the salience of linguistic competence. This one is not sufficient for creating proficiency during a conversation with a speaker because “language has no function independently of the social contexts in which it is used” (Alptekin 1996, 60). Therefore, learners of a foreign language should become aware of this context and adapt their discourse to the particularities of a certain situation. By doing so, they become effective speakers who acknowledge the interrelationship between culture and language when communicating and interpreting meanings. Valuable exposure to the target language and opportunities to engage in social interaction are conducive to and “indispensable for pragmatic growth” (Taguchi 2012, 23).

Even if language learning comprises several aspects such as semantics, phonetics or syntax, Martin and Nakayama (2010, 220) consider that “pragmatics is probably the most useful for students of

intercultural communication because it focuses on actual language use - what people do with language". But "pragmatic development involves mastery of both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge" (Taguchi 2012, 3-4). Sociocultural norms and conventions tend to vary across cultures and determine changes both in the linguistic and sociolinguistic skills they make reference to. In order to analyse the pragmatic function of a certain utterance one also has to pay close attention to the "non-verbal codes" (Martin and Nakayama 2010, 266). These codes are imbued with cultural aspects and "are highly dynamic and play an important role in understanding intercultural communication" (Martin and Nakayama 2010, 266). Misunderstanding might arise due to different ways of perceiving proximity, gestures, intonation or eye contact. Non-verbal language is able to communicate meaning, but this should always be interpreted in a certain context that is governed by its own rules. Because "non-verbal communication is symbolic" (Martin and Nakayama 2010, 268) it is thus open for speculation and differing expectations. Therefore, an effective speaker should be able to interpret non-verbal language in order to grasp better the meaning of verbal communication.

1.2 International and national approaches to pre-service teacher education

Context

In order to respond to a diverse and constantly changing student population, pre-service teacher training programmes should undergo constant adjustments so that prospective teachers would be able to manage well demanding educational settings.

The framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020, 2009/C 119/02) is a forum that provides opportunities to disseminate knowledge and establish educational policy reforms within the European Union. ET 2020 is based on a lifelong learning approach and has established several objectives in order to deliver the best possible practice from early childhood to higher education. One of these objectives is particularly relevant for this chapter. It refers to improving the quality and efficiency of education and training. To make lifelong learning relevant a thorough rethinking of teacher education is needed in order “to accommodate all these changes and bridge the gap in teachers’ mind-sets” (Pop 2018, 94). The roles performed by teachers, the knowledge and skills they have to acquire, the attitudes they have to demonstrate are undergoing various changes and thus pre-service teacher training programmes need to facilitate this transformation.

Several reports have been issued by researchers and European institutions suggesting that it is important for individuals to develop their intercultural competence from an early age (Coste, Moore & Zarate 2009; European Council 2002, Commission of the European Communities 2003) in order to develop social skills and adjust to linguistic and cultural diversity. The intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching intends to encourage individuals to broaden their horizons and develop awareness of other and view the world in terms of ‘multi’. In order to act accordingly, “teachers of language need to become teachers of language and culture” (Byram 2009, 331). This

acknowledges the fact that learning is placed in a social and a cultural context, and that this has multiple implications for education.

Over the last two decades, the field of language teaching has been focusing more and more on finding a way of incorporating both language knowledge and culture in the foreign language classroom. Intensified intercultural encounters, as a result of increased mobility, have determined many decision-making institutions to acknowledge the need of a change with the purpose of providing meaningful teaching that is appropriate to students' diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For example, the European Union and the European Commission emphasized through various directives and educational policies (*The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008); *Recommendation 2006/962/EC on key competences for lifelong learning* (2006); *The Aims of Language Teaching and Learning* (2010); *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching - A Practical Introduction for Teachers* 2002) the need to understand as well as to handle appropriately cultural differences in situations of intercultural contact.

Nowadays, a constant emphasis is placed on developing teachers' intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills. The development of the ICC urges teachers to transfer all theoretical knowledge into clear pedagogic aims in order to operationalize every aspect of ICC. Recent research has been carried out in an attempt to understand teacher efficiency in Europe after completion of initial training programmes. According to the Eurydice report, teachers admit having moderate or high levels of needs in areas such as teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings (European Commission 2015, 3-4). These findings indicate that teachers still need more training in what regards the anchoring and the practical application of an intercultural dimension in teaching. Pre-service teacher training, alongside with in-service professional development, represent relevant sources for developing teachers' ICC in formal education. Even so, teachers who participate "in intercultural teaching exchanges accumulate valuable knowledge of and experience with a variety of cultures and cultures of

schooling” (Schlein 2018, XVIII). This hands-on experience that incorporates both formal and informal training in the development of ICC is valuable in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, Schlein (2018, XIX) concludes that education experiences taking place abroad are “essential for educators’ acquisition of beneficial experience and knowledge”. In addition, Sleeter (2007 cited in Cushner & Mahon 2009, 316) agrees that by taking part in intercultural experiences and by stepping out of one’s cultural context represents “an essential step in the development of intercultural competence”. An immersion experience encourages teachers to be more self-reflective and aware of the implications that derive from the deeply rooted bond between language and culture.

A broad analysis on Romanian literature written on this subject indicates that there is great interest for including in foreign language teaching an intercultural dimension. Various studies constitute a proof of this constant interest for integrating an intercultural dimension within pre-service teacher training practice and developing students’ intercultural communicative competence (Bârlogeanu, L., 2005; Nedelcu, A., 2008; Cozma, T., Butnaru, S., Cucos, C., 2001; Cosma, M., Cosma, B., 2006; Pop, R. 2015). This redesign of teacher education targets a deeper understanding of what teaching to linguistically and culturally diverse learners really means.

In the field of education, and particularly in the area of foreign language teaching, educators “should be trained to deal with the growing diversity of learners” (European Commission 2015, 5). Villegas and Lucas (2002, 20) propose a framework for preparing culturally responsive teachers and suggest six important qualities that should be attained throughout the teacher education curriculum. Teachers should:

- be socioculturally conscious,
- have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds,
- see themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing about change to make schools more equitable,

- understand how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction,
- know about the lives of their students,
- design instruction that builds on what students already know while stretching them beyond the familiar (Villegas and Lucas 2002, 20).

These characteristics suggest that knowledge about learners' cultural, social and linguistic diversity should be put to good use and transferred into clear pedagogical objectives.

Pop (2018, 98) considers that an intercultural perspective in pre-service teacher training education should permeate all levels: the macro level referring to educational policies and the curriculum, the mezzo level comprised of school policies and the micro level that concerns the development of every teacher into an agent of change. Moreover, teacher education programmes should "examine their curriculum to decide whether what they offer effectively prepares pre-service teachers to work with ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students" (Wood 2009, 163). A number of different theories related to teacher learning go from behaviourism to constructivism and each of them favour some characteristics of the 'good teacher'. Recent view "see identity and (inter)personal skills development as integral components of planned processes for teacher preparation" (Malderez & Wedell 2007, 14).

All in all, a pre-service teacher training programme should acknowledge a need for change. Relevant didactic practices should be included in order to educate teachers to become agents of change and to be able to address learners' diverse needs.

1.3 An intercultural perspective in teaching the didactics of the English language at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education

Details about the course

The didactics of teaching English as a foreign language is an optional course that is offered by the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (through its Teacher Training Department) to students who are enrolled at the Faculty of Humanities in Cluj-Napoca in a three-year pre-service teacher training programme. This programme intends to acquaint students with various theories of learning and teaching and help them develop as creative and reflective teachers. In order to become teachers of English, students should acquire strong subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and the ability to work with learners belonging to different age groups. Trainees should become cognizant of the professional and personal dimension of teaching, of the social, cultural, economic, political or emotional factors that can generate a significant impact on their teaching practice.

Living in a globalized world brings new perspectives on the intricate relationship between language teaching and culture. Therefore, this course also targets the development of intercultural communicative competence. The current requirements of the European Union concerning the teaching and learning of foreign languages place a great emphasis on the development of an *intercultural speaker* who is aware of cultural similarities and differences, and is able to act as mediator between two or more cultures, two or more sets of beliefs, values and behaviours (Byram 2008, 75). A great number of documents and recommendations (Key Competences for Lifelong Learning-European Reference Framework¹, the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue², The Aims of Language Teaching and Learning³, and The

¹http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/l1-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

² http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

³ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/ListDocs_Geneva2010.asp#P58_2278

European Profile for Language Teacher Education⁴) imply that language should not be taught independently of culture in the foreign language classroom. Both teachers and learners should strive to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary in order to become intercultural speakers. The concept ‘intercultural speaker’ was coined by Byram and Zarate when working for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe 2001.

Course objectives

The course aims to familiarize future teachers of English with the theoretical and practical implications that emerge from teaching a foreign language. An intercultural perspective permeates the entire course because prospective teachers have to be resourceful and responsive when addressing their courses and activities to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Following the line of a constructivist approach, this course is learner-cantered and intends to cater individual differences by offering various differentiated teaching activities.

Specific objectives

- be able to use various methods, strategies, techniques in order to teach specific skills, vocabulary items and grammar points
- be able to analyse the elements that intervene in the process of teaching and learning
- be able to create lesson plans and analyse different classroom management issues
- be able to adapt various teaching resources to different knowledge levels and various learning skills
- be able to evaluate course books and the appropriateness of other teaching resources

The academic skills targeted by the course refer to:

- developing critical thinking
- learning autonomy and time management skills

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/profil-broch_en.pdf

- improving communicative skills
- tackling different genres and understanding various registers
- providing arguments using connectors
- analysing a multimodal resource.

Targeted transversal competences

The course intends to develop several transversal competences such as: learning to learn and lifelong learning skills, social competence, digital skills, intercultural communicative competence and interpersonal skills. Critical-thinking is developed through thinking critically about one's lesson, by giving feedback and interacting with peers.

Problem-solving skills are addressed when trainees need to exhibit good classroom management skills as they try out new strategies and teaching techniques. Reflective skills are developed when trainees are asked questions in order to guide discussions of both real case-studies and probable future experiences. New skills and tools can be put in practice while being engaged in team-teaching sessions.

The course and the seminar provide pre-service teachers with various opportunities to be engaged in peer observation while performing teaching activities. Thus, they are encouraged to be reflective, to provide feedback and to be open about making improvements in their teaching practices.

All the topics tackled in this course are infused with an intercultural perspective that permeates the three areas that prospective teachers should acquire: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge about how diverse students learn. By incorporating relevant research and literature, various authentic materials and by taking part in projects and discussion sessions, the course aims to enable pre-service teachers to develop their intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes and to acquire good teaching practices for handling diverse classrooms.

1.4 The role of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in foreign language teaching

In today's foreign language learning methodology three elements have been empowered and brought together in a more visible manner: language, culture and identity. All the parties involved in providing and receiving education have been assigned new responsibilities. The educational institutions need to adapt their curriculum in order to "accommodate the intercultural dimension in teaching and learning foreign languages" (Pop 2016, 92). Both teachers and learners need to take a more active role in becoming "social agents and (...) efficient communicator's in today's globalized world" (Pop 2016, 92). Course books and teaching resources need to be adapted as to reflect the diversity in the classroom as well as the diversity outside the classroom.

The field of foreign language learning has undergone various shifts of perspective from *linguistic competence* (Chomsky 1965), to *communicative competence* (Hymes 1972), and afterwards to *intercultural communicative competence* (Byram 1997) in order to address the changes that have occurred in educational and sociocultural settings. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is understood as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Deardorff 2006, 13). A great emphasis is placed on individuals' ability to communicate and to relate to other people belonging to different cultures.

Although the concept of ICC and the interest for developing an integrated teaching and learning of both of language and culture has been covered in the literature by many researchers (Kramsch 1998; Byram 1997; Deardorff 2006) Liddiecoat and Scarino (2009, 74) suggest that there has not been issued "an adequate theory of language development from an intercultural perspective". Much is left for the teacher to decide and discover on his/her own which strategies and resources that are conducive to intercultural learning in a particular

classroom setting are the most appropriate. Because this intercultural perspective encourages changes to take place in the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains of learning, it is difficult to validate the measure in which one single aspect influences other.

Communication has both a transactional and an interpersonal aim attached to it. The concept of ICC focuses both on language proficiency and on being able to establish relationships and socialize with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This idea is suggested also by Liddicoat and Kohler (2012, 75) who consider that “knowing a language means more than knowing the code; it means engaging in social practices using that code in order to participate in social life”. Therefore, it is advisable to include as often as possible intercultural perspectives and content in the language-learning task.

Pragmatic competence, as a core component of the communicative language competence according to the CEFR (2001, 13) is valid and perfectly justified in an intercultural perspective on foreign language learning. A functional definition of pragmatics would be in this context: to know what to say, how to say it, and when to say it in the right context, even if this context is a new cultural one. Accuracy in the foreign language is a sought for ability, but of paramount importance is also the appropriateness of the discourse.

Learners learning a foreign language have to get accustomed to both a new communicative and a new cultural repertoire. Therefore, they need to distinguish what is or what is not appropriate in a given context, how they can convey illocutionary aspects (...) and make use or identify politeness markers in the foreign language. Schmidt (1993 Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 180) explains that even after prolonged exposure to the target language learners are not likely to develop pragmatic competence. Some form of instruction with “appropriately tuned in materials” (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 193) is necessary. In this respect, Takahashi (2001 in Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 180) indicates three directions that need to be considered:

- explicit teaching of pragmatics (metapragmatic explanation),

- form-comparison between L1 and TL pragmatics (misuse, infelicities, inappropriate remarks etc.),
- form-search where students get the possibility to identify pragmatic language elements in provided scenarios.

These directions would be conducive to acquiring metapragmatic awareness. Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh (2008, 193) consider that in the context of second or foreign language learning “pragmatic ability [...] must be incorporated in a model of communicative ability” in order to provide learners with the opportunity to communicate appropriately in the target language. Consequently, there is a need for “instruction to focus on the pragmatics of the language” (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 179).

In addition, teachers should also demonstrate sound metapragmatic awareness. As mediators between L1 and the TL language and culture, they should make proof of their “awareness of cross-culturally diverse patterns of linguistic action” (Kasper 1997, 113 cited in Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 194). Only a few studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1997; Eslami-Rasekh 2005; Rose 1997) have addressed the issue of pragmatics in ESL teacher education programmes (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 179). Still, in the formal educational setting of second or foreign language learning the teacher should demonstrate “cultural, pragmatic and interactional expertise” (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2008, 193) in order to be able to model for learners an appropriate instance of communication. Therefore, teacher education programmes should aim to help language teachers to become experts in the target language.

Models of intercultural communicative competence

This chapter makes reference to two widely accepted models of developing ICC. The first model was developed by Byram in 1997 and it aimed to define “the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language” (Byram 1997, 71). This model of ICC is comprised of five *savoirs*: knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness, skills of interpreting and relating and skills of

discovery and interaction (Byram 1997). Table no. 1 below indicates several components of these saviors:

Intercultural Communicative Competence		
Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
“knowledge about social groups and their cultures, knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal level” (Byram 1997, 35)	“ability to interpret a document or event from another culture”, ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (Byram 1997, 37-38)	“curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief” (Byram 1997, 34)

Table no. 1. Intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes.

These components are to be acquired through experience and reflection in contexts that combine formal and informal interventions.

The second model developed by Deardorff (2006) is a process model of intercultural competence that starts with attitudes, and then individuals develop knowledge and skills. The model also comprises external (appropriate communication and behaviour, etc.) and internal (flexibility, adaptability, etc.) outcomes that regulate this process of developing ICC. Acquiring ICC is not a linear process, but a dynamic one consisting of various layers that contribute to its development in a life-long learning perspective. Image no. 1. below describes the dynamic view of intercultural communicative competence.



Image no. 1. A dynamic view of the intercultural communicative competence
(from Pop 2015, 16)

The different colours of the spiral refer to the three components: intercultural knowledge, intercultural skills and intercultural attitudes that develop gradually in view of the contexts a person encounters and not necessarily in a pre-determined order. Each element of the spiral develops gradually, and not thoroughly.

Culture and the foreign language teaching

Cultural knowledge refers more to “general knowing that underlies how language is used and how things are said and done in a cultural context” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 78) and opposed to intercultural knowledge that implies the idea of interplay or of an interaction between one’s own culture and the TL culture. A further distinction is made between cultural orientation and intercultural orientation. Liddicoat and Kohler (2012, 78-79) consider two directions when it comes to teaching culture:

- **a cultural orientation:** culture is regarded as an object of study and the focus is placed on acquiring factual knowledge about

culture, i.e. elements that are visible in a culture (art, music, food, clothing etc.). In this sense, the learner is a passive receiver of culture and the learner does not undergo any changes or decentring from his/her own culture in terms of values, attitudes or beliefs. Culture tends to remain external to the learner and does not transform the learner's existing practices, values, attitudes and identity. The development of factual knowledge about culture focuses only on the accumulation of data about a certain culture. This tends to be the main approach to culture in many learning resources.

- **an intercultural orientation:** this “implies a transformational engagement of the student in the act of learning” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 79) because it seeks to engage the learner into an exchange between L1 and TL culture. Likewise, the learner is encouraged to explore how language and culture relate and influence each other. The learner develops a “sense of self as a user of language and as a cultural being” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 80).

The Reference Framework issued in 2006 by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (Council Recommendation 2018, 7) indicates eight key competencies for lifelong learning that should be acquired during compulsory education and developed throughout one's lifetime. Because this book tackles the topic of developing foreign language from an intercultural perspective only the following two competences were selected for discussion:

- multilingual competence,
- cultural awareness and expression.

Multilingual competence entails the ability to use other foreign languages besides one's mother tongue when communicating in various contexts. The competence referring to cultural awareness and expression refers to being more reflective of how communication can be influenced by specific beliefs and values. In addition, it lays emphasis on addressing issues of identity and of exhibiting respect, acceptance and tolerance towards both the mother tongue culture and the target

language culture. According to the competence-based paradigm in education, competences are considered to be comprised of three elements:

- knowledge (factual information, concepts, theories within a certain field of activity or subject),
- skills (procedural knowledge, i.e. how to use the acquired knowledge in order to carry out different processes),
- attitudes (a certain disposition or mind-set to interact with people or act in different situations) (Council Recommendation 2018, 7).

In addition, a competence is a lifelong learning experience that develops in each stage of one's life, in formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts by putting to good use particular knowledge, abilities and attitudes in concrete situations. In this respect, a competence has a formative value and it develops gradually through exposure to different tasks and contexts.

Table no. 2 indicates some of the elements of the multilingual competence with respect to the three components listed above:

Multilingual competence	
<i>Knowledge</i>	Demonstrate sound knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in the foreign language; demonstrate awareness of different registers of language use and discourse; master the pragmatics of the language.
<i>Skills</i>	Demonstrate skills related to literacy (understand spoken and written messages in a foreign language, be able to convey a message using different channels of communication); be able to use appropriately the foreign language in different intercultural contexts; master adequately non-verbal language.
<i>Attitudes</i>	Exhibit respect and curiosity towards other foreign languages; demonstrate willingness to learn a new language; refrain from using

	biased or discriminatory language
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Table no. 2. Multilingual competence.

Table no. 3 comprises the elements of the competence of cultural awareness and expression:

Cultural awareness and expression	
<i>Knowledge</i>	Demonstrate culture specific and culture general knowledge; demonstrate understanding of how people from different cultures have diverse views on life, ethics, time, proximity etc.; become aware of one's own development of identity; become aware of social and cultural norms both in one's mother tongue and in the foreign language;
<i>Skills</i>	Ability to express cultural values; ability to identify and relate to culture specific beliefs and values; be knowledgeable about the way in which language use is subjected to implicit and explicit elements of culture; ability to adapt one's discourse to a specific cultural context; be able to interact effectively with people from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds
<i>Attitudes</i>	Demonstrate positive attitudes towards the mother tongue culture and the target language culture; demonstrate curiosity for discovering a new culture; be open-minded and tolerant to elements of culture that seem distinct from one's own culture.

Table no. 3. Cultural awareness and expression.

As indicated in table no. 2 and table no. 3 above, to be a proficient and accurate communicator in a foreign language entails the acquisition of all the three components of a competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes).

The Romanian education system is based on the eight key competences established by the CEFR (2001). The school curriculum for English as a foreign language for classes ranging from 5 to 8th grade⁵ aims to integrate both language and culture in the teaching process. Thus, as regards understanding oral messages in communicative situations, learners are encouraged to express curiosity about certain elements specific to the target language culture (2017, 4), to identify elements that are specific to L1 culture and to the TL culture (2017, 10) or to show interest in knowing personalities and cultural events (2017, 13). In terms of content, learning resources should include authentic documents (poster announcements, ticket tours, magazines, songs, videos, literature, etc.) in order to provide different registers and types of discourse specific for different types of texts. Every school curriculum for English focuses on the same values and intercultural attitudes. These refer to:

- demonstrating flexibility in the exchange of ideas and within a working group in different communication situations
- awareness of the role of English as a means of access to universal cultural heritage
- accepting differences and demonstrating tolerance when engaging in different cultural contexts
- developing interest in discovering specific cultural aspects in a variety of texts written in English by making reference to the civilization of the Anglo-Saxon cultural space.

The examples indicated above conclude that an emphasis is placed on developing skills, knowledge and attitudes that are in line with an intercultural perspective on teaching foreign languages. The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth in Romania issued in July 2007 an official order (Order no. 1529/18.07.2007) which tackled for the first time in the Romanian education system the issue of cultural diversity in the national curriculum. New books for teaching English as a foreign language have been issued with regard to this official order. In addition, it is compulsory for teachers to attend courses that would

⁵ <http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/Curriculum/2017-progr/19-Limba%20moderna1.pdf>

develop their teaching skills and would provide support in their professional development.

Questions and tasks

1. Provide your own definition of 'culture'. There are many collocations with the word culture: classroom cultures, pop culture, youth culture, etc. Create a semantic map in order to include other collocations and consider the degree in which this concept has undergone changes in the way it is perceived nowadays.
2. Create your own cultural iceberg model. What elements would you include in the visible culture and what elements in the invisible culture? Motivate your choice.
3. Choose a school curriculum for English as a foreign language that is in force in Romania. Analyse it and decide whether the linguistic and cultural aims of this school curriculum are in accordance with learners' level of language/age group.

Summary

In the last two decades, the educational arena has undergone considerable changes in order to accommodate teaching and learning to the requirements imposed by a globalized society. Foreign language learning is expected to play a more active role in enabling learners to engage effectively and appropriately in intercultural dialogue both with peers and teachers in diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Nowadays, a constant emphasis is placed on developing teachers' intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills. The development of the ICC urges teachers to transfer all theoretical knowledge into clear pedagogical aims in order to operationalize every aspect of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

The teaching of a foreign language, in a formal learning environment, has demanded a change due to the multitude of variables it usually engages: students' perspective on the foreign language and

culture, learners' different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, learners' needs and their diverse learning styles, the quest for identity and approval both for learners and teachers etc. The intercultural turn expected from teachers a change in mind-set so that they would develop skills, attitudes and knowledge that support an understanding of the implications of multiculturalism and multilingualism in the formal classroom setting.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

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2. The teacher and the learner in the EFL classroom

Introduction

The foreign language classroom represents an arena where different individuals meet, establish rapport and strive to reach together various goals. The emphasis is laid on *different* because each individual brings in the classroom one's way of perceiving life, one's identity and values or one's socio-cultural background. Put straightforward, a teacher is not just a teacher in the classroom. The prevailing characteristic of being first of all a human being leads to the fact that one brings in the classroom, in a conscious or unconscious manner, feelings, views of life, and a cultural baggage.

Learners also have unique traits that are going to influence, to some extent, the way one learns a foreign language or one's expectations of what should happen in terms of interaction patterns in the formal educational setting. Each developmental stage in the educational path of a learner is linked to certain characteristics. Thus, a teacher should consider also how he/she paces and adapts the content that needs to be taught. This chapter intends to cast light on the characteristics of a good teacher and of a good language learner. We question these traits in view of the challenges that education has to overcome in a globalized society.

Keywords: *foreign language teaching, teacher, student, characteristics, personality, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, procedural knowledge, non-native speaker, native speaker, identity, culture, teacher roles, leadership styles, learner characteristics, motivation, age, intelligence, digital skills, learner autonomy, student-centred learning, intercultural communicative competence, establishing rapport, multicultural classroom.*

2.1 The professional profile of a foreign language teacher

The teaching profession in Romania is a profession regulated by law. Most of the times, when we make reference to the formal educational setting, teachers are persons who has graduated some courses that, in accordance with the laws of a particular country, are allowed to teach at various levels of education: kindergarten, primary education, secondary education or university level.

State owned kindergartens in Romania usually offer optional courses in English or in other foreign languages. Being an optional course that usually does not last longer than 30 minutes due to learners' low attention span, the law does not indicate that a teacher should have obtained a Bachelor level in English or that the teacher should have graduated a teacher training course. On the other hand, private kindergartens can offer the whole instructional process in a foreign language and then other policies apply for those teachers.

In what concerns the primary and secondary education in the Romanian education system, according to the National Education Law no. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments, teachers of foreign languages are allowed to teach only after they have completed an initial training or a second level of teacher training courses at Master level in order to. The initial training performed at BA level gives prospective teachers the possibility to teach in the compulsory education system which comprises the learners ranging from the 1st grade up to the 10th grade. The second level of training performed at MA level gives would-be teachers the possibility to teach to learners ranging from the 11th grade up the 12th grade or at university level.

Additionally, to a second level of training performed at MA level, a PhD is required if a teacher wants to perform teaching activities at university level. The default study period to acquire a PhD at Babeş-Bolyai University, according to the Bologna agreement, is three years. Usually, one writes a PhD thesis in the field that has been studied at BA level.

The internalization of education has determined many universities to provide a large amount of their courses in English or in

other foreign languages. Globalization led to an increase in mobility and learners now travel worldwide in order to find the best courses, specializations and learning programmes. Considering the varieties of the English language, a teacher at university level would approach the teaching of English from two different perspectives: *English for special purposes* (taught in order to manage different job requirements) or *English for Academic Purposes* (taught in order to succeed in higher education).

Teacher characteristics

Teachers come in different shapes and forms. Some have been motivated to become teachers from an early age. Others had gradually become fond of teaching. Being an efficient teacher implies, at least metaphorically, to be a juggler with lots of balls in the air, i.e. one who manages well different situations or elements that happen at once. Madsen and Bowen (1978, IX cited in Donough, Shaw & Masuhara 2013, 65) suggest that a good teacher should simultaneously strive to handle the following variables: “teaching materials, methodology, students, course objectives, the target language and its context, and the teacher’s own personality and teaching style”. The challenge arises when one has to consider all these variables at once.

In order to be prepared teachers for the realities of the classroom, a teacher should exhibit:

- sound content/subject-matter knowledge;
- pedagogic content knowledge (Schulman 1987);
- procedural knowledge.

Subject-matter knowledge, in our case, refers to knowledge of English syntax, morphology, phonology, grammar, vocabulary etc. Pedagogic content knowledge implies that the teacher should be aware of various teaching methods, of diverse teaching techniques and of ways of motivating and engaging learners in different activities. In addition, they should also be aware of education policies and issues related to curriculum policies and development. Procedural knowledge allows a teacher to make informed choices about what and how to

teach, in view of students' readiness, development and learning characteristics. All these three types of knowledge are inter-related and inter-conditioned within the teaching profession.

Teachers bring in the classroom both personal and professional characteristics. It would be highly unlikely to leave aside personal characteristics as one steps inside the classroom. Or maybe it is not even advisable to do so, since the teacher should stand as a model for his/her students. This teacher model should be diligent, honest, even-handed, respectful, positive, curious, enthusiastic, etc.

These characteristics are complementary to the professional ones: be able to use appropriately verbal and non-verbal communication, speak English in an accurate manner, attend workshops and conferences that focus on education, be a lifelong learner, keep up-to-date with recent developments in education, be reflective, make the content of instruction relevant for students, demonstrate metacognitive skills, demonstrate problem-solving skills, acquire digital skills, knowledge of how to engage and motivate learners, and so on. The term *professionalism* is often encountered in connection to teacher education or teaching competence. Leung (2009, 49) explains that teacher professionalism refers broadly to practitioners' knowledge, skills and conduct.

Adrian Doff (1992, 7) suggests that teaching behaviour should be comprised of three stages:

- before the lesson takes place (preparation skills are activated),
- during the lesson (teaching and classroom management skills are activated),
- after the lesson (reflective practice skills are activated).

Planning a lesson or planning a presentation is as important as delivering it. A careful planning lets the teacher in on who the audience is, on choosing appropriate discussion topics, on planning ahead the interaction patterns or on establishing back-up plans in case the teaching situation goes astray. During the teaching sequence, the teacher should use a variety of techniques and tools that are meant to keep students focused and motivated: the use of different ICT tools,

gap-information activities, role-plays, problem-solving activities, activities that develop critical thinking, activities that target higher-order thinking, etc. The *reflecting teacher movement* (Lockhart and Richards 1994; Schon 1983, 1987; Zeichner and Liston 1996) has emphasized according to Johnson (2009, 23) the need of teachers to reflect critically on their teaching as a mechanism of change in classroom practices.

Teachers should not act only as “mechanical operators of pedagogic procedures” (Leung 2009, 55), but as reflective practitioners who understand what appropriate actions they have to take. Thus, each teaching experience can shape the complex way teachers reflect and perceive themselves.

Teacher roles performed in the classroom

A development in methodology targeted the shift of emphasis from the teacher to the learner (Doff 1992, 9) with implications on reconsidering teacher roles, the planning of lessons and the interaction patterns in the classrooms. The traditional model of pouring information into empty vessels (i.e. students) is no longer considered acceptable.

A deeper understanding of how learning takes place led to a shift in the “traditional metaphor of transfer of knowledge into the more modern metaphor of construction of knowledge” (Heikkinen 2016, 25). Image no. 2 provides a visual support:

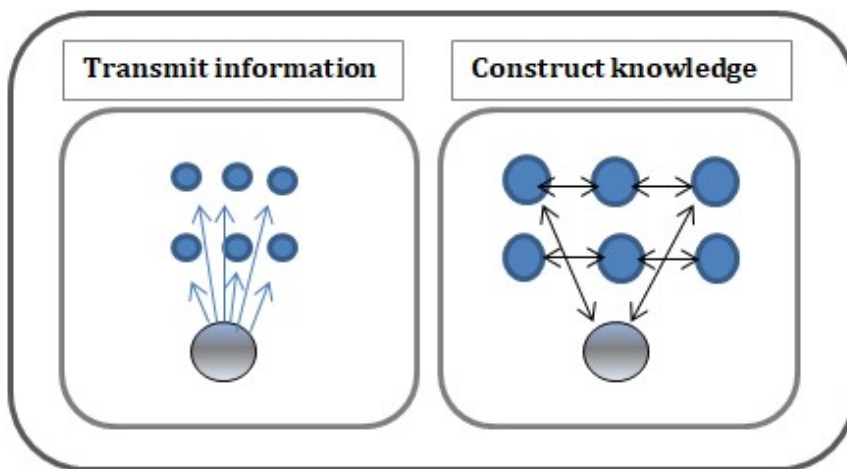


Image no. 2. Imparting knowledge

As a consequence, this perspective requires the teacher to act as a facilitator and enable learners to enter a dialogic relationship and jointly construct the knowledge to be acquired. Depending on the aim of a particular teaching sequence, the teacher can exhibit a variety of roles:

- *prompter*: one who offers learners just the right amount of support without controlling the activity
- *resource*: one who provides help in case students encounter difficulties
- *participant*: one who joins a pair-work or a group-work activity when the situation requires it
- *diagnostician*: one who makes an inquiry of learners' needs and the difficulties they struggle with and uses afterwards this knowledge in order to make the necessary amends
- *assessor*: one who evaluates learners' performance
- *manager*: one who organizes the physical teaching space (seating arrangements), establishes routines etc.
- *reflective individual*: one who evaluates his/her performance and identifies steps for improvement

- *motivator*: one who encourages learners and provides constructive feedback so that the learner knows what steps to take next

These roles enable the teacher to create the right conditions and the appropriate context under which learning and teaching can take place. As concerns a teacher's teaching style, Wright (1988, 68) suggests this one is "a complex amalgam of belief, attitude, strategy, technique, motivation, personality and control". In addition, instruction can be performed in different modes, depending on the "materials being used, the expectations of the learners, the subject matter being treated, the prescriptions of school administrators" (Wright 1988, 69).

The classroom can also be an arena for exhibiting different leadership styles:

- *autocratic*: the teacher who has an autocratic leadership style controls the classroom in every detail (establishes rules on his own, decides the seating arrangement and the details of group-work and pair work activities, etc.)
- *democratic*: this leadership style allows learners to take part, up to a certain level, in the decision-making process, always looks for improving teacher-student rapport, understands that change is necessary and tries cater for learners' needs.
- *laissez-faire*: the teacher is inconsistent both in what concerns applying rules and following them
- *indifferent*: the teacher does not like what he teaches, he/she does not like the job he/she is performing and these factors are responsible for the low level of involvement in the classroom.

Establishing rapport

Teachers strengthen their professional relationship with their learners when they make room for activities that allow learners to get to know the diverse languages and cultures in the classroom. This is the first step towards creating a community in the classroom. Language is such a powerful connector between people. The role of language increases in a foreign language learning context because of the need to

establish rapport. Thus, the classroom becomes a medium for expressing personal points of views, and a considerable amount of personal information surfaces.

The beginning of a new school year requires the teacher and the learners to make the best use of this accommodation process. It is advisable that the first weeks are used for getting to know the individuals in the classroom alongside with teaching them the subject matter. On the one hand, learners need to have the chance to discover their likes and dislikes and develop their social skills. Likewise, the success of a pair-work or of a group-work activity will probably not be determined by the refusal to work with someone. Individuals who are friends or who get acquainted to each other tend to collaborate better. If the learning environment is a positive one, then teaching can begin. On the other hand, this initial phase allows the teacher to get to know his/her students, to understand their preferred topics of discussion and to understand their expectations for the course. Once the teacher gathers all these details the planning phase can proceed.

Still, the teacher-student rapport might fail in some situations:

- respect should be a two-way road: the teacher respecting the learners and the learners respecting the teacher,
- not listening to one's learners/teacher,
- when the teacher is not even-handed,
- not bother to know your students' names,
- when private matters are brought in the classroom.

At the beginning of a new school year/semester, ice-breaker activities are necessary in order to give both teachers and learners the possibility to get to know each other. Ice-breaker activities have the purpose to release a bit the tension that arises when people meet each other for the first time. In order to be meaningful, ice-breakers should have some of the following characteristics:

- be age appropriate
- be fun and interesting to perform
- be easy to follow, without too difficult instruction
- each student should manage to perform them

- everyone should be a winner
- be not too lengthy

New challenges for the teacher

Technological advancements and globalization, the emergence of new fields of study and various political and economic factors have challenged education in many ways. In this context, it is without doubt that teachers' professional knowledge has to be constantly updated. Some of these challenges that teachers meet are indicated below. It is indicated their effect on the learning process, but also on the learners themselves.

Lantolf and Johnson (2007) advocate for a broadening of the concept of language acquisition towards a functional understanding of language as "social practice". The sociocultural turn in language learning proposed by Karen Johnson (2006) intends to make learners more aware of the characteristics of an appropriate communicative instance in a particular sociocultural context. Furthermore, this shift of perspective considering language as "drawing meaning from broader social, cultural and historical contexts, reorients how [...] teachers must come to think about and teach language" (Johnson 2009, 25). The challenge for the teacher resides in identifying the appropriate resources in order to create meaningful teaching sequences that help students not only to communicate in a language, but also to allow them to establish relationships. Language as a social practice stems from the fact that when learning the mother tongue, the child is immersed in culture and gets familiar with it unconsciously. Still, for second or foreign language learners this is a conscious process that requires much introspection.

Teaching a foreign language cannot be separated from its corresponding target culture since through language one communicates cultural norms, expectations and values. Applying cultural lenses to exploring teaching resources, especially authentic materials, implies the development of a certain degree of intercultural communicative competence which, according to Byram (1997, 7) constitutes "an

individual's ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries." Both teachers and learners are required to develop various levels of intercultural communicative competence.

The implications of today's globalized world in the field of foreign languages have added a new challenge for the teachers: teachers themselves as well as their learners should acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to communicate appropriately and efficiently in any given international context. The European Profiling Grid (EPG) is an EU-funded project that indicates various descriptors related to six development phases in a language teacher's professional evolution. This framework can contribute to raising awareness of language teaching competences and teaching quality and it can also be used in reflective practice. EPG (<http://egrid.epg-project.eu/en/egrid#>) identifies different levels of training, teaching competencies and means to acquire professional conduct. Table no. 4 below summarizes some of elements comprised in these development phases aiming to evaluate teachers' intercultural competence:

Development phase 1	Development phase 2	Development phase 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher is aware of the fact that language and culture should be taught in an integrated manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher is able to avoid intercultural problems arising in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher is able to find or design projects and presentations in order to broaden his/her and students' perspective of intercultural issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher is able to discuss and present to learners factual knowledge about specific and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher can identify the best suitable resources to match the cultural horizon of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher can make use of his/her intercultural knowledge and

general elements of culture.	learners.	awareness in order to help less experienced colleagues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher demonstrates ability to create an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding in a multicultural classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher makes proof of his/her ability to promote inclusive education and mutual respect in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher is able to create activities and resources for his/her own and colleagues' use in order to develop learners' ICC.

Table no. 4. The European Profiling Grid

According to this grid, the culturally sensitive teacher is expected to organize the teaching space with regard to the diversity of the classroom, to focus on “materials and methods that develop specific elements of intercultural competence” (Byram 2009, 331), to “speak with confidence to a variety of audiences” (Dimitrov, Dawson, Olsen & Meadows 2014, 87) across cultures and to contribute to broadening learners’ cultural horizons.

Multilingual and multicultural classrooms are today a growing reality in many countries all over the world. In the field of education and particularly in the area of foreign language learning, educators “should be trained to deal with the growing diversity of learners” (European Commission 2015, 5). Every teacher is required to adapt and respond to these demographic changes. We offer two functional definitions for the above concepts. A *multilingual classroom* is comprised of students who are able to speak different languages besides the official instruction language. A *multicultural classroom* is a learning context in which learners, even when they speak the same language of instruction, can belong to different mother-tongue cultures. In a multilingual or a multicultural setting, the reflective teacher should promote an inclusive learning environment based on tolerance and

respect and admit that linguistic diversity is a reality. Therefore, teachers should strive to develop instructional styles that cater for these diverse classrooms.

Researchers Hartnett, Brown & Anderson (2014) claim that the emergence of digital technology has determined the student population to undergo some changes in the way students perceive, handle and make use of information. The *Generation Z* learners, born after 1995, are digital natives and prefer to be exposed to experiential learning, to discovery and problem-solving activities, and to the use of technology when performing learning activities. They want to understand the purpose of learning, would like to be involved in experiential learning and feel more motivated to work with multimodal resources which present information through different channels (audio, text, etc.). In this respect, a good language teacher should always keep himself/herself up to date with technological advancements and should try to design activities that incorporate the right amount of student collaboration (writing wikis, digital storytelling, etc.), degree of competition (online evaluation apps, etc.) and a balanced use of learning skills (visual, audio or kinaesthetic skills).

Patrick and McPhee (130-131) suggest that “professional identity rests on personal identity” and as such it is based on individual beliefs, feelings and values. In other cases “social and cultural aspects such as ethnicity, culture and religion” (Kostogriz & Peeler 2007 cited in Patrick & McPhee 131) or institutional practices and access to professional development define teachers’ personal and professional identity. A growing body of recent research (Pennycook 2001; Morgan 2004; Norton 2006) has tried to define the concept of ‘teacher identity’ and reached to the conclusion that identity is negotiated through interaction and in context. Teachers, on a daily basis, undergo an “ongoing development of professional teacher identities” (Miller 2009, 178) deciding what is appropriate in the classroom from a personal, sociocultural or institutional point of view and to what extent “knowledge, pedagogy and identity intersect” (Miller 2009, 178). In the context of foreign language teaching a non-native speaker teacher

transitions between two or more cultures and becomes a mediator between learners' L1 and TL culture. Therefore, in order to promote understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity in the classroom, the foreign language teacher has to explore on his/her own the complex relationship between language and culture.

When it comes to issues of identity, teachers who teach a language other than their mother tongue are still striving to acquire legitimacy. Therefore, "the status of the native speaker as model for language use [...] has been questioned" (Fekete 2015, 54) in view of the fact that a non-native will hardly ever acquire the same linguistic, pragmatic or cultural competence as a native speaker. Still, non-native speaking teachers should not be considered less efficient. One argument in favour for sustaining this point of view is the fact that a non-native speaker teacher has taken the same route while learning a foreign language as his/her learners have (Enyedi 2000, 8 cited in Fekete 2015, 55) and thus can anticipate the difficulties they are going to encounter.

The second argument is provided by Freeman, McBee Orzulak & Morrissey (2009, 83) who argue that non-native speaker teachers are perceived as less qualified even if they may have more "in-depth grammatical and meta-linguistic knowledge" in comparison to a native speaker teacher. Birch (2009, 35) is in favour of using the term 'expert speaker' because it "legitimizes a more egalitarian concept based on language expertise". When discussing issues related to the identity of a teacher and his/her proficiency in a language, a distinction should be made between *knowing the language* and *knowing about the language* (Freeman, McBee Orzulak & Morrissey 2009, 83). In consequence, natives and non-natives have an equal chance to becoming successful teachers even if there are some advantages and disadvantages on both sides. Emphasis is placed on the agreement of getting rid of the native speaker versus non-native speaker division since these two terms are impossible to define (Kaplan 1999 cited in Kamhi-Stein 2009, 91).

Questions and tasks

1. Literature indicates that a good teacher should have various competencies. To what extent do these competences depend on/are influenced by the following contextual factors:

- a) A teacher who teaches foreign languages to learners with special needs.
- b) A teacher who teaches in a virtual classroom environment.
- c) A teacher who teaches to very young learners/pre-school level.

2. What are the sources of teacher professionalism? Be reflective about your own teaching skills, knowledge and attitudes. Which are the areas that need to be improved?

3. Design a SWOT chart (strengths/ weaknesses/opportunities/threats) for a non-native speaker teacher and another chart for a native speaker teacher.

4. The non-verbal channel of expression is also a carrier of meaning. Watch the following two videos from www.teachingchannel.com and analyse teachers' non-verbal language. Provide a strategy in order to improve your non-verbal language. Do you often use gestures? Which ones do you tend to use the most?

- a) <https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/classroom-lesson-starters>
- b) <https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/reinforcing-learning>

5. Read the quotation below and express your opinion regarding the learning process. Provide arguments in favour or against it:

“Learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. Most people learn best by being ‘with it’, yet schools makes them identify their personal cognitive growth with elaborate planning and manipulation”.

(Ivan Illich 1971, 44)

6. Design a teaching activity that focuses on developing speaking skills and aims to improve learners' ability to express *opinion*. The activity

will take approximatively 20 minutes. As a teacher, you are going to perform different roles during these 20 minutes. Describe each role and its purpose.

7. Watch two videos depicting two teachers in their first day of school. After watching the videos express your opinion related to the teachers' leadership styles.

1. Tough love: first day of school

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/establishing-classroom-ground-rules>

2. Setting Expectations on the First Day of School

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/setting-classroom-expectations>

8. Take a leap back in time and think of your former teachers. Which leadership styles did they exhibit? Which leadership style was the most efficient to help you acquire knowledge? Provide arguments. Which leadership style do you think you are going to exhibit? Provide arguments.

9. Watch Rita Pierson's TED talk presentation entitled: *Every child needs a champion*.

(https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion, accessed 10 March, 2019). Identify some other teacher characteristics that have not been already mentioned in the theoretical underpinnings.

10. Design an ice-breaker activity for each age group:

a) very young learners/young learners

b) teenagers

c) adults

Provide a name to your ice-breaker, indicate the aims, the stages, the resources used, the time needed and the interaction patterns in the classroom. Take into consideration the criteria for creating a successful ice-breaker.

11. Think of various activities that can improve the teacher-student rapport/relationship in the classroom.

12. Jim Scrivener (1994, 7-8) indicates some factors in a teacher that might positively influence the learning atmosphere in the classroom:

- gives clear, positive feedback
- has a good sense of humour
- is patient
- is well-organized
- paces lessons well
- is enthusiastic
- is honest
- is approachable

Place these factors in the appropriate column below. Try to think of other characteristics and include these in the appropriate column in table no. X below:

<i>Personal characteristics</i>	<i>Professional characteristics</i>

Summary

In order to be an efficient practitioner and a professional, a teacher should exhibit sound content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and procedural knowledge. Depending on the aim of a particular teaching sequence, the teacher can exhibit a variety of roles and teaching styles. Technological advancements and globalization, the emergences of new fields of study, the reality of multilingual and multicultural classrooms, all have challenged to a great extent the job description of a teacher. The new challenges for teachers refer to acknowledging that the fact that language is social practice. In view of this understanding, both learners and practitioners need to develop

intercultural communicative competence. In addition, in order to update teaching practices to consider the new realities, teachers need to constantly engage and motivate learners to further develop. Still, when it comes to issues of identity, teachers who teach a language other than their mother tongue are still striving to acquire legitimacy.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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www.TEDtalks.com

2. 2 The profile of a foreign language learner

The learner, in our particular case, is an individual who learns a foreign language in the context of the formal classroom. Foreign language learning is different in many respects from second language learning:

- exposure to language
- the context of receiving input (formal/ informal /non formal)
- the goal of learning: communicative competence/ quest for identity and approval
- graded language
- socio-cultural context

Table no. 5 below provides a detailed perspective of the differences that characterize second and foreign language teaching and learning:

<i>Second language learning</i>	<i>Foreign language learning</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exposure to language takes place on a daily basis (TV, newspapers, impromptu discussions, listening to music, to news, train departures etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exposure to language is usually determined by the courses/time slots established in the timetable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exposure to language usually takes place in informal and non-formal contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exposure to language usually takes place in the formal classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Language input is not graded to a certain level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Language input is usually graded
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Learning a second language might turn into a quest for identity and approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The goals of learning a foreign language are often focused on the development of communicative competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The learning of a second	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The learning of a foreign

language takes place in a genuine socio-cultural context	language takes place in the classroom setting, sometimes perceived as being artificial
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Table no. 5. Second vs. foreign language learning

On the one hand, Philp and Duchesne (2008, 84) suggest that in the process of second language acquisition “it is important to view the child’s linguistic, social and cognitive needs and development as interconnected”. The formal context of the classroom becomes an arena where learners construct their identity and seek for the approval of their peers. Therefore, “social goals direct language choices” (Philp and Duchesne 2008, 84) and the relation is one of subordination.

On the other hand, in the context of foreign language learning, one strives to attain communicative competence. Still, the intercultural perspective in the foreign language context brought with it a new quest, that for identity and approval. According to Spolsky (1990, 111) “our native language carries our personal self-representation” and therefore one also needs to create a new identity in the foreign language. In this case, the quest for identity exceeds the micro level of the classroom where maybe learners do not come from so diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and do not have to seek for peer approval. At macro-level, identity is constructed with each intercultural encounter. Young learners and teenagers tend to be more flexible when it comes to constructing their new identity, as opposed to adults or seniors who are no longer interested in embracing a new identity.

Individual differences

Learners’ characteristics can have an impact on the goals and outcomes of a teaching sequence and can influence planning decisions and choice of teaching resources. Therefore, according to McDonough, Shaw, Masuhara (2013, 7), Harmer (2007), Lightbrown and Spada (2001) and Dörnyei (2005) teachers should consider the following key variables when planning and delivering instruction:

- Age: it influences the choice of topics and of teaching activities

- Interests: it influences the choice of topics
- Aptitude: a specific talent for language learning since some people seem to be more able to learn a another language
- Attitudes: towards learning, the target language, the teacher
- Motivation: the teacher should reflect on the elements of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and try to find a balance between them. Motivation is a valuable asset in foreign language learning since it guarantees a good starting point in learning the language.
- Preferred learning styles: i.e. individual approaches to diverse learning situations. The teacher should engage learners in a variety of learning styles: visual, audio or kinaesthetic learning.
- Mother tongue: the teacher should consider the negative or positive language transfers taking place when learning a new language
- Personality: the teacher should make use in the lesson of different interaction patterns or of different seating arrangements in order to provide learners with a large pool of options (quiet vs. extrovert learners)

Age:

Two main approaches consider the effects of age on second or foreign language acquisition. The first one entitled *maturational approach* suggests that there is a “biological window of opportunity for attaining native-like levels of competence in a language that closes after brain maturation, leading to a sharp decline in success around the end of the critical period and making-native like attainment thereafter impossible” (Long 1990, 2005; Meisel 2007 cited in Dimroth 2008, 55). Unfortunately, the temporal frames of this critical period are still under debate. Researchers (see e.g. Singleton 2005) argue that not age *per se* confines this interval but that other age-related factors are at stake: motivation at different ages, general cognitive development and the amount of prior language knowledge and use (Dimroth 2008, 57).

The second approach targets a usage-based theory of language acquisition. According to this, linguistic rules are meaningful

constructions (Dimroth 2008, 57) and native-likeness cannot be reached because it is difficult for a learner to cope with a new system and with the properties of another language. MacWhinney (2001) and Flege et al. 1995 (cited in Dimroth 2008, 57) suggest that “form-function mappings established during L1 acquisition and use bias the way in which speakers attend to new linguistic stimuli”. Once this processing mechanism has been set in L1, it is almost impossible to switch to a TL mechanism. Since L1 patterns have been encoded earlier in life we could perceive age as being an important factor.

Aptitude

Even if there isn't conclusive research regarding the existence of a specific talent or gift for language learning, there is “consistent evidence to suggest that learning attitude and motivation are important predictors of achievement” (Kohonen 1992, 22).

Intelligence

Success in language learning is not directly related to cognitive ability. Still, according to Mitchell, Myles & Marsden (2013, 25) there is evidence that learners who are above average in their general academic attainment tend to do well in foreign language learning.

Motivation

Dörnyei, a leading expert in the field of second language motivation, suggests that “without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals” (1998, 117). All the other individual differences may fade away, but motivation is the one that sustains the diligence and the hard work necessary to learn a new language. Naiman et al. 1978 (cited in Ur 2009, 275) came to the same conclusion, that the most successful learners are not those who have an aptitude for languages, but that there are those who exhibit the following characteristics:

- positive task orientation (has confidence in his/her success);
- ego-involvement (promotes a positive self-image);

- need for achievement (wants to overcome difficulties);
- high aspirations (ambitious);
- goal orientation (aware of learning goals);
- perseverance (constantly invests effort);
- tolerance for ambiguity (is confident even in situations where he/she lacks understanding).

In light of the intercultural perspective that permeates all levels of education, we could also include cultural background on the list of individual differences. We do not intend to suggest that a particular cultural background is better than another. What we would like to emphasize is that “learning a second language involves confronting a different organization of perception and conceptualization” (Spolsky 1990, 111), and this organization, depending on the difficulties it imposes, might be decisive for one’s academic performance. Cultural differences might influence learners’ expectations about teaching and learning (Mantiri 2013; Yamauchi 1998). Therefore, teachers should make use of teaching strategies and resources that incorporate the cultural diversity of the classroom thus, allowing learners to accomplish their full potential. These culturally conditioned expectations can influence “learners’ comfort with and participation in various classroom activities and arrangements” (Smith & Sadler-Smith 2006, 85) and adjustments might be needed both from the teacher’s and the students’ part.

Another theory that intends to address these human differences is the *Multiple Intelligences* theory developed by Howard Gardner in 1983. According to him, each individual is born with a set of types of intelligence but as one grows up, due to contextual factors, one maybe has the chance to develop a certain type of intelligence to the detriment of another.

We indicate below these seven suggested types of intelligence:

- Linguistic Intelligence
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence
- Spatial Intelligence
- Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence


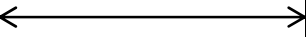

- Musical Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence

This theory informs teachers that to address learning differences in the classroom, they need to variate their teaching techniques and tasks so that they make informed choices about how reach every learner's potential. Learners should not be locked into a single mode of learning but rather be "exposed to a variety of learning contexts in which they can explore and develop their learning strategies" (Wright 1988, 25). Several other types of intelligence have been recently added: existential intelligence, emotional intelligence, etc.

A needs analysis – student learning profiles

It is advisable that teachers perform a needs analysis every time they have a new classroom with students they do not know. This analysis would help the teacher to make informed decisions about students' preferences, cognitive styles, motivation, interests or cultural background. All these pieces of information could be gathered in a student learning profile which is an individualized tool the teacher can use for observing his/her students. Pop (2017, 70) suggests below a model of such a student learning profile.

STUDENT LEARNING PROFILE

Personal information		
Student's name:	Age/ Level of English	Parents'/Tutor's email address:
Mother tongue:		Parents'/Tutor's telephone number:
Other known languages:		
Cultural background:		
Learning style		
Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic
 Less More	 Less More	 Less More

Learning profile		
Multiple intelligences	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal-linguistic <input type="checkbox"/> Logical-mathematical <input type="checkbox"/> Visual/Spatial <input type="checkbox"/> Bodily/ Kinaesthetic <input type="checkbox"/> Musical/Rhythmic	<input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist <input type="checkbox"/> Intrapersonal <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal
Preferred grouping arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual work <input type="checkbox"/> Whole classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Group work <input type="checkbox"/> Pair work
Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading skills <input type="checkbox"/> Listening skills <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Writing skills <input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural skills <input type="checkbox"/> Digital skills	<i>Comments/ Areas that require improvement:</i>
Students' interests and motivation		
Evidence of interest for the school subject	Interests outside classroom	
Evidence of intrinsic motivation	Evidence of extrinsic motivation	
Student's overall progress		
Comments:		

Table no. 6. Student learning profile

The student learning profile should contain details related to:

- personal information (the student's name, age, grade, school, and contact details)
- student's interests and motivation
- student's mother tongue, known languages and cultural background

- student's learning and cognitive styles
- student's preferred types of intelligence
- information about preferred interaction patterns
- details about student's skills

In our view, a teacher could use this profile in the following manner: check the empty boxes, use the arrow in order to make a mark where the student is positioned and fill in the blanks where needed. Other pieces of evidence can be added if needed: result to tests, portfolios, projects etc.

In addition, the student learning profile acknowledges the fact that all individuals “process information differently, and have distinct preferences about where, when, and how” to learn (Gregory & Chapman 2002, 19). Therefore, this profile could be used as an aid to cater for differentiated learning (Pop 2017, 59).

Learners' characteristics

Each developmental stage in the educational path of a learner is linked to certain characteristics. We intend to consider three stages (young learners, teenagers and adults) and provide for each of them particularities regarding their learning capacities and their development of intercultural communicative competence.

Young learners

Before starting teaching to any learners, a teacher should understand that each age group has specific learning needs. Thus, the teacher has to consider different teaching approaches and a variety of resources that would allow the learner to receive the right amount of exposure and comprehensible input in the foreign language. The expectations are high as both parents and the educational institutions require concrete evidence that learners are going on the right path. Knowing how children develop, what their interests and needs are, would allow the teacher to provide appropriate assignments that would focus on the whole learning situation i.e. “activities which are of value to the overall educational and social development of the child and not

merely to develop [...] language skills” (Vale 1995, 28) and not on an isolate skill or language structure. Young learners are not likely to learn structures out of context since they learn best when they are involved, when they are presented a relevant input and when they are the “owners of their work” (Vale 1995, 28).

As concerns young learners and their distribution in the education system in Romania we indicate the following scheme:

- Very young learners - age: 3 - 6 years old (preschool education)
- Young learners - age: 7 - 10 years old (1st grade - 4th grade)
- Older/Late young learners’ age: 11 - 12 years old (5th grade - 6th grade)

According to Vale (1995, 32), in a total immersion situation, where the young learner hears and is spoken to only in the second language, he/she might go through a silent period during which the individual is processing the new language environment. This state of silence is merely a transition, an accommodation phase and is not at all equivalent with not learning at all. This silent phase might as well appear in the context of learning a foreign language. Firstly, learners focus on developing their listening skill and they get acquainted to the melody of the language (accent, intonation, etc.). Afterwards, when their exposure increases and they gain confidence they begin to speak. Language production should not be forced.

Young learners enjoy making use of all their learning styles: visual, audio or kinaesthetic. Being energetic, they would like to learn and play and be engaged in what is called *learning by doing*. Vale (1995, 34) advocates for these types of physical activities because these provide active understanding and the foreign language is given a practical context that has meaning for learners. The type of teaching and learning that focuses on bringing together both physical responses and language is called TPR (*Total Physical Response*).

A teacher should consider also how he/she paces the content he/she intends to teach. In view of this, one has to keep in mind the fact that young learners’ attention span is short and therefore a “change of pace and approach within a teaching sequence is vital” (Vale 1995, 35).

The low attention span (approx. 5-10 min) might be caused by the fact that very young learners are faced with new experiences and information that they cannot process so quickly. Therefore, the teacher should limit the amount of new information and recycle it throughout the lesson by integrating it in different teaching sequences that target various skills and diverse learning styles. Still, young learners compensate this low attention span with a great amount of enthusiasm, genuine joy and willingness to participate.

Being able to convey non-verbal language is as important as its verbal counterpart. The non-verbal language provides support and contributes to the easiness of decoding the message that was uttered. Tough (1991, 221) concludes that when addressing young learners in a second or foreign language it is important “to support communication through the use of gestures, facial expressions and action because this gives children clues to the meaning of what they hear”.

When learning one’s mother tongue, one takes for granted the rhythm, the intonation and the stress of the language. Unfortunately, all these need to be taught in a foreign language. The use of songs and nursery rhymes is beneficial not just for their intrinsic value, but also for the fact that these can support motivation and interest, and can create a positive language learning environment. Young learners are very receptive and thus tend to learn a foreign language in a quick manner. Because they have a short attention span, the teacher has to change the type of the activity and recycle vocabulary throughout the lesson. A suggested sequence could be:

- a) the teacher presents some flashcards;
- b) learners play a game using the flashcards;
- c) vocabulary is included in a context or in a situation that resembles real life interaction patterns;
- d) learners listen to a song that includes the target vocabulary;
- e) learners watch a video that includes the target vocabulary
- f) the teacher sets a role-play activity that includes the target vocabulary.

These multiple exposures to vocabulary help learners acquire new vocabulary and lexical chunks. As concerns pronunciation in a foreign language, Ur (2009, 286) indicates that this one is acquired easily and more accurately by younger children.

Young learners are very enthusiastic but still, they “have a greater immediate need to be motivated by the teacher” (Ur 2009, 288). Since their attention span has a low level, motivation could be the right incentive to keep them focused on task. Moreover, the teacher should employ appropriate teaching techniques (i.e. interactive learning, Total physical response, etc.) and tasks (i.e. open dialogues, role plays, mind mapping, etc.) that would allow intrinsic motivation to develop. The intrinsic motivation of young learners, in the case of studying a foreign language, provides better outcomes in the long run. Extrinsic motivation might fade away when its purpose has been accomplished. In this respect, Williams (1991, 207) claims that young learners “will learn better if they have a positive attitude towards what they are doing and if they are motivated or want to do it”. Learning a foreign language, maybe one that has not such a high value status in one’s local setting, is an endeavour that is sustained by motivation which “provides the primary impetus to initiate learning [...] and [...] the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” (Dörnyei 1998, 117).

What motivates learners is also the use of a balanced set of resources. Out of these resources, Penny Ur mentions three of them as being “important sources of interest for children in the classroom [...]: pictures, stories and games” (2009, 288). These three resources cover all the learning styles i.e. the visual, the audio and the kinaesthetic style. In today’s era of technology and communication, these resources are combined in a single multimodal resource where the information is sent through different channels such as for example a blog that comprises video, audio, text and pictures.

Learners’ mother tongues can also influence to a certain degree how easy (positive language transfer) or how difficult and sometimes misleading (negative language transfer) the learning of a foreign

language can be. If the teacher and the learners have the same mother tongue then this should “alert teachers to features of the second language that are contrary to the children’s expectations” (Tough 1991, 222). This would help the teacher to anticipate some of the learners’ difficulties and to overcome misunderstandings, if these are tackled beforehand.

Any learner is a “cultural being” (Wajnryb 2005, 40) who has a “cultural perspective on the world, including culture-specific expectations of the classroom and the learning process” (Wajnryb 2005, 40). These characteristics surface even more poignantly in the case of foreign language learning when both L1 culture and the TL culture meet in the classroom. According to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2001) and in regard with the principles stated by an intercultural perspective in education, every learner should acquire a certain level of intercultural communicative competence. Of course, the content of the activities has to suit the learners’ developmental age. As regards the perfect intercultural model speaker, this does not exist. Byram (2009, 325) indicates that the ideal intercultural speaker is not defined and that “there is no definition of levels or degrees of ability, knowledge and attitudes, of stages on the way to perfection. Only a minimal ‘threshold’ can be determined for a given context and no general statement of a threshold level makes sense”.

The elements of big ‘C’ (i.e. food, music, art, literature, clothing etc.) are easier to tackle and teach in the foreign language classroom. The invisible aspects of culture (ways of life, ethics, religious principles etc.) are difficult to handle by young learners because these reflect personal beliefs and tend to be subjective perspectives. Therefore, these aspects are seldom brought in the classroom or if they are included, they are tackled with care. In what concerns the development of the intercultural communicative competence both general and specific cultural aspects are taken into consideration. The diversity of the classroom becomes a resource that the teacher should use in order to generate genuine conversations and to encourage learners to become

reflective and develop intercultural attitudes. Integrated activities that focus both on the development of linguistic and intercultural competence promote learning other than just TL knowledge. Thus, the learner becomes more aware of the fact that the TL is in fact a tool that enables one to establish relationships with other individuals and to develop social skills.

Teenagers

A teenager is a young adult between 12 and 19 years old. At this age, learners “have a longer concentration span [...] and do not need a constant change of activity” (Lewis 2007, 7) as younger learners do. They begin to think abstractly and engage in pair work and group work, as long as they do not lose face in front of their colleagues. Topics and teaching materials have to be chosen with care and consideration for their emotional development.

In order to engage teenagers in language learning activities that are full of deeply personal significance, Lewis (2007, 6) suggests three directions:

- encourage students to become critical thinkers and to link the study they perform to other subjects they study,
- promote group work and collaborative learning,
- involve them in language awareness activities in order to have a hands-on experience of how languages function.

At this age, developing social skills while being engaged in group work and pair work represents an important asset to acquire for teenagers. Along with demonstrating interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, the development of social skills contributes to a better understanding of the idea of difference (i.e. people can have different socio-cultural backgrounds; they can speak different languages; they may have other perspectives on life).

These characteristics of teenagers are conducive to the development of the intercultural communicative competence in the following respect: abstract thinking allows teenagers to grasp better the meaning of concepts such as *cultural awareness*, *cultural sensitivity* or

intercultural attitudes. Teenagers have gained by now more experience as concerns the interaction with people who have a different language and culture. This experience was gained either by travelling abroad or by interacting with peers who belong to different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, technological advancements (different gadgets, tools and apps) allow teenagers to cross easier physical boundaries and gain cultural knowledge, cultural skills and cultural attitudes.

Teenagers can be more receptive and can easily be exposed to informal and non-formal learning situations allowing them to get a genuine experience of intercultural communicative development. If in the case of young learners, the teacher is the one who initiates and guides the development of the intercultural communicative competence, teenagers tend to become more independent in this endeavour. Teenagers begin to understand the need for learning and are responsible if the teacher establishes realistic and right goals (Harmer 2007, 83). Both Lewis (2007, 6) and Ur (2009, 286) conclude that recent studies suggest that teenage years may be the time when students learn languages fastest and most efficiently in regards to comprehension and production in a foreign language.

Adults

Adults are more disciplined, cooperative and committed to the study (i.e. maybe the courses are paid; maybe they are already employed or have families and thus have little time to allocate for courses, etc.). Motivation tends to be more stable in comparison to that of younger learners. Their motivation “is more likely to vary and is more susceptible to immediate surroundings influences” (Ur 2009, 288). Adults have the capacity to engage in abstract thinking and “logical thought is greater” (Ur 2009, 287). Their commitment together with longer concentration span allows the teacher to engage learners in tasks and projects that variate from 90 minutes to multiple hours.

A foreign language course implies to a certain degree a (re)construction of identity. The interaction with another language and culture allows one to become more inquisitive about one’s own culture while observing some of its patterns and characteristics from a certain

distance. Byram (2009, 330) suggests that when interacting in a foreign language, although a national identity may be never forgotten, other identities are also present: “professional, age, sex, ethnic”. These identities can be explored in the foreign language culture and can be regarded as a resource. Most often, adults have already been engaged in some type of intercultural exchange and can thus further develop, in the foreign language classroom, their intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Young learners and teenagers are more open to accept new elements of culture and identity from a foreign culture. In comparison to them, adults and seniors are not so flexible since they have already established their identity and are not particularly looking to adapt to something else. Still, their life experiences can be made use of in the foreign language classroom with an intercultural focus attached to it.

Harmer (2007, 85) identifies several problematic situations as concerns teaching to adults:

- they became familiar with a certain methodological styles and thus they may be hostile to unfamiliar teaching patterns,
- they lose confidence in learning a foreign language as a result of previous failure or criticism,
- they are worried that their intellectual abilities may be diminishing with age.

Adults already have a set of acquired rules and behavioural patterns in their mother tongue that makes intercultural learning more difficult. Adults tend to find pronunciation in English difficult. Further details into this matter are presented in chapter five, section speaking skills.

All in all, teachers need to adapt their teaching strategies in respect to the age groups they address. Learner differences can be accounted for with the help of differentiation strategies that vary from differentiating the content, the process and the product of an activity.

The good foreign language learner

In order to acquire linguistic and communicative competence, a language learner should be diligent, interested, motivated, should make use of various learning strategies, and be willing to tackle various teaching resources and authentic materials from different perspectives. Learning a new language implies that one is going to make eventually some mistakes. Therefore, Kohonen (1992, 23) considers that language learners should have the courage to cope with the unknown, to tolerate ambiguity and “in a sense, to appear childish and make a fool of oneself when making mistakes”. In addition, a good language learner should not be afraid of be an accurate guesser and try to infer meaning out of a given context.

Learners are exposed to a variety of tasks and teaching activities. Thus, a good language learner should demonstrate problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in order to achieve the intended outcomes. More and more, extensive learning is promoted and learner autonomy is encouraged. Learners become familiar in the classroom with the resources that are suitable for their level and with the appropriate learning strategies they have to adopt. Further on, they have to continue their studies outside the walls of the classroom and discover, on their own, how language functions in informal and non-formal settings. More exposure to the foreign language helps one become a proficient speaker.

Foreign language learning is a continuous process and therefore, learners need to be reflective and self-conscious about their own development, about their weak and strong points and establish realistic goals for their learning paths. Being reflective means also to become aware of “one’s own learning and gain an understanding of the processes involved” Kohonen (1992, 24) in learning.

A learner should have good social skills in order to be able to collaborate with his/her peers. With respect to the recognition of the intercultural dimension in the teaching of a foreign language, a good language learner should strive to attain higher levels of intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In a student-centred learning approach the teacher acts as a facilitator of knowledge, and the learner takes full responsibility of his/her own learning. Thus, responsibility should be also a meaningful quality in a learner.

A good language learner should also try to achieve metacognitive strategies in order to be able to control and assess what he/she knows and what he/she does not know. Fogarty (1994, Introduction, XVIII) concludes that metacognitive strategies “promote learning not just for a test, but for a lifetime” since one takes control over one’s own thinking behaviour.

According to the requirements of the European Reference Framework (2006/962/EC) regarding the *key competences for lifelong learning* learners need to develop good digital skills. The foreign language classroom could represent a good opportunity to develop digital skills and engage learners in various projects based on ICT tools. Hence, learners would improve both their competence in the foreign language and also their digital competence as a result of using various apps and collaborative tools. A good foreign language learner should know how to handle new technology in order to become autonomous outside the classroom. More and more, information is structured in ways that are increasingly multimodal (a combination of visual, audio, text resources). Consequently, the learner should have knowledge of how to interact with these new items of information and how to develop understanding (higher order thinking skills) of these varieties of electronic media. Nowadays, the concept of literacy has been extended to multiliteracy which implies “making meaning in different cultural, social or domain-specific contexts” (<http://newlearningonline.com/multiliteracies>) while navigating in a multimodal resource.

A word cloud generator has been used (<https://www.wordclouds.com/>) in order to sum up all the characteristics already mentioned above:



Image no. 3. The characteristics of a good foreign language learner

Intercultural activities

In connection to the principles of intercultural language education, intercultural activities are meant to enrich learners' experience of otherness through two channels: language and culture. Moreover, these activities "would help learners to enjoy making links between the familiar and the strange, the easy and the less comfortable, the self and the other" (Corbett 2010, 9).

As with any other activities, some aims have to be established beforehand. Intercultural communicative competence is comprised of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, an intercultural activity should aim to develop in addition to linguistic competence also:

- Intercultural knowledge: knowledge of general and specific cultural components (arts, literature, food, music, traditions etc.), knowledge of communication conventions; awareness that identity and culture can influence the interaction between individuals etc.

- Intercultural skills: be able to communicate taking into account socio-cultural and sociolinguistic differences; be able to identify similarities and differences between two or more languages; be able to anticipate misunderstandings etc.
- Intercultural attitudes: curiosity, respect, tolerance, interest in discovering the particularities of the target language culture etc.

An example of such an activity that focuses both on language and culture awareness is provided below:

Name: <i>Are you a travel guide?</i>			
Language focus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practice modal verbs (should, could, would, must etc.) ➤ Practice adverbs of frequency (often, sometimes, occasionally, rarely, never) 	
Culture focus	Intercultural knowledge		
	Intercultural skills		
	Intercultural attitudes		
Level		Intermediate level	

Time	45 min
Interaction patterns	Teacher-students, students-students
Resources	PC or a smart phone, the backboard, sheets of paper.
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present the name and the aims of the activity. 2. Organize students in groups of 4 and allow them to take one role (be the speaker, the writer of the group, a resource, the time keeper etc.). 3. Give to each group some lists with modal verbs and with adverbs of frequency. Tell them that they have to integrate these in their oral and written activities that they perform. 4. Each group can decide to be a guide in a city within the same country. Variation: each group can decide to be a guide in a different country. 5. Each group looks up on the Internet for details regarding different customs, everyday habits of people, and specific elements of culture: music, literature etc. 6. Each group creates a travel guide including some Do's and Don'ts for tourists that might visit the city. 7. The teacher organizes a role-play activity. A student from each group is selected in order to be a tourist visiting the country/the city of another group. The tourist meets the travel guide and asks him/her different questions: Which is the most important event/festival that takes place in the city?

	<p>What kind of gifts should one buy when visiting a friend's house? How do you greet people? etc. At this moment students have to make use of the grammar items provided by the teacher and include these in the role-play activity.</p> <p>8. The last stage of the activity focuses on providing feedback and evaluating the outcomes of the activity.</p>
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Table no. 7. Activity

Questions and tasks

1. Vale (1995, 66) outlines some issues that teachers must consider in two different situations: when teaching in primary education and when teaching to other levels. Consider the characteristics and limitations of teaching to young children. Try to fill in the empty rows.

<i>Primary education context</i>	<i>The generic language teaching classroom</i>
➤ Children need opportunities to review, recycle vocabulary and consolidate their language	➤ There is the need to complete a prescribed course within a prescribed number of hours

2. The foreign language learners that comprise a classroom are different in many aspects. Design an activity that incorporates the three learning styles: visual, audio and kinaesthetic. Indicate the time needed, the resources used, the interaction patterns and the aims of this teaching sequence.

3. What are, in your opinion, the best characteristics of a good foreign language learner? Indicate your response in the grid below.

■	
■	
■	
■	
■	
■	
■	

4. With regard to the Multiple Intelligence theory, try to design several activities in which to follow the same aims, but use different scientific contents and attend three types of intelligence. Indicate the time needed, the resources used, the interaction patterns and the aims of this teaching sequence.

5. To cater to a class of mixed-ability learners, a teacher could differentiate *the content* (the amount of information), *the process* (the strategies, the resources) and *the product* (the outcome) of the activity. Design an activity for your generic classroom and then indicate how and what elements would you differentiate and why. You can decide on your own the aims and the topic for this teaching sequence.

6. Negative transfer occurs when the influence of one's native language determines one to make errors in the use of the target language. Positive transfer takes place when one's native language provides quick acquisition of the target language. Consider your own mother tongue in relation to the foreign languages you are able to speak. Identify and evaluate some linguistic elements that determine a negative transfer and a positive transfer between L1 and the TL.

7. Authentic materials (journals, newspapers, ads, recipes, songs, etc.) are imbued with culture so it is advisable to use them in the foreign language culture. These help learners to enlarge their deep understanding of language and culture. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages for using these resources for various language levels/age groups: young learners, teenagers or adults and also for the research activities in the field.

8. Design a needs analysis for your learners in order to find out what their learning needs are. You can decide on your own the targeted age group. Suggest particular didactical strategies for different needs categories.

9. During courses students might exhibit poor language learning behaviour or good language learning behaviour. Establish some operational criteria for each category and indicate these in the grid below.

Poor language learning behaviour	Good language learning behaviour

Summary

Learners' characteristics can have an impact on the goals and outcomes of a teaching sequence and can influence planning decisions and choice of teaching resources. In light of the intercultural perspective that permeates all levels of education, teachers should

make use of teaching strategies and resources that incorporate the cultural diversity of the classroom thus, allowing learners to accomplish their full potential.

It is advisable that teachers perform a needs analysis every time they have a new classroom with students they do not know. This analysis would help the teacher to make informed decisions about students' preferences, cognitive styles, motivation, interests or cultural background. All these pieces of information could be gathered in a student learning profile which is an individualized tool the teacher can use for observing his/her students. As a rule of thumb, each developmental stage in the educational path of a learner is linked to certain characteristics.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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3. Managing the learning environment

Introduction

Recent research about how people learn has provided new understanding on how to manage efficiently the physical space in the classroom, how to conduct teaching and to provide learners with successful learning conditions.

Classroom management is an umbrella term that comprises many aspects ranging from organizing the time and the physical space in the classroom, to organizing learning activities and managing efficient interaction patterns with one's learners. It refers to the teacher's ability to make decisions in order to create the best possible conditions for lesson stages to develop. Classroom management focuses also on handling discipline-related problems, but this is not its core function.

This chapter comprises two subchapters. The first one provides details about a comprehensive perspective on classroom management. The second indicates some aspects related to how teachers should manage teaching.

Keywords: *learning conditions, classroom management, teacher roles, seating arrangements, grouping arrangements, interaction patterns, behaviour, multicultural classrooms, time management, management of learning activities.*

3.1 Classroom management

Classroom management is an umbrella term that comprises many aspects ranging from organizing the time and the physical space in the classroom, to organizing learning activities and managing efficiently interaction patterns with one's learners. Bocoş, Răduţ-Taciu and Chiş (2015, 63) suggest two dimensions of classroom management: one that in its narrow sense refers to the teacher's responsibility to use and organize efficiently all the human resources and the non-human ones (technology, time, books, etc.) in the classroom in order to attain the established learning objectives; the wider sense implies that the teacher is responsible for all the managerial tasks that reside both in terms of curriculum and in the case of establishing inter-personal relationships with students, parents, managers of the school etc. Therefore the teacher is responsible for the management of extra-curricular activities, for the management of educational projects, for the management of conflict situations or for the management of inclusive education (Bocoş, Răduţ-Taciu & Chiş 2015, 63).

Nowadays, classroom management seems to favour the concept of 'condition' and places the concept of 'discipline' on a lower level. An argument that sustains this preference refers to the fact that by providing the most appropriate conditions that favour learning, collaboration and trust in the classroom, discipline problems are not likely to arise.

Likewise, classroom management is not restricted to the 50 or 90 minutes of instruction. In fact, it takes place long before the lesson even starts. Teachers are thinking beforehand of some aspects that would allow them to deliver successful teaching sequences and manage the classroom and all the resources in it: What kinds of interaction patterns should I use? Is the video projector working? Do I have enough resources for my learners? How can I improve time management? What kinds of learning activities are suitable for my next presentation? What predictions can be made regarding managing learning situations?

Classroom management refers also to teachers' abilities to make decisions in order to create the best possible conditions for lesson stages to develop. During this stage, the teacher pays attention to signals: if students are bored or if they find the task too difficult to handle, if it is time for a change of pace or for attention getting signals, if better instruction has to be provided, if certain measures need to be taken when a certain situation emerges. Teaching is a complex activity due to this "multiplicity of simultaneous activities" (Malderez & Wedell 2007, 10).

As concerns the classroom layout, teachers need to create conditions that are conducive to efficient learning:

- organizing seating arrangements in such a manner so that teaching techniques support the interaction patterns required for the learning activities;
- grouping arrangements should be mindful towards learner's learning needs;
- creating a learning space that encourages the development of positive interpersonal relationships between students belonging to different cultural backgrounds.

Teachers need be aware of the fact that the physical environment influences the way students learn: whether the light and the acoustics are good, if the layout of the tables is appropriate, the way charts are displayed etc.

In regards to the teaching and learning activity, the layout could have the following structure:

- orderly rows (perfect for the teacher to explain but not suitable for group work; this is a teacher-centered layout),
- horse-shoe/circle (appropriate for smaller groups; the teacher's position is less dominating; it is easier for students to talk and exchange ideas).
- nests/separate tables (it is appropriate for classes with different levels of abilities; the teacher can go around and check students' work; group work is easy to arrange),

- one large table (appropriate for smaller groups; students have a good eye-contact with each other),
- no tables (when students are engaged in role-play or simulations, when they perform games etc.).

It is advisable to design learning activities that would allow students to interact and use the foreign language. Collaboration is beneficial since “peer interaction can foster opportunities for negotiation, feedback and modified input (Oliver 1995, 2000; Oliver & Mackey 2003 in Philp and Duchesne 2008, 83). Likewise, students develop their social skills in addition to their communicative competence.

3.2 Managing teaching

Establishing rules and routines

The ability to manage efficiently the classroom reassures students that the teacher is confident and in control of all the aspects that are connected to classroom management. According to research (Emmer et al. 2003; Everton et al. 2003 cited in Kauchak & Eggen 2007, 196) students’ patterns of behaviour for the entire year tend to be established in the first few days of school. Therefore, the teacher needs to consider some rules and routines in order to provide guidance but also to offer structure and conformity when managing interventions. Conflict management comprises the theoretical and practical aspects that allow teachers to properly manage disagreements, misunderstandings and conflict situations (Bocoş, Răduţ-Taciu & Chiş 2015, 382). An intervention continuum consisting of five stages is suggested by Kauchak and Eggen (2007, 206):

- praise desired behaviour (likewise students know what is expected of them),
- ignore inappropriate behaviours (interruptions disrupt the flow of thoughts),

- use indirect cues (teachers uses proximity, non-verbal language and intonation in order to indicate that they want to eliminate undesirable behaviour),
- use desists (explicitly require students to stop the disruptive behaviour),
- apply consequences (teachers apply the rules they have established in the first days of school).

Procedures and rules need to be explained, applied consistently and monitored. Being able to manage transitions in the foreign language classroom is useful since likewise time is going to be used wisely, with no gaps that would favour the emergence of distractions and noise. Routines provide depth to teaching sequences and refer to different procedures: entering the classroom, using materials and equipment, ending a task, forming pairs and groups, checking attendance, checking homework, answering questions etc. In addition, by knowing what to expect, students can transition easily from one activity to the next without losing focus or learning time. Learners know what is expected of them when routines are carefully taught and established. By establishing routines teachers can spend more time on meaningful instruction since the conditions for learning have been set.

Other tools that the teacher can use in order to create favourable conditions for learning are *attention getting signals*. These signals can be verbal ("one, two, three, eyes on me etc.), non-verbal (the teacher uses gestures, flashcards etc.) or musical (the teacher uses a bell or plays/sings a sequence allowing students to continue etc.). The purpose of these signals is to draw students' attention in key moments when the teacher needs to make sure that all eyes are paying attention.

Managing a multicultural classroom

Knowing one's students represents a solid principle in teaching. This knowledge can make the difference in being able or not to provide individual help to each learner in order to achieve his/her potential. The first steps taken towards building relationships with students "begin with a genuine concern to listen (...) and to be responsive to the

needs of the students” (Loughran 1997, 59 cited in Loughran & Russell 1997). In a student-centred approach a shift of emphasis takes place generating a movement from the teaching towards the learning. Much more focus is placed on students’ involvement in creating meaning and on making them more responsible for the discovery of information.

Still, in a multicultural classroom, the teacher needs to anticipate some discrepancies that are linked to the fact that “in addition to gender and cultural diversity, differences in learning style and varying abilities, students think, act and feel differently at different ages” (Charles 2002; McCarthy and Benally 2003 cited in Kauchak & Eggen 2007, 189). Thus, teaching brings into consideration multiple layers and dimensions of the cultural exchanges that take place in the classroom. A culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the diversity of the classroom and considers and values the “cultural dimension of the learners” (Wajnryb 2005, 40). In addition, an inclusive curriculum could provide to students according to Gardner (2004, 78-79) a “multicultural understanding that is essential to the future well-being of our multi-ethnic society”. Thus, in this case, one has to reach an understanding of classroom management in its wider sense. Classroom interactions are essential to learning progress. They fuel students’ motivation and involvement. Therefore, Skrefrud (2016, 141) considers that classroom interactions need to be orchestrated in “ways that may make it possible for students to explore the complexity of their cultural identities in an atmosphere of communication and mutual understanding”.

Teacher talking time vs. student talking time

Another dimension of classroom management that has to be considered by teachers is the one that refers to managing communication (Bocoş, Răduţ-Taciu & Chiş 2015, 388). Communication does not limit itself only to the transfer of information between two interlocutors. It provides a broader picture by focusing on the need to interact and establish a relationship between interlocutors. Therefore, didactic communication represents a “social activity in which people

create and exchange meaning” (Scales 2013, 38). Teachers should use pauses to punctuate what they want to say and vary their voice thus avoiding a monotonous presentation. Likewise, it is going to be easier for your students to follow their teachers.

Teacher talking time (TTT) is crucial for organizing the classroom and for the language input that is provided to learners. Still, it should represent only 30 % of the talking time within the classroom (Harmer 2007). In order to increase *student talking time* the teacher could design pair work/ group work activities. Teacher talking time can be diminished if teachers establish some routines and procedures every time learners are engaged in a certain type of activity or when there is a transition. Communication can take place by using different channels: voice (intonation, pauses, silence etc.), non-verbal language (eye contact) and gestures (avoid unnecessary language that would increase TTT if some routines have already been established).

Questions and tasks

1. What kind of evidence do you have as a teacher that the content to be taught addresses learners’ needs and interests and is suitable for them? Write in the grid below some indicators that suggest the learning task is too challenging or too easy:

<i>The task is challenging</i>	<i>The task is performed with considerable ease</i>

2. Learners of a foreign language can be grouped or paired in respect to their language level. Learners who manage well the language and

learners who are less able can be in the same groups or in different groups. Indicate in the table below the expected outcomes of such a pairing/grouping and provide a sample activity for each situation:

	<i>Expected outcomes</i>	<i>Sample activity</i>
a) Group/pair together less able students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ 	
b) Groups/pair together strong students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ 	
c) Mixed level groups/pairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ 	

3. Provide examples of activities that are suitable for each type of classroom layout indicated in the theoretical part of this chapter.

4. Create some classroom rules which would help to provide a positive learning environment. Indicate rules for various age groups.

5. Indicate in the grid below some elements of classroom management that can be or cannot be controlled by the teacher:

FACTORS TEACHERS CAN CONTROL	FACTORS TEACHERS CAN'T CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ formative evaluation ▪ the teacher's attitude towards teaching and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor student attendance • parents' expectations and attitudes towards learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

6. Design an attention getting signal. Provide details regarding learners' age or language level and when and how would you use this attention getting signal.

7. Design different techniques of creating pair and group activities. Take into consideration various age groups.

8. In view of the theoretical underpinning presented in this chapter, try to provide a solution to these problematic situations:

- a. You have a student who always interrupts you;
- b. You have an early-finisher who is very talkative;
- c. Some of your students don't like to collaborate;
- d. You work with a mixed level class.

9. Compare how classroom management is conducted in a foreign language class and in a class where another subject is taught. Indicate in the grid below some possible challenges and solutions:

Class	Classroom management	
	Possible Challenges	Possible solutions
The foreign language class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪
A math/chemistry/biology etc. class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■
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Summary

Classroom management is an umbrella term that comprises many aspects ranging from organizing the time and the physical space in the classroom, to organizing learning activities and managing efficiently interaction patterns with one's learners.

Classroom management refers also to teachers' abilities to make decisions in order to create the best possible conditions for lesson stages to develop. The ability to manage efficiently the classroom reassures students that the teacher is confident and in control of all the aspects that are connected to classroom management. Therefore, the teacher needs to consider some rules and routines in order to provide guidance but also to offer structure and conformity when managing interventions. Knowing one's students represents a solid principle in teaching. This knowledge can make the difference in being able or not to provide individual help to each learner in order to achieve his/her potential.

Communication in the foreign language does not limit itself only to the transfer of information between two interlocutors. It provides a broader picture by focusing on the need to interact and establish a relationship between interlocutors.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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4. Design and evaluation of teaching materials used for foreign language teaching

Introduction

Teaching materials used in the foreign language classroom constitute resources that a teacher uses in order to deliver appropriate instruction that targets language awareness (syntax, vocabulary, registers, discourse, etc.) and cultural awareness (texts that make reference to cultural representations). Having in mind the aims of an activity, the students' learning styles, their level of language and the sub-cultures they belong to (occupational, educational, etc.) the teacher decides which are the most efficient, reliable, and meaningful teaching materials that can be presented in the classroom. The teacher acts as a facilitator who helps students to navigate through a variety of relevant teaching materials and to use these resources in effective ways.

This chapter is comprised of two sections. In the first section entitled *Evaluation of teaching materials* are indicated different criteria for choosing appropriate course books and authentic materials to be used in the formal educational setting. The second section, *Design of teaching materials*, provides details regarding the design of new teaching materials. Still, before engaging in an evaluation of teaching materials or compiling a database of teaching resources, the teacher has to consider who the target audience is.

Keywords: *authentic materials, graded level materials, criteria, evaluation, design of teaching materials, electronic resources, multimodal resources, adapted materials.*

4.1 Evaluation of teaching materials

The first step taken before deciding on using a certain teaching material refers to evaluating that particular material. A teacher has a variety of resources to choose from. By choosing a course book there is “a strong probability that the language, content and sequencing in the book will be appropriate” (Harmer 2007, 146), correct and graded to a certain language level. Moreover, a good course book “carries with it built-in structural scaffolding that ensures certain desirable outcomes even in situations where teachers are not prepared, not reflective, untrained or indifferent” (Ahmed 2017, 181). Still, maybe the topics included in the course book might not be as attractive for students as they are for teachers. It might be also that the content of the book is biased or not culturally appropriate and thus, it does not provide inclusive learning activities that respond to the characteristics of today’s multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

A key disadvantage of the course book resides in the fact that it has been issued for commercial purposes, namely with the intent to be used in a world-wide market and for a generic classroom.

Additionally, when evaluating a teaching material or compiling a database of teaching resources, the teacher has to consider the reasons why a certain group of learners wants to learn the foreign language. Thus, one has to consider who the target audience is. An increase in globalization has diversified the purposes of learning a foreign language. Consequently, in order to make informed judgments, the teacher has to take into account the following varieties of English language:

- [EFL] - *English as a foreign language* – taught to those who do not live in an country where English is a national language,
- [ESL] - *English as a second language* - taught to those who are non-native speakers but live in an country where English is a national language,
- [ESP] - *English for special purposes* – taught in order to manage different job requirements (medicine, business, law, etc.),

- [EAP] – *English for Academic Purposes* - taught in order to succeed in higher education,
- [CLIL] – *Content and Language Integrated Learning* – a simultaneous focus is placed both on subject matter learning and foreign language learning in a cross-curricular programme.

Before choosing a resource, the teacher should consider according to Rubdy (2003, 48-49) if the following requirements are met:

- Do the materials also involve the learner's emotions in the learning process?
- Do the materials allow for the development of creative and critical thinking skills?
- Do the materials allow scope for the development of a desirable set of attitudes?
- Do the materials involve the learners as human beings rather than just language learners?
- Do the materials help build personality and learner voice and give learners an understanding about themselves?

The content of a teaching resource should take into account criteria related to authenticity and cultural sensitivity:

- Do the materials provide extensive exposure to authentic English through purposeful reading and/or listening activities?
- Is the content realistic, reflecting topics and events and texts from the real-world situations?
- Do the texts generate 'real-life' communication process?
- Are the materials relevant/suitable/appropriate to the learners' cultural context and sensitive to their values and beliefs?
- Do the materials reflect awareness of and sensitivity to sociocultural variation? (Rubdy 2003, 52)

Teaching materials that are used in the foreign language classroom can be divided into two broad categories:

- Basic materials: course books and workbooks that could include references to activities and exercises on CDs.
- Additional materials: in printed form or which involve the use of new technological devices.

Both course books and additional materials can contain authentic materials or semi-authentic (adapted) materials. The term *authentic material* is used in order to designate any type of resource that is intended for native speakers' use and that is not graded or edited in any way. The term encompasses elements such as songs, travel guides, recipes, advertisements, menus, blogs, newspapers, movies, letters, bus tickets etc.

Semi-authentic materials are resources that have been graded to a certain extent in order to adapt them to the learners' level of language. Image no. 4 depicts a mind-map comprising different authentic materials that are suitable for different learning styles: visual, audio and kinaesthetic.

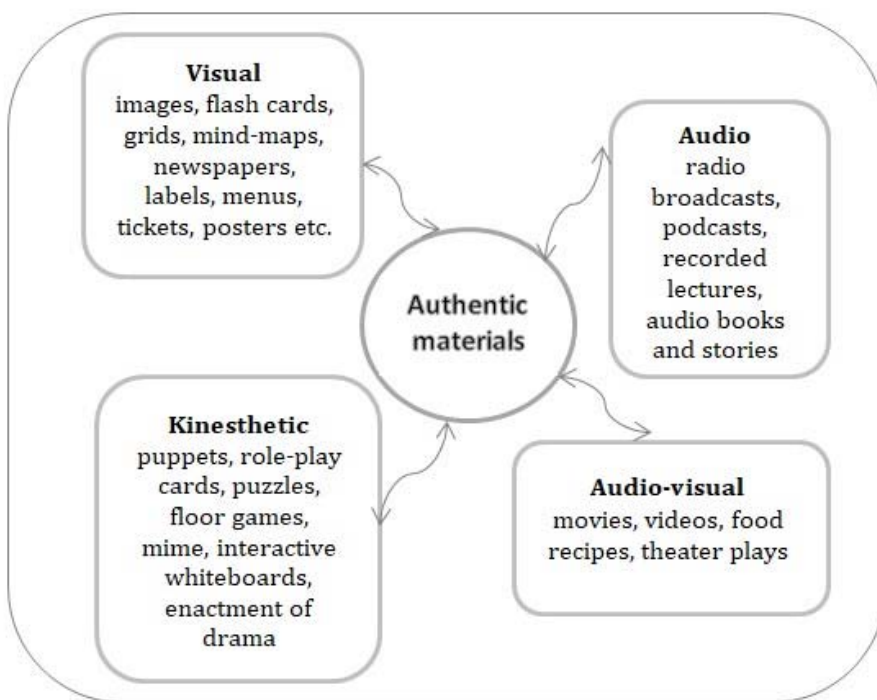


Image no. 4. Authentic materials targeting different learning styles

In addition to being efficient tools for depicting language in context, authentic materials supplement the need of exposure, in the formal classroom setting, to the target language and culture. One should have in mind the following criteria for choosing authentic materials:

- authentic materials should not depict inaccurate data or information that is culturally biased
- authentic materials should aim to involve learners in activities that resemble real-life situations and that would provide a contextualized use of the target language
- the content of the authentic material should be valid from a linguistic point of view
- authentic resources should be relevant, motivating and interesting to work with
- authentic resources should encourage learners to make connections between L1 and the TL and target culture.

Howard and Major (2005, 102-106) provide other relevant perspectives that favour the use of authentic materials: materials should allow focus both on form and function; they should offer opportunities for integrated language use; they should cater for individual needs.

4.2 Design of teaching materials

Even if today there is a wide range of foreign language materials available and a considerable amount of course books, teachers still need to make some changes in order to address students' individual needs since 'one size fits all' is not a responsible view. Choices need to be constantly made by teachers: what to select, what to include, what to take out, what to modify, how to adapt etc.

Some principles of materials design are indicated by Petruş (2011) below:

- appropriateness (gather reliable information that is appropriate to learner' age, language level and learning styles)
- interaction patterns (include resource that require taking part in different interaction patterns thus increasing student talking time)
- availability (if the data to be included in the resource can be found for free in paper based form or electronic form)

- enhancement of cultural awareness (materials should enable students to perform authentic tasks likely to encounter in real situations outside the classroom)
- unit structure (materials should focus both on the development of language skills and intercultural skills)
- purpose (consider materials that differentiate between academic discourse and every day, informal speech)

McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013, 61) bring into discussion the flexibility factor of a teaching resource, namely if materials can be used in different ways, other than their intended meaning. This refers to the case when learners engage with the text and make connections that teachers did not anticipate.

It is also beneficial to co-create teaching materials with learners thus allowing them to put to good use their diverse sociocultural knowledge. This demonstrates willingness to incorporate different learning preferences and to connect to learners' experiences by acknowledging the salience of every individual learner.

The use of digital and authentic resources can bring in the classroom a boost of motivation, increased interest and better exposure to the foreign language. In this respect, the teacher can allow students to create multimodal resources in order to develop their language competence, (inter)cultural competence and digital skills. Reflection on how information is rendered through different channels of communication (written form, images, music, etc.) engages learners in an interpretive process that allows them to negotiate new contexts of foreign language use. Today's intense use of ICT tools provides an easy and quick access to a diversity of authentic materials.

As a conclusion, the following perspective sums up the way in which one should perceive resources. Kohonen (1992, 26) considers that the use of a resource does not guarantee much if the learner does not do anything to "the input so that the output has a personal meaning, no matter how modest such modifications or productions are in the beginning". Therefore, the aim of developing learners' metacognitive

skills while interacting with teaching resources makes learning more purposeful and more efficient.

Questions and tasks

1. Choose a lesson from a course book. Indicate your reasons for adapting, adding, deleting, simplifying (lexical content, grammar structures) or reordering the elements of a lesson.
2. Select an activity from a lesson and make some changes to it in reference to: interaction patterns, the aims of the activity and the degree of authenticity of the task.
3. Choose an authentic material. Decide what would be the task you assign to this particular resource. Indicate the students' language level, the interaction patterns, the aims of the activity and the time needed in order to explore that resource.
4. Select an authentic material. Try to transform it into a semi-authentic material that would be graded to a certain level of language.
5. What kind of pedagogical issues do you reckon to face as you work with a particular authentic resource in order to teach foreign language skills?
6. Analyse the advantages and disadvantages that reside in using authentic materials in the foreign language classroom.
7. Develop your own set of principles in respect to developing materials for foreign language teaching and learning.

Summary

Before engaging in an evaluation of teaching materials or compiling a database of teaching resources, the teacher has to consider the reasons why a certain group of learners wants to learn the foreign language. Thus, one has to consider who the target audience is. Teaching materials used in the foreign language classroom constitute resources that a teacher uses in order to deliver appropriate instruction

that targets language awareness and cultural awareness. In addition to course books and workbooks the teacher can include in a lesson authentic materials or semi-authentic (adapted) materials. Authentic materials supplement the need of exposure, in the formal classroom setting, to the target language and culture. The teacher should consider different criteria for choosing authentic materials or for designing new teaching materials.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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5. Teaching language skills

Introduction

Language skills can be divided into two main categories: receptive skills (listening and reading), and productive skills (speaking and writing). When working on a particular task learners of foreign languages are required to make use of a set of micro-skills such as listening for inference, reading for specific information or top-down processing. Even if in this chapter each skill is explained separately, the model proposed in this book is one that is based on teaching the four skills in an integrated manner. A reasonable reason to do so resides in the fact that on a daily basis, the enactment of communication does not rely only on one skill, but on a combination of skills.

The teaching of receptive skills can be performed according to a framework that indicates the stages that comprise each activity: a *pre-/a while-/ a post-*listening, reading, speaking or writing activity. Proficiency in a foreign language can be evaluated according the descriptors indicated in the CEFR (2001, 23) in terms of six ascending levels: A1 and A2 (beginner speaker), B1 and B2 (independent speaker), C1 and C2 (proficient speaker) and in terms of three kinds of language activities: reception (listening and reading), production (speaking and writing), and interaction (spoken and written). The second section describes the productive skills and how these can be enhanced in the foreign language classroom.

Language skills need to be practiced in an integrated manner such as they are to be found in real life communication.

Keywords: *receptive skills, productive skills, sub-skills, reading for gist, reading for specific information, reading for inference and for making predictions, pre-/while-/post reading, listening, speaking, top-down processing, bottom-up processing.*

5.1 Receptive skills

Listening skills

Listening is a dynamic process because while listening one already tries to formulate a response, to make predictions or to infer meaning and follows closely the listening sequence aiming to engage in turn-taking when appropriately. Listening is a complex process because it also “requires the activation of contextual information and previous knowledge” (Donough, Shaw and Masuhara 2013, 145). Factors such as increased mobility and technological advancements that enhance communication create new contexts for developing and making use of listening skills. Rost (2016, introduction) considers that due to “the increasing speed of communication, it is becoming more important to know how to decode input accurately, how to filter information, to select what is important”. Therefore, on a personal level, the need to listen accurately, to take multiple perspectives into account and to understand how speakers from different cultures make use of a variety of paralinguistic cues has increased.

One also needs to acknowledge the fact that “language codifies many cultural assumptions and values” (Brody 2003, 40). Consequently, language is influenced by the social context in which it is used. A listening sequence might not be difficult to comprehend in terms of language knowledge, but elements such as interlocutor’s perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and values might impede the decoding of the message and the dialogue between the participants. Often, in a listening sequence, linguistic problems that occur due to lack of accuracy tend to be easily accepted as opposed to cultural misconceptions and inaccuracies that might be regarded as inappropriate or offending and would lead to a break down in the communication flow.

When engaged in face-to-face interaction, the non-verbal language contributes to confirming the linguistic message that has just been uttered. But if the “messages in the linguistic and paralinguistic or non-linguistic channels are detected to be inconsistent, the listener may

have reason to believe that the speaker is being deceptive” (McCornack et al. 2014 in Rost 2016, 43). In the case of such a mixed message more emphasis and trust is given to the non-verbal language than on its linguistic counterpart.

According to the CEFR (2001, 13), communicative language competence in a foreign language comprises three components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence. Thus, when carrying out communicative tasks, foreign language learners should demonstrate in addition to sound linguistic competence both an ability to make use of this knowledge in diverse sociocultural contexts and an ability to listen and manage different “discourse functions (e.g. apologies, invitations, complaints) and types (e.g. greeting routines, personal anecdotes)” (Rost 2016, 39).

Listening activities in the foreign language classroom provide a considerable source of exposure to language that learners receive in order to understand how the language works. According to Rost (2005, 3 in McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara 2013, 135) listening constitutes “a primary means of acquiring a (...) language”. In the foreign language classroom structurally simplified speech is encountered in beginner level (Ellis 2012, 168). Language is usually graded to learners’ own level, so that exposure is in fact exposure to a “comprehensible input” (Krashen 1985 in Rost 2011, 152) to which the teacher adds the right amount of challenge. Learners’ should have sufficient opportunities to listen to the teacher’s academic language input. Still, they should also have the chance to listen to their peers in different pair and group work activities in order to gain confidence to exchange ideas with someone who is on the same wavelength.

When the teacher is not an expert speaker of the foreign language, listening to authentic resources (TV and radio programmes, podcasts, etc.) or attending live-listening presentations delivered by native/non-native guests represent valuable instances for providing exposure to the target language.

In order to be good communicators in the foreign language, learners need to be acquainted with various paralinguistic cues, such as

“voice level (volume), pitch (intonation), rate of speech, and fluency of speech (...) pauses and silences” (Cormier, Nurius and Osborn 2009, 60). Likewise, learners get a glimpse of how language occurs in normal interaction. In addition, learners should also be explained that these paralinguistic cues tend to vary in respect to the cultural background in which they take place. It is easier for learners to grasp the meaning of a listening sequence that provides visual reinforcement (attend a lecture, watch a video, etc.). This visual reinforcement together with the non-verbal language contributes to a far better understanding of the message.

In one's mother tongue, one always listens, speaks, writes or reads with a purpose in mind. In the foreign language classroom, this purpose is best put to good use when learners are engaged in a communicative instance that resembles a real-life situation (to provide advice, gap information activities, role-plays, etc.). Likewise, learners are going to be motivated to use the language.

Developing listening strategies

Top-down processing and bottom-up processing occur unconsciously in one's mother tongue, depending on the purpose of listening. Top-down processing refers to understanding the general meaning of an utterance. Therefore, when listening to a podcast and one engages in top-down processing, then one focuses on the general idea and on the main elements encountered in that discourse. When engaging in a bottom-up processing with the same podcast, the learner focuses on individual words in order to infer meaning about the entire topic presented in the podcast.

Foreign language learners need to be taught a variety of listening comprehension strategies in order to understand different listening resources (weather forecasts, audio books, music, radio announcements, nursery rhymes, etc.). Thus, diverse sub-skills should be tackled: listen for specific details, listen in order to make predictions or to make a guess, to infer meaning or to listen for gist.

Harmer (2007, 135-136) indicates some listening principles that teachers should use as guidelines when teaching a foreign language:

- engage students in listening activities as often as possible in order to provide exposure to the foreign language;
- prepare students to listen with a purpose and make use of various sub-skills;
- listen to a resource multiple times, once may not be enough;
- learners could focus on various elements in the listening sequence: language knowledge, overall content, cultural knowledge etc.;
- explore a listening resource from various perspectives.

These principles are suitable for any age group, but when it comes to very young learners or beginner levels one more principle could be added: listen and learn through gestures and movements. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching developed by Dr. James J. Asher. TPR refers to learning a language by making use of physical movement. This physical reaction to verbal input is considered to be meaningful because it allows one to make associations and demonstrations and these are conducive to better recall. This is not a method suitable only for kinaesthetic learners. The teacher might request learners to 'stand up' or to 'open books' in order to demonstrate an action.

TPR and songs or nursery rhymes go together well. Songs are not to be considered fillers in the foreign language classroom. They are relevant for the "memorability, rhythmicity, performance (...) playfulness, reactional language, motivation and interaction" (Alan Maley 1990, 93-95) that they provide. Some songs and nursery rhymes can be acted out and since they contain lots of repetitions, they tend to stick better in learners' minds. Language knowledge can be enhanced through songs and nursery rhymes: writing skills (dictate songs, gap-fill, etc.), speaking skills (role-play, discussions etc.), reading skills (reading the lyrics, etc.) vocabulary and grammar.

If the teacher integrates music, culture and language in the same activity, then songs could also provide intercultural learning. Alan

Pulverness (2003, 428) considers that language should not be treated out of context because this perspective “[...]is likely to deprive learners of key dimensions of meaning and [to] fail to equip them with necessary resources to recognize and respond appropriately to the cultural subtext of language in use”. Learners should be encouraged to explore the content of a song, both from a cultural and a linguistic perspective.

As songs are bound to generate emotions, feelings and attitudes towards something that is valuable for the learner they “definitely involve learners as human beings rather than just language learners” (Petruş 2012, 132). Songs break the routine, change the atmosphere in the classroom and are likely to influence the level of students’ anxiety towards learning a foreign language. Research indicates that that use of songs decreases the foreign language classroom anxiety average of students with rather high anxiety (Dolean 2016).

In order to provide coherence to a listening activity, the teacher should have in mind a simple framework that guides learners and engages them in the activity. The first stage is the *pre-listening* stage. This stage aims to:

- motivate learners and arouse their interest in working with the listening resource;
- allow learners to brainstorm ideas and make predictions about the listening resource;
- make learners understand the context in which the listening sequence takes place;
- allow learners to demonstrate previously acquired knowledge;
- pre-teach vocabulary.

According to Wilson (2008 in McDonough and Shaw (1994, 150) a pre-listening activity should “establish a framework for listening so that learners do not approach the listening practice with no points of reference”. Some examples of tasks suitable for this stage might be: predict the content of the listening sequence by analysing its title; explain the way in which these pictures are linked to the listening sequence; read through these comprehension questions and predict the topic of the listening sequence.

The *while-listening* stage aims to:

- keep students focused and engaged in the listening activity;
- allow learners to listen in order to make use of different sub-skills;
- check whether learners engage in listening comprehension activities.

Some examples of tasks assigned to this stage might be: listen firstly for gist and then listen again for specific details; while listening, try to write down the collocations you hear; while listening, try to look through these comprehension exercises and provide answers; put these pictures in a correct order as you listen the recorded sequence; while listening complete this grid.

The *post-listening* stage aims learners to:

- express opinions or evaluate what they have listened to;
- make connections between the listening resource and their previously acquired knowledge;
- focus both on content and on language knowledge.

Some examples of tasks assigned to this stage might be: summarize the main ideas stated in the listening resource; analyse the perspectives presented in the resource; make a comparison between the situation presented in the resource and a similar situation in which you were engaged;

Learners of a foreign language should be able to employ in the target language the same sub-skills that they make use of while communicating in their mother tongues. Thus, listening activities need to be goal-oriented and to have much in common with a real-life listening situation. Even if “listening is essentially an internal cognitive process, the listener must utilize social knowledge” (Rost 2011, 98) and pragmatic competence in order to infer speaker’s intentions in connection to the sociocultural context in which the utterance takes place. Thus, listening should not be regarded as a passive activity because interlocutors are constantly engaged in co-constructing meaning.

Questions and tasks

1. What are the benefits and challenges of teaching listening skills? Create a grid in order to express your opinion. What changes would you make in order to provide a solution to those challenges you have found?

2. Based on what you already know, how would justify Vandergrift's (1999, 168) point of view regarding the usefulness of a listening activity:

"Listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance".

Vandergrift (1999, 168)

3. Formulate your own theory regarding the characteristics of a proficient listener in a foreign language.

4. Design a listening sequence by using different weather forecasts from various countries. Establish the learning objectives, the types of sub-skills you want learners to practice, the time needed to perform the activity, the interaction patterns. In addition to teaching linguistic competence, try to focus on ways of enabling learners to develop their intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. Consider how weather can influence people around the world and to what extent.

5. Traditionally, listening activities included cassettes and CDs. Indicate some advantages and disadvantages for the teacher to act as a resource in the classroom.

6. Teachers want to increase the amount of exposure learners receive in a foreign language classroom. Indicate some extensive listening activities appropriate for different age groups and for different language levels.

7. According to Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, instruction should aim to provide comprehensible input that is one level above the learner's current level of linguistic competence. Provide examples and a context in which the teacher grades and simplifies speech. Indicate learner's language level.

8. Nowadays, listening activities can provide learners with the opportunity to listen to formal and informal speech, to specialized vocabulary, to slang, etc. Design a framework for integrating such listening activities in the formal foreign language classroom.

9. Choose a listening activity from a course book. Analyse its objectives. Suggest a better way to adapt this activity to the whole content of the book or to the learners' language level.

Summary

Listening is a dynamic, complex and personal process of inferring meaning and of filtering information. A listening sequence might not be difficult to comprehend in terms of language knowledge but elements such as interlocutor's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and values might impede the decoding of the message and the dialogue between the participants. When engaged in face-to-face interaction, the non-verbal language contributes to confirming the linguistic message that has just been uttered.

TPR and songs or nursery rhymes go together well. Songs are not to be considered fillers in the foreign language classroom. Some songs and nursery rhymes can be acted out and since they contain lots of repetitions, they tend to stick better in learners' minds. Language knowledge can be enhanced through songs and nursery rhymes: writing skills (dictate songs, gap-fill etc.), speaking skills (role-play, discussions etc.), reading skills (reading the lyrics etc.) vocabulary and grammar. If the teacher integrates music, culture and language in the same activity then songs could also provide intercultural learning.

In order to provide coherence to a listening activity, the teacher

should have in mind a simple framework that guides learners and engages them in the activity: a pre-listening, a while-listening and a post-listening task.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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- Cormier, S., Nurius, S. P. & Osborn C. J. (2009) *Interviewing and Change Strategies for Helpers: Fundamental Skills and Cognitive-Behavioural Interventions*. Sixth edition. USA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.
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Web resources

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Reading skills

In recent years a considerable body of research (Krashen 2005; Liddicoat and Scarino 2013; Lazar 2005; Collie and Slater 1997) has pointed out the benefits of reading in order to acquire proficiency in a foreign language. Reading activities can develop learners' vocabulary, engage them in language processing strategies or provide the language input so much sought for when trying to develop one's communicative competence. In addition, reading offers good models of correct writing, of punctuation and of understanding how grammar is contextualized.

When reading, individuals perform two interconnected processes: "word recognition and comprehension" (Pang et al. 2003, 6). Word recognition implies knowledge of letters and symbols and how these lead to the formation of a specific word. Comprehension implies understanding words or concepts by making "use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with the text" (Pang et al. 2003, 6). In the case of reading in a foreign language the reader engages in a cross-linguistic transfer because some of the concepts existing in one's mother tongue need to be reconceptualised, namely "to be modified to accommodate a similar concept from another language" (Kecskes and Papp 2000, 67). In view of the complex comprehension process, reading is believed to "engage higher levels of cognitive thinking" (Spangler and Mazzante 2015, 2) such as analysis and evaluation.

Reading is also perceived as a private and individual activity. What one reads determines the lenses one uses in order to see, to judge and to make sense of the world. Nowadays, literacy development is of paramount importance since it offers access to a variety of resources and data that can allow individuals to be informed and to become more knowledgeable in different areas.

Reading can be extensive or intensive (Harmer 2007, 99). Extensive reading is considered to be the reading performed outside the classroom, on one's own out of the need to read for pleasure, for information or for improving linguistic competence in the foreign language. Reading in a foreign language "entertains, educates,

communicates and informs us about the past, the present and even the future” (Farell 2009, 1). By encouraging extensive reading the teacher encourages learners to become autonomous and independent readers. Moreover, this desire to read for pleasure correlates strongly according to Urquhart and Frazee (2012, xi) with academic achievement.

Intensive reading implies “a detailed focus on the construction of the reading text” (Harmer 2007, 99) in which case instruction stretches to include various perspectives:

- the purpose of reading focuses on meaningful language input (grammar, sentence structure, discourse);
- the purpose of reading focuses on developing a relationship with the whole content (i.e. the main ideas rendered by the resource) thus providing learners with a global perspective and an authentic purpose for reading which resembles reading in the mother tongue;
- the purpose of reading focuses on interacting with different cultural backgrounds and representations and a means of understanding better intercultural contact.

In today’s learner-centred context, teachers require their students “to progress from learning to read toward reading to learn” (Spangler and Mazzante 2015, 2). Likewise, much more emphasis is placed on responsibility to manage reading strategies and to consider reading as a purposeful activity.

In order to provide learners with genuine language experience, the teacher should consider using a variety of materials that exhibit different genres (a press release, a script, a job advertisement, etc.) and topics. Therefore, ideally, the teacher should use authentic texts in order to develop learners’ linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Several criteria must be taken into consideration when making this choice: vocabulary, word length, grammatical complexity, sentence length and cultural factors (Pang et al. 2003, 17) and learners’ age. Both cultural background knowledge and content background knowledge need to be put to good use when trying to make meaning while being engaged in a reading task. A diverse exposure to reading

texts is of tremendous importance when we want students to “learn to navigate multiple cultural terrains through a well-developed understanding of how their own experiences juxtapose with those in their communities and the world around them” (Barnes Rowland and McGarrell 2018, 169).

The reading process

The act of reading involves different components that lead to the development of advanced reading skills. Rycik and Irvin (2005, 9) identify four different components that lay the foundation for understanding the reading process:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>Reading the words</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand letters and sounds ➤ Grammar knowledge ➤ Make use of the context to decipher meaning
<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>Mastering messages</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication competence ➤ Media literacy ➤ Genre knowledge ➤ Critical thinking
<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>Making meaning</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reading comprehension ➤ Create connections ➤ Use background knowledge
<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>Engaging with the text</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal relation with the text ➤ Attitudes and identity ➤ Personal involvement ➤ Motivation

Table no. 8. Reading components. (Adaptation Rycik and Irvin 2005, 9)

The four components that develop gradually allow readers to make use of the context in order to infer meaning, to be able to interpret texts, to make connections to their own background, as well as

to establish a personal relation with the text as an outcome of personal involvement. Motivation for continuing reading is sustained by the fact that learners “find their lives and cultural experiences reflected within classrooms and the books they read” (Lynch-Brown, Tomlinson and Short 2011, 214 in Barnes Rowland and McGarrell 2018, 169). Therefore, the reader brings his/her own personality, view of life, cultural background and general knowledge when interacting with a text.

Comprehension strategies

While reading, one engages in an “active processing of the ideas in a text” (Cohen and Cowen 2008, 41). Comprehension strategies need to be taught explicitly so that readers become aware of how they should read a certain text. Likewise, learners develop their metacognitive skills and would be able to select the best strategies that favour comprehension in different sections of the reading text. Table no. 9 indicates some stages in the reading process and their corresponding comprehension strategies:

Stages in reading	Comprehension strategies
Pre-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ activate prior knowledge ▪ predict and anticipate ▪ deduce ▪ infer meaning ▪ develop a hypothesis
While-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ read for general information ▪ read for specific details ▪ create semantic maps, graphic organizers, Venn diagrams ▪ make inferences ▪ interpret the text ▪ reflect on what you read
Post-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ draw conclusions ▪ reflect on what you read

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ re-read parts of the text ▪ confirm predictions
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Table no. 9 Stages of reading

The first stage refers to activating one's prior knowledge in order to make predictions about what one intends to read. According to Rosenblatt (1978 in Moreillon 2007, 19), the reader brings his own feelings, personality and experiences to the text which explains why a reader develops an individual relation with a resource (literature, music, art etc.). This background knowledge is critical to developing reading comprehension because "we connect new information with prior knowledge before we integrate and organize the new information" (Moreillon 2007, 19). At this stage the teacher creates a state of enjoyment and excitement in the classroom and prepares the students for the task. A positive atmosphere mixed with interest and suspense would help students "overcome enthusiastically the linguistic obstacles" (Collie and Slater 1997, 7) that might arise.

The while-reading stage allows learners to make sense of what they are reading by reading the text for general information or for specific details. Since people tend to visualize information stored in their brains, readers should be encouraged to create semantic maps and graphic organizers for better understanding of the connections that exist in the text they are reading. The post-reading stages should offer readers the possibility to draw conclusions and to reflect on what they have read.

Different reading materials require the use of different comprehension strategies. Therefore, a label, a book, a SMS, an email, an advertisement should be read by employing different comprehension strategies.

Reading also employs top-down and bottom-up processing in order to support comprehension. As such, it is not sufficient to "decipher the meaning of individual lexical items but (...) also have clear ideas about the overall rhetorical organization of the text" (McDonough and Shaw 1994, 109). Two examples of texts are indicated below in order to exemplify these two types of processing information:

a) *He kept on wondering in the old forest until he reached a sunny clearing that allowed him see the beautiful landscape that he has ignored for so much time. All his life he has consciously ignored the beauty of the surroundings. The close encounter with nature and especially with an old bark that reminded him of his childhood touched in him a soft spot that sent mixed feelings.*

b) *Recipe for fluffy muffins: You need 200 gr of white flour, 50 gr of sugar, 1 egg, 150 ml of milk, 50 gr of melted butter, ½ teaspoon of salt and 1 tablespoon of baking powder. First of all you sieve the flour and you mix it up with the other dry ingredients: the baking powder, the salt and the sugar. Secondly, you take another bowl in which you pour the milk, the egg and the butter and you whisk them.*

Text a) could be used to engage readers in a top-down processing and thus focus on the whole content and message of the text. Such an approach engages “the whole child, the whole language process and the whole process of comprehension and meaning that is inherent in language” (Cohen and Cowen 2008, 41).

Text b) could be used to engage readers in a bottom-up processing and thus focus on decoding units of meaning and phonemes in order to teach learners how to identify words instead of memorizing or guessing them. A bottom-up processing to reading “stresses the need to teach phonics and word study through explicit instruction and systematic approach” (Cohen and Cowen 2008, 41).

Ownership

Reading invites readers to take ownership of what they read. Ownership of what one reads is described by Vale (1995, 83) as a process that unfolds in four mental stages:

- picturing and imagining (i.e. creating a mental picture of one is reading);
- predicting and recalling (i.e. predicting what is going to happen next);

- identification and personalizing (i.e. relate to plot/characters to one's own personal experiences);
- making value judgements (i.e. consider own values in relation to those encountered in the text).

Cohen and Cowen (2008, 46) suggest that “students learn material faster and easier when they have a visual representation of it to store in their memories”. It is a manner in which learners make meaning of the text. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to present visually and graphically their ideas about a text, during and after the reading process has been accomplished. By making predictions, the reader feels more connected to the text and is motivated to read in order to check if predictions were true. While reading, one tends to make connections to personal experiences and relates to the text on a personal level. After reading, one questions the author's intended meaning and filters information according to personal values. These four stages are conducive to the development of a personal engagement with the text.

Layers of comprehension processes

Comprehension is influenced by individual differences. Farell (2009, 3) points out ways in which foreign language comprehension and instruction may differ from learning one's mother tongue. The layers are indicated below:

- linguistic differences between L1 and the TL;
- individual differences between L1 and TL;
- sociocultural differences between L1 and TL (adapted from Aebbersold & Field 1997 and Grabe & Stoller 2002 in Farell 2009, 3).

The first layer refers to the fact that L1 learners already have an immense data base in their minds at the age of 6 or 7 when they begin reading in a formal classroom. On the other hand, learners of the TL don't have “a tacit knowledge of TL grammar (...) and text organization” (Farell 2009, 3) and this is a setback when they begin reading.

Therefore, they need to be taught comprehension strategies. Additionally, Masuhara (2007 in McDonough, Shaw, Masuhara 2013, 124) points out the different exposure to languages: L1 children spend about five years in aural-oral language acquisition prior to learning to read but TL learners are taught the four language skills at the same time. This first layer also brings into discussion the concept of language distance and the fact that readers who learn a language that is far apart from their mother tongue (e.g. Romance languages vs. Indic languages) might encounter difficulties in conceptualization processes.

The second layer brings into discussion the fact that learners differ in terms of their cognitive development and learning style. Thus, the reading process and the comprehension strategies are going to be influenced by the particularities of each individual. Differentiated instruction is required in order to cater for various needs, expectations and individual differences. Individual differences count in one more respect. Research indicates that “learners who are more literate in their first language are more able to transfer reading skills from their first knowledge” (Farell 2009, 5).

The third layer considers the relevance of sociocultural differences. When trying to make sense of idioms, metaphors or connotations in a foreign language, readers need to understand that these are representations of a particular culture. Because language and culture are interconnected, understanding the message implies a thoughtful consideration of intercultural knowledge. While engaged in reading tasks, learners make use of their formal schemata “knowledge of text types in their first language” (Farell 2009, 5) and of their content schemata “their background knowledge” (Farell 2009, 5) and their beliefs about the purpose and value of the reading process. Transitioning between these two types of schemata in both L1 and TL can pose some challenges. This is why, according to McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013, 199) “reading something written by someone in a language with different cultural assumptions from ours can be difficult”.

Instruction

In view of learners' age and learning needs, reading instruction can take different forms: guided-reading, reading-aloud, shared reading, individual reading and repeated reading. Guided-reading implies offering individual or group support to some readers in order to help them apply some of the comprehension strategies modelled by the teacher. A read-aloud is a reading sequence in which the teacher reads aloud a text to the whole class, usually for beginner level in the TL context. A read-aloud offers "expressive, enthusiastic reading while transmitting the pleasure of reading and inviting listeners to become part of the literacy process" (Cohen and Cowen 2008, 52). Shared-reading implies that the teacher involves the learners in reading together. The teacher makes pauses from time to time and allows learners to make predictions, to utter hypothesis about the next sequence of the text. Individual reading takes place when each learner reads for him/herself. All these different types of instruction lead to the ultimate goal that of independent reading. Repeated reading is a strategy that can be used to contribute to reading fluency. As an intervention, it is most efficient when the teacher models reading "performed individually (teacher reads aloud and students listen/follow the text silently) or chorally (both teacher and students read aloud simultaneously)" (Dolean, Damşa and Pop 2017, 13).

Reading skills are developing if the teacher brings materials in a variety of formats, if reading is taught in connection with the other language skills, if students have the possibility to bring in the classroom their favourite materials, if reading provides engagement on an emotional level or if reading provides multiple ways of interacting with the text. Still, reading might be perceived as a tedious activity when the topic is not interesting or relevant, the text is too easy or too difficult to grasp or the reading strategy is not appropriate.

Literature and intercultural perspectives

Literature is valuable in the foreign language classroom because it represents an authentic material and thus it provides both language

and cultural enrichment. Literature can help one broaden one's "own experience and practical knowledge, (...) read figurative language and distinguish between literal and metaphorical meaning, (...) create literary texts" (Showalter 2003, 26).

The teaching of literature favours personal involvement (Collie and Slater 1997), the development of students' interpretative abilities and of their creative skills. Language is understood better in context and literary works provide this context, whether it is a social or a cultural one. Readers get accustomed to the meanings of a word: the connotation and the denotation. By reading literature, learners are encountering different situations and plots that allow them to understand better the difference between what is fictional and what is real in a literary work.

Books fascinate their readers by depicting unexpected situations, complex characters and interesting plots, but above all because literature can foster personal involvement. Readers begin to feel that they take part in the development of the plot. They begin to like some characters and dislike others, and are eager to find out how the story develops after they turn another page. It is this motivation that arises from personal involvement that keeps one reading another page and another book. Readers are eager to find out what books reflect their own ideas about the world. In this respect, literature provides this medium where meanings are negotiated and where the reader adds his/her own feelings and thoughts. The personal involvement is also generated by the fact that "literature enables learners to shift their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system" (Collie and Slater 1997, 5). A literary text can always serve as a follow-up activity that takes the shape of a written or a speaking activity. The students' creative skills are improved when they are asked to write their own stories, to continue a given text or to write reviews to books they have read.

Consequently, literature provides opportunities for intercultural encounters and from an intercultural and teaching perspective, it becomes a "vehicle for deeper reflection and for understanding self and

others” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 95). Exposure to literature alone will not guarantee the development of intercultural competence. The intercultural language learning process requires a change from within, namely a conscious “interpretation, of seeing the cultural in the text” (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 95).

Technology and reading

In today’s digitalized world, learners need to adapt their reading skills to be able to manage different reading resources. More and more, readers interact with multimodal resources that comprise information that is sent through different channels (e.g. a blog, social media posts, etc.). The perception of reading has undergone changes in terms of the rituals one employs and the gadgets one uses in order to read. Recent insights into this matter concluded that readers do not see themselves as readers or writers when they use digital devices, and that they perceive the tasks they do to be different from school-based reading and writing skills (Pitcher et al 2007 in Urquhart and Frazee, xiii).

Changes have undergone in the reading process itself. Thus, “people tend to skim, to scan and flip (...) they don’t read deeply for an extended period of time” (Urquhart and Frazee 2015, xii). Comprehensive strategies used in reading a paper-based text cannot be entirely transferred to an electronic-based resource. This happens mainly due to the fact that in the digital era “linear text is being replaced with hypertext (...) text that is no longer linear but interactive and dynamic” (Cohen and Cowen 2008, 5). Multimodal resources combine text with graphics, with pictures, animation and sounds. Readers must make sense of the content by considering all these channels of communication. Multimodal texts understood as hypermedia offer “more interactivity than regular books and it provides many alternative paths to follow” (Topping 1997 in Cohen and Cowen 2008, 5). Our students who are “digital natives” (Marc Prensky 2001) are learning language skills and are being assessed with the use of ICT tools. Unfortunately, not so much research had been done in understanding how this different interaction with the text will affect literacy.

Questions and tasks

1. Ur (1996) distinguishes different criteria for being an efficient reader. Efficient readers:

- can access content more easily by changing reading speed according to the text
- can select significant features of a text and skim the rest
- can guess the meaning from the context
- make predictions
- use background knowledge to help them understand the meaning
- are motivated to read as they see it as a challenge and the text has a purpose
- can switch reading strategy according to the type of text they are reading etc.

Analyse these criteria and decide which 3 of them you consider to be the most relevant in today's reading context. Add at least two other criteria that indicate proof of efficient reading.

2. Choose a written text for beginner, intermediate or advanced level. Will you pre-teach any vocabulary? What items and how? If not, why not? Write three appropriate comprehension tasks for it.

3. Choose an authentic resource. Indicate the logical steps in developing students' effective reading strategies by using both bottom-up and top-down processing.

4. Read the following statement:

“We interpret what we read in terms of what we already know, and we integrate what we already know with the content of what we are reading”.

David Nunan (1999, 256)

Provide arguments in order to express your agreement or disagreement this statement. Analyse the implications that derive from this perspective when you choose a reading material for you learners. Indicate the language level that you have chosen.

5. Classrooms that foster motivation to read have the following characteristics according to Gambrell (1996, 194-197 in McCormack and Pasquarelli 2010, 10).

- Students are motivated to read when they are involved in choosing texts and materials they want to read.
- Students are motivated to read when they have opportunities to engage in sustained, independent learning.
- Students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities to discuss with others what they have read.
- Students are more motivated to read when literacy activities recognize and value their cultural identities.

Put these characteristics in order of importance so that the most important ones are done first. Consider the learners' age group or language level when you provide your answer. Motivate the choices you have made.

6. Choose a literary work. What opportunities does the resource offer in order to explore both language and cultural aspects together with your learners?

7. Construct a model for enhancing motivation for reading from two different perspectives: intrinsic and extrinsic. What are the elements that could be included in each type of motivation?

8. Design an advantages/disadvantages chart for using authentic materials when engaging foreign language learners in reading activities. Decide on the language level/age group when you provide the answer.

9. A follow-up activity can provide an opportunity for extra practice. Design a listening activity followed by a reading one. Provide details regarding the learning objectives of each type of activity and indicate the rationale for providing extra practice.

Summary

Reading activities can develop learners' vocabulary, engage them in language processing strategies or provide the language input so much sought for when trying to develop one's communicative competence. In addition, reading offers good models of correct writing, of punctuation and of understanding how grammar is contextualized.

Nowadays, literacy development is of paramount importance since it offers access to a variety of resources and data that can allow individuals to be informed and to become more knowledgeable in different areas. Literature is valuable in the foreign language classroom because it represents an authentic material and thus it provides both language and cultural enrichment.

Comprehension strategies need to be taught explicitly so that readers become aware of how they should read a certain text in the pre-reading stage, the while-reading stage and the post-reading stage. Reading also employs top-down and bottom-up processing in order to support comprehension.

In today's digitalized world learners need to adapt their reading skills to be able to manage different reading resources. More and more, readers interact with multimodal resources that comprise information that is sent through different channels. The perception of reading has undergone changes in terms of the rituals one employs and the gadgets one uses in order to read.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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5.2 Productive skills

The stages of a basic methodological model for teaching productive skills are indicated below:

- the lead-in stage (students engage with the topic, they are asked to make predictions, to brainstorm keywords and concepts related to the topic);
- setting the task (students are given complete information regarding the way in which the task should be accomplished and its learning objectives; the teacher provides examples and models for students an example);
- monitoring the task (the teacher acts as a resource, listens to students and provides help when help is needed);
- giving feedback (the teacher provides constructive feedback, explains what can be improved) (Harmer 2007, 275).

Language skills have to be practiced in an integrated manner such as they are to be found in real life communication. Therefore, after providing feedback the teacher should move on with “a task-related follow-up” (Harmer 2007, 275) in order to give students the possibility to apply the knowledge they have gained in a new context that focuses on enhancing a different language skill.

Speaking skills

Speaking is a dynamic skill that urges one in the context of foreign language learning to mediate “between languages and cultures as an inherent part of communication” (Liddicoat et al. 2003, 68). Therefore, not just linguistic competence is needed in learning a foreign language but also intercultural competence that is likely to help the speaker to find the best match between the intended message and the sociocultural context in which this one is uttered.

In addition, language has both transactional and interactional functions (Harmer 2007, 343). When one conveys information for the

purpose of imparting knowledge or for making a request, speaking focuses on the transactional function of the language. The interactional function takes place when one intends to focus more on maintaining a relationship with one's interlocutors. In this case, interlocutors need to make use of discourse markers: back-channeling (hmm, aha), turn-taking (yes, well..., but it may be that...), changing a topic (anyway...), repairs etc. These elements need to be included in the EFL classroom so the learners are aware of how real life interactions actually take place. Moreover, Richards (1990) brings into discussion the usefulness of being able to perform small talk. He claims that "native speakers who lack the ability to use small talk and to exploit the interaction aspects of communication may find many encounters awkward and may avoid talk where talk would be appropriate"(Richards 1990, 55). Small talk is not so insignificant after all. It manages with success to keep the conversation afloat without transmitting consistent information. Its purpose is to create a bond between interlocutors.

Learners of a foreign language also need to know that in speech, information "tends to be less densely packed than it is on the page and it may also be more repetitive" (Donough, Shaw and Masuhara 2013, 139). While speaking people tend to hesitate, to self-correct and rephrase their ideas. This aspect is also relevant when enacting speaking activities in the foreign language classroom.

Opportunities for enhancing speaking skills

When creating a speaking activity, teachers need to take into consideration that different age groups and language levels require different learning objectives. Every age group has different expectations from a speaking activity. These expectations might regard the development of social skills and intercultural competence or might be job related. Adult language learners "need fast progress, may have fixed ideas about how to learn and are easily frustrated" (Baker and Westrup 2003, 9) when they make mistakes. Consequently, it is not easy for the teacher to accustom adults to diverse teaching techniques when they have already established their learning preferences. As regards the

need of a fast progress, adults can also be encouraged to become autonomous learners.

Accuracy and fluency are two aspects targeted to be developed in the foreign language classroom. An accurate speaker is someone who makes use in a correct manner of the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary that one has acquired. Fluency entails being able to keep the conversation afloat, even if one makes small mistakes. Whether striving to achieve accuracy or fluency, good pronunciation is the key factor since it can influence the development of all the other language skills (Walker 2012). Poor pronunciation is conducive to spelling mistakes in writing or to inefficient reading. Such is the case of the two words 'desert' and 'dessert' where knowledge about stress patterns prove to be useful.

Pronunciation in the English language is difficult to master because "speech sounds (...) are unlikely to be identical to the speech sounds of the mother tongue of the learners (...), there might be differences in placement of word stress, quality and intensity of syllables, speech rhythm, intonation" (Reid 2016, 19). Romanian learners of English can imitate almost all sound features because "the degree of overlap between Romanian and English is large, and the majority of sounds are familiar and do not present any learning difficulty" (Cehan 2007, 27). Still, some differences need to be tackled, either explicitly or implicitly, since pupils are expected to practice correct pronunciation right from the early stages of learning a foreign language (CEFR 2001). For some teachers and students alike, pronunciation does not seem to be as important as grammar, vocabulary and the four skills. The tendency to avoid teaching pronunciation is grounded in teachers' lack of time, lack of confidence as non-native speakers, lack of clear guidance in course books (Hycraft 1978; Griffiths 2011 in Reid 2016, 20).

Walker (2012) provides the following piece of advice: insist on good pronunciation and likewise show students that this aspect of language learning is relevant but don't demand perfection. An identical imitation of a voice heard in a video or on a CD is not a realistic aim for

foreign language learners. On the other hand, aiming for intelligibility is such an aim.

According to research, native-like pronunciation is best to achieve between 2-13 years old (Loewen and Reiders 2011 in Reid 2016, 21). It is widely accepted that acquiring good pronunciation in adulthood is difficult because “the older the learner gets, the stronger is the effect of the native accent” (Gilakjani 2011 in Reid 2016, 20). Still, adults are more disciplined, they establish patterns in their learning, can perform abstract thinking and have more self-control so that they can focus even when the learning activity is boring (Harmer 2005 in Reid 2016, 22). Even if they don’t achieve perfect pronunciation, adults should rather strive for fluency, control of structure and above all understanding (Finocchiaro 1989 in Carrasquillo 1994, 136).

Pronunciation can be taught explicitly by using phonemic charts and by making reference to vowels, diphthongs or homophones in context. But pronunciation can also be taught through imitation. Learners are required to listen and imitate rhythms, sounds and stress patterns while being engaged in different activities: “authentic spoken utterances (...) audio-recorded native speakers, video-recorded native speakers, read aloud phonetically weighted texts, practice ear-training, phonetic drilling, imitation, tongue twisters” (Reid 2016, 22). Young learners tend to be enthusiastic, creative and eager to get involved in collaborative tasks. They don’t mind listening to the same stories over and over again (Baker and Westrup 2003, 10). This repetition is of paramount importance at this age since learners need to encounter a word several times, in different contexts, in order to be able to store it in the long term memory. Therefore, the teacher should use songs and rhymes to provide opportunities for repetition (Baker and Westrup 2003, 10). Pronunciation should be taught in context, in situations that are relevant for learners.

Intercultural perspectives in enhancing speaking skills

When speaking, interlocutors decode correctly the message if both the speaker and the listener have a common frame of reference

that allows them to “share an understanding of the meanings that are associated with the language” (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, 76). Still, this common frame of reference tends to be different when interlocutors have different socio-cultural backgrounds. Moreover, “even in minimal exchanges of information, the presence of the people and their identities cannot and should not be ignored” (Byram 2009, 331). Accuracy in this case is not sufficient. One also needs to be aware of the “socially contextualized nature of speech” (Goh and Burns 2012, 52). Therefore, much pressure is placed on the speaker when he/she tries to choose responsibly what to say, when to say and how to say something.

Gog and Burns (2012, 58) propose four categories of core speaking skills that provide additional specific skills that teachers can focus on in the foreign language classroom:

Core skills	Specific skills
Pronunciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being able to identify vowels, consonants and phonemes ▪ Be able to use different intonation patterns
Speech function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be able to request permission, to explain reasons, to give instructions, to offer advice, to describe situations etc.
Interaction management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be able to initiate conversations, perform turn-taking, repairs etc. ▪ Be able to use verbal and non-verbal cues
Discourse organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be able to use discourse markers and intonation

Table no. 10. Core skills. (adapted after Goh and Burns 2012, 59)

All these four categories should be tackled in a speaking activity provided that these are adapted to learners’ age and language level. All these sum up a combination of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence so much needed when speakers of a foreign language face so diverse linguistic, cultural and interactional contexts. Interaction management implies that

interlocutors are able to “adapt or construct their talk in relation to a specific listener or listeners and this includes the obvious areas of politeness strategies and levels of formality” (McCarten and McCarthy 2010, 17 in Donough et al 2013, 158). This adaptation of the speech to a certain audience supports the idea that speaking is a highly contextualized.

Level of fluency and knowledge of vocabulary are also connected and influence each other. In order to achieve fluency and be able to perform various speech functions knowledge of vocabulary is an important prerequisite. Various researchers (Li 2017; Castro, Chiluisa, Tandalla and Gonzalez 2018) bring into discussion the advantages of teaching lexical chunks in the foreign language classroom. Still, empirical research provides mixed results. Their relevance is not questioned but further research is needed in order to understand how the acquisition of these lexical chunks takes place. Lexical chunks comprise: collocations (context sensitive, politically correct etc.), idioms, semi-fixed expressions or institutionalized utterances (I’m afraid that; Sorry, but etc.) or word chains (nice to meet you? how do you do?). Lexical chunks are said to “help ease learners’ frustration, promote their motivation and improve language fluency” (Chung-guang 2014, 6 in Castro, Chiluisa, Tandalla and Gonzalez 2018, 14) and to “help learners to achieve greater fluency in speech production and comprehension” (Li 2017, 110).

Characteristics of a successful speaking activity

Below are presented some characteristics of a successful speaking activity:

- Learners talk a lot and in an even manner (all the learners should have the opportunity to express their opinions on various interesting tasks and topics and practice the foreign language);
- Learners should engage in interactive activities where the purpose of speaking is easily identifiable (role-play activities,

debates, catchy moral dilemmas that need to be solved, gap information etc.);

- Learners know what kind of specific skills (request permission, express agreement etc.) they need to practice and they try to use their L1 at a minimum level;
- Learners are able to make a distinction between accuracy and fluency and do not feel demotivated after making small mistakes;
- Learners should feel motivated, enthusiastic and they should enjoy the speaking activity;
- Learners are engaged in activities that promote high levels of interaction and higher order thinking.

Nowadays, digital technology can provide attractive ways to teach pronunciation. The teacher can use various online games, quizzes and apps (e.g. voki, stickman, digital storytelling, etc.) to enhance learners' speaking skills.

Providing feedback

In order to be good communicators, learners need to receive feedback on their performances. This feedback allows them to make improvements, to understand teachers' expectations and the specific skills one has to focus more on. Feedback should not overwhelm learners. Teachers should consider "which aspects of the students' performances are worth drawing attention" (Richards, Hull and Proctor 1997, IX). Individual and pair work or group work feedback should be taken into consideration since students "often prefer this type of private or personalized feedback to feedback given in front of the whole class" (Richards, Hull and Proctor 1997, IX).

Several error correction strategies are available. In the case of the following sentence '*Give her an advice*' uttered by a learner in the context of a speaking activity focused on enhancing accuracy the teacher might react as such:

- The teacher says nothing in order not to interrupt the student (postponing the feedback);

- The teacher simply repairs the student's utterance;
- The teacher requests peer-correction;
- The teacher uses repetition: Give her...? (the teacher replays, repeats the utterance up to the point where the mistake was made, isolating thus the error and the possible correct answer);
- No article (the teacher indicates the mistake);
- Give her an advice? (intonation);
- Just one? (using gestures).

Still, as regards communicative competence the quality of communication does not depend only on the speaker's knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also on the speaker's sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence that would allow one to be aware of the social and cultural rules that apply in each communicative situation. Therefore, the "the notion of error is no longer restricted only to incorrect grammar or perhaps choice of vocabulary. If being communicative includes also paying attention to context, roles and topics, then it is logically possible to make an error at any of these levels" (Donough, Shaw and Masuhara 2013, 28).

Questions and tasks

1. Write down in the grid below some criteria for having a good role play activity having in mind the teacher's responsibilities and the learners' responsibilities. Keep in mind that truly authentic communication tasks have several features:

- learners take part in solving a problem/a situation that might happen in real life
- it allows learners to use all of the language skills they have acquired
- language is used to communicate and accomplish a realistic goal, not on using language structures out of context

Variables	Criteria
The teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ activate prior-knowledge by requesting learners to brainstorm ideas, key words etc. related to the

	topic of the role play ▪ ▪
The learners	▪ act in accordance to the role they have ▪ ▪

2. Think of a suitable activity (debate, gap information activity etc.) for each of the following topics. Indicate an appropriate level of language for each activity:

- a) A visit to a travel agent
- b) The issue of gambling
- c) Two similar but slightly different pictures
- d) Leisure activities
- e) Should smoking be allowed in a pub?

3. Design a speaking activity that resembles a real-life communicative event. Provide a title to your activity. Decide whether you would like to teach new vocabulary/grammar structures or evaluate previously acquired knowledge. Formulate 3-4 clear instructions for your learners. Indicate learners' language level, the time needed to perform the activity, the resources used, the roles performed by the teacher, some details about classroom seating and the collaboration patterns.

4. Read the following quotation:

"Speaking is a process difficult in many ways to dissociate from listening. Speaking and listening skills often enjoy a dependency in that speaking is only very rarely carried out in isolation; it is generally an interactive skill unless an uninterrupted oral presentation is given".

Donough et al. (2013, 157)

Design an activity that focuses both on enhancing listening and speaking skills in an integrated manner. Indicate learners' language level, the time needed to perform the activity, the resources used, the

roles performed by the teacher, some details about classroom seating and the collaboration patterns.

5. Choose a lesson from a course book. Evaluate the speaking activities you encounter there in terms of:

- a) relevance to the lesson's topics,
- b) suitability for learners,
- c) focus on increasing student talking time,
- d) focus on providing different interaction patterns in the classroom.

Redesign these speaking activities by changing or adapting them in order to make them appropriate for enhancing learners' speaking skills.

6. Design an activity that focuses on developing speaking skills with the help of digital technology. Indicate learners' language level, the time needed to perform the activity, the resources used, the roles performed by the teacher and details about collaboration patterns.

7. Choose a rhyme, a song or a chant suitable for beginner level. Consider in what ways you could use this resource in order to teach pronunciation.

Summary

Speaking is a dynamic skill that focuses on demonstrating sound linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence. All these three aspects would allow one to be aware of the social and cultural rules that apply in each communicative situation

When creating a speaking activity, teachers need to take into consideration that different age groups and language levels require different learning objectives. Every age group has different expectations from a speaking activity.

In order to be good communicators, learners need to receive feedback on their performances. This feedback allows them to make improvements, to understand teachers' expectations and the specific skills one has to focus more on.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

- Usó-Juan, E. & Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). *Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the four Language Skills*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
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Writing skills

Learning how to write in a foreign language has numerous advantages: to get accustomed to use the written form of the target language, to achieve a structured flow of ideas, to state personal opinions and to provide arguments, to be able to express inner feelings or to learn new structures and vocabulary. Hedge (1992, 7) has identified two more reasons. On the one hand, writing requires a lot of conscious effort from students and thus both students and teachers can monitor this progress and find solutions to accommodate learning problems and gaps in knowledge. On the other hand, writing is much easier to revise due to its hard copy structure and it can be used by teachers for facilitating learning or for explaining new theory.

Writing activities are complex because they imply mastering well spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and knowledge about different registers and genres. As a result of the fact that language should always be understood in relation to a socio-cultural context, a writing task cannot be successful if one does not take into account the intended audience. Nevertheless, in order for the written text to achieve its communicative purpose, one “cannot ignore the notions of register and genre in the process of text production” (Figueiredo 2010, 130). Language register is defined as the degree of formality when using language in spoken or written form. Register comprises various levels that range from formal, to neutral and informal. Choice of language register determines choice of vocabulary and language structure. Therefore, learners who study English need to get accustomed to the particularities of each register: how professional emails, announcements, reports are written (formal register), how friendly emails, phone texts or blogs are written (informal register) or how reviews or articles are written (neutral register). Genre refers to the form of writing that can take the structure of a business letter, a memo, a letter etc.

Figueiredo (2010, 119) considers that in the context of foreign language learning “the notions of register and genre can be used to make students aware of the sociocultural features of the text-type that

is being taught". Much more focus has been placed in recent methods to foreign language teaching (such is the communicative language teaching method) on bringing "into focus the relevance of the context in interpreting the message that was uttered/written" (Figueiredo 2010, 124). Thus, communication in spoken or written form needs to explore the socio-cultural context in order to provide an outcome that is in accordance with the discourse patterns specific to a certain situation.

Writing is one of those skills that require learners to be motivated. If learners do not see the purpose in writing something, the task will not be an effective learning experience. Writing usually occurs in response to a situation that may be another piece of writing (i.e. answering a letter), a conversation (i.e. taking notes during a telephone conversation), or after reading something (i.e. replying to a job advert). Therefore, writing activities should be as realistic as possible. Lack of motivation can be supplemented by engaging learners in activities that they like: write a caption to today's most viewed image, write a script for a next episode of your favourite sitcom, write a brochure that depicts your favourite city/country in the world, write down the rules of your favourite game etc. If students have a low level of self confidence in their abilities to fulfil a written assignment then more guidelines should be given in order to provide a model for relevant genres learners are to encounter or need to know to perform during their compulsory education.

Writing is a time consuming activity because one has to brainstorm and organize ideas, think of how to plan the writing assignment and pay attention to vocabulary, word order, spelling, register or genre. Nevertheless, the value of writing should not be neglected either by teachers or by students, since most often evaluation that takes place in school is in written form. Academic writing can take various forms: descriptive, analytical, persuasive or critical. To be able to make proof one one's academic writing, one has to demonstrate good planning skills, be aware of how to structure information, how to support opinions and arguments with evidence or how to use an appropriate register.

In addition, writing skills represent a valuable component of the learning process and should not be neglected. The brain stores information according to Paivio (1971; 1990 in Wandberg and Rohwer 146) in two forms: a linguistic form and an imagery form. The implications for learning are the following: being given linguistic input from teachers, “students are left to generate their own nonlinguistic representations” (Wandberg and Rohwer 147) in the form of visual representations (e.g. mind-maps, semantic mapping etc.).

These nonlinguistic representations determine the students to be more analytical and to make connections and inferences about different situations or perspectives. Previously acquired knowledge is also evaluated. Being actively involved in this process of making meaning and handling sequences of events, students are more likely to recall the information (Wood and Pressley 1990 in Marzano, Pickering and Pollock 2001). When producing a written text in a foreign language, the learner makes use of cognitive elements, of language elements (lexis and grammar) and socio-linguistic elements in order to create visual representations.

Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001, 73-77) indicate some activities that enhance the development of nonlinguistic representations and students’ understanding of the learning content: drawing pictures and pictographs, graphic organizers, time sequence pattern organizers, process/cause-effect patterns, generalization/principle patterns and concept patterns. Below is a mind-map that indicates such a visual representation:

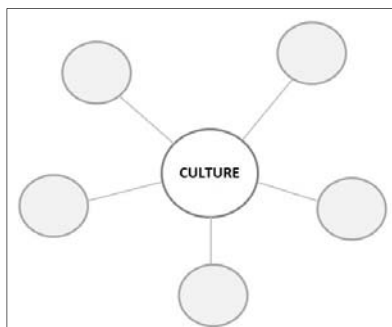


Image no. 5. Mind-map: Culture

The writing process can be divided into four steps: planning, drafting, editing and the final version (Harmer 2007, 113). Each of these steps can be repeated until the intended objectives are reached. While performing these steps students need to make proof of their writing sub-skills: use cohesive devices, demonstrate sound knowledge of grammar, word order and orthography or provide vocabulary that is appropriate for a specific literary genre.

Foreign language learning represents a complex activity of reconceptualising lexical, grammatical categories and cultural concepts (Kecskes and Papp 2000, 8). Therefore, the teacher has to consider when interpreting and analysing writing in a foreign language the interferences between L1 and the TL or the negative transfer between the two languages.

All learning activities should promote higher levels of learning. Bloom's taxonomy was revised by Anderson et al. 2001 in order to comprise a range of cognitive processes that promote meaningful learning (Bayles and D'Alba 2015, 226). This taxonomy is a useful tool in order to guide instruction from simple to complex learning designs. Writing skills, as well as the other language skills, could make use of this taxonomy. Teachers can ask students to "retrieve previously learned information (...), to use the concept in a new context (...), to make value judgements regarding ideas or to create new structures" (Bayles and D'Alba 2015, 226).

Writing activities

Below are presented some examples of writing activities:

- instant writing: elicit from students several random words and afterwards ask them to provide a good opening paragraph to a story;
- creative writing: students receive some pictures and they have to imagine the story behind the pictures; students are given some blank comic strips and they have to fill in with text the empty speech bubbles;

- collaborative writing: students use online maps and write down the directions for an imaginary treasure hunt taking place in their city; students provide subtitles to a silent movie;
- transfer information from one format to another: students watch a short film and afterwards they write a film review.

Questions and tasks

1. Consider the three language registers: formal, informal and neutral. Have in mind the English language and design some rules of writing for the formal language register, for the informal and for the neutral one.

2. Design a complex activity that comprises all the language skills. Provide follow-up activities that would allow a delicate transition between the targeted language skills.

3. Writing can take many forms:

i) What instructions could a teacher give to students when they are supposed to write: a) an ad, b) a book review, c) a press release or d) a script

ii) Which of the tasks indicated above are suitable for individual work/ pair work/ group work?

4. How can the teacher differentiate in the case of a creative writing activity the product and the content? Provide details.

5. Intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be explored and integrated in the learning process of a foreign language. What elements of the visible and the invisible culture would you tackle in the classroom for designing writing activities? Describe such a writing activity that focuses on making learners more aware of the fact that language and culture are deeply rooted.

6. Students are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Look at the grid below and add for each type of learner a writing activity that would stimulate the visual, the auditory and the kinaesthetic learning style.

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic
▪ Blank comic strips	▪ Write a dialogue	▪ Write a multimodal text in a blog
▪	▪	▪
▪	▪	▪
▪	▪	▪

7. Design an evaluation scheme for you students' writing activities so that evaluation follows a more objective path and not a subjective one. Provide details about your method of correcting and marking mistakes.

Summary

Writing activities are complex because they imply mastering well spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and knowledge about different registers and genres. As a result of the fact that language should always be understood in relation to a socio-cultural context, a writing task cannot be successful if one does not take into account the intended audience.

Writing is one of those skills that require learners to be motivated. If learners do not see the purpose in writing something, the task will not be an effective learning experience. Therefore, writing activities should be as realistic as possible

Writing is a time consuming activity because one has to brainstorm and organize ideas, think of how to plan the writing assignment and pay attention to vocabulary, word order, spelling, register or genre. Nevertheless, the value of writing should not be neglected either by teachers or by students, since most often evaluation that takes place in school is in written form.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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6. The assessment of the intercultural communicative competence

Introduction

An intercultural perspective in teaching English as a foreign language encourages learners to reflect on and question the borders between self and other. It encourages individuals to undergo behavioural and affective changes in the act of making-meaning and interacting with diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, the assessment of such an outcome is difficult to master.

ICC does not lend itself to being assessed by traditional evaluation schemes. Hence, alternative forms of assessment need to be taken into consideration. One such suggestion is the *European Language Portfolio* (Little & Simpson 2003), which encourages learners to think about cultural difference and to reflect on their intercultural experiences.

This chapter intends to provide details about the challenges that evaluators face when assessing the intercultural communicative competence and the alternative approaches that could be used.

Keywords: *intercultural communicative competence, assessment, challenges, communicative competence, alternative assessment, portfolios.*

Challenges in assessing the intercultural communicative competence

The assessment of the communicative competence infused with an intercultural perspective poses some challenges. Teachers are encouraged to use a common reference level as indicated in the (CEFR) (2001) when it comes to assessing communicative competence. But these levels of proficiency tend to measure declarative knowledge and not procedural knowledge that ICC focuses on. Personality traits and attitudes or willingness to engage with other people in social interaction cannot be measured by using the descriptors found in the CEFR. Therefore, new alternative assessment schemes need to be taken into consideration.

Firstly, evaluation of ICC tends to be a subjective matter because it tackles not only factual knowledge about culture (culture-general and culture-specific knowledge), but also skills and attitudes (Lázár et al. 2007; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002).

Secondly, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002, 7) suggest that there is no perfect model to imitate and that the development of intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes is an ongoing process because culture itself is dynamic and undergoes constant changes. Moreover, beliefs and values tend to change over time.

Thirdly, this evaluation tends to be highly contextual (i.e. it can be influenced by many factors such as the role of the communicative practice, the age of the participants, their gender, their status, etc.) and thus difficult to be assessed using a standardized test (Petruş 2014, 141).

Fourthly, researchers still argue whether linguistic competence should be evaluated together with the intercultural competence. Two researchers bring this topic under debate. On the one hand, Meyer (1991, 157) suggests that “students with low linguistic competence may be excellent in intercultural mediation and vice-versa”. Therefore, linguistic competence might not have a decisive role. On the other hand, Little and Simpson (2003, 5) are in favour of taking into consideration the non-verbal language as well when assessing intercultural competence,

suggesting that cultural difference can be experienced or demonstrated without being linguistically mediated.

In view of these challenges, one definite direction is indicated. The evaluation of linguistic competence infused with an intercultural perspective should comprise both quantitative and qualitative measurements (Steele 1996, 80) and portfolios, projects, quizzes, self-reports, learning logs, surveys summaries (Scarino 2009, 5; Lázár et al. 2007, 29) since these mirror better and in a holistic manner the development of an intercultural communicative competence.

The roles of teachers and learners do tend to change in the context of this intercultural turn. In addition, more emphasis is placed on understanding the social and cultural context in which communication takes place. An evaluation scheme of ICC should pay a considerable attention to the degree in which learners' identities and intercultural skills and attitudes are undergoing changes in view of adopting the roles of mediators between L1 and TL language and culture.

In comparison to informal or non-formal education, formal education has assumed its role in tackling, in an explicit manner, the values and aims of the intercultural perspective. Increased mobility and the development of digital media generate a constant need to adapt language choices to new contexts. Therefore, there is an urgent need to equip today our students with the necessary competences for the future that awaits them.

Alternative approaches

The assessment scheme of ICC should make a differentiation between the native speaker's communicative competence level and the intercultural speaker's communicative competence level. The native speaker has learned L1 within a certain cultural context which the intercultural speaker has encountered only through mediation of authentic resources or short encounters. ICC puts a great emphasis on self-reflection as a means of becoming more knowledgeable and more capable

to understand how language and culture influence each other in different contexts.

According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002, 23) traditional examinations are not appropriate for assessing ICC. Various alternatives are offered:

- the use of a portfolio that evaluates learners' rapport with culture;
- the use of personal diaries to quantify ICC (Lukinsky 1990);
- the use of self-report forms (Dominice 1990);
- the use of individual artefacts (reflective journals), student e-portfolios and survey questionnaires (Ingulsrud et al. 2002);
- measure awareness through critical text analysis (Ingulsrud et al. 2002).

In the case of assessing ICC the formative evaluation tends to be preferred to the summative one. The reason for this resides in the fact that ICC is synonymous with lifelong learning and that more emphasis is placed on the self-reflective process of developing intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes than on the final product and achievement of ICC. In addition, Schneider and Lenz (2001, 36 in Little and Simpson 2003, 4) conclude that there aren't any empirically validated descriptors for learners' intercultural and sociocultural competences. Thus, alternatives evaluation schemes should be considered.

One such alternative is the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* which encourages a self-reflection on personal intercultural experiences. ELP is comprised of three parts (Little and Simpson 2003, 3-4):

- *the language passport* (awareness of the socio-pragmatic dimension of linguistic communication);
- *the language bibliography* (learners are encouraged to write about intercultural experiences of various kinds);
- *dossier* (collection of documents that intend to illustrate the learner's development of intercultural competence).

Taking into consideration the components of the *European Language Portfolio*, one could observe that it compiles linguistic experiences that have taken place both in formal and in informal environments. A combination of these two contexts is ideal for developing one's intercultural communicative competence.

Questions and tasks

1. Adapt sections from the *European Language Portfolio* so that these are tailored to be particularly relevant for a certain target group (tourism, business, education, etc.) and age (young learners, teenagers, adults).
2. Provide your own alternative forms of assessing ICC. Motivate your choices.
3. Consider the three components of ICC. Design a scheme for assessing the development of ICC by indicting appropriate items for each component (knowledge, skills and attitudes).

Summary

An evaluation scheme of Intercultural Communicative Competence should pay a considerable attention to the degree in which learners' identities and intercultural skills and attitudes are undergoing changes in view of adopting the roles of mediators between L1 and the TL language and culture.

Intercultural Communicative Competence does not lend itself to being assessed by traditional evaluation schemes. Therefore, alternative forms of assessment need to be taken into consideration.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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7. Information and communication technology tools and the teaching of English

Introduction

This chapter intends to explore the changes that the field of foreign language teaching and learning have underwent due to an increase in the use and availability of various information and communication technology (ICT) tools. Technology can be used in order to teach, to provide differentiated learning opportunities or to assess learner's knowledge. Thus, technology can provide the support teachers need in order to accomplish the learning objectives they have in mind.

The chapter comprises two sections. The first section provides details about the requirements teachers need to fulfil in learning environments that focus on the use of ICT tools. The second section tackles the ways in which digital technology influences 21 century classrooms.

Keywords: ICT, digital natives, netiquette rules, collaboration, gamification, differentiation, multimodal resources, online learning environment.

7.1 Digital technology and its new learning environments

In view of the technological advancements that have emerged in the past twenty years, new demands have been established for teachers to accommodate their teaching practices to the new ‘age of communication.’ Technology is ubiquitous. Therefore, digital competence is one of the priorities established by the Education & Training 2020 – strategic framework⁶. The aim of ET 2020 is to provide open and innovative education and training by fully embracing the digital era. Digital competence has gained much more emphasis in the last decade since almost every domain of activity requires people to be able to use ICT tools to some extent. Thus, ET 2020 has addressed two issues as regards the use of technology: a) to what extent gaps in digital skills influence education and curriculum planning? and b) how can digital education be included in teacher training education? This digital revolution needs the support of innovative types of pedagogy if the objective is to increase quality and relevance of education. As such, both teachers and learners, at all levels, need to develop their digital competence in order to facilitate the teaching and the learning processes.

Teachers have new requirements to fulfil since education needs to adapt to the constant changes taking place in the digital era. Thus, teachers are required to master online teaching skills, to be able to produce online learning materials, to evaluate knowledge by making use of ICT tools, to increase collaboration in the classroom by providing activities that involve the use of ICT tools, to motivate students to learn by offering opportunities to use ICT tool with regard to various learning styles. In this regard, ICT promotes a systemic change in education as concerns “pedagogical concepts, modes, content and methods” (Du 2017, 2) of teaching. By including ICT in education, several aspects need to be considered: “infrastructure, digital educational resources, instructor training, education and teaching reform and education

⁶ <https://www.eunis.org/blog/2015/09/18/education-training-2020-ec-strategic-framework/>

management” (Du 2017, 3). The potential of ICT in instruction has reached only an exploratory stage and thus continuous research needs to be done in order to build “a connected, digital, personalized and lifelong education system” (Du 2017, 3).

Digital technology promotes a student-centred approach to learning by offering both personalized instruction and evaluation. In addition, it encourages learners to be more responsible and be actively involved in the discovery and learning process. Diverse digital contents such as videos, audio tracks, images, written texts can be easily accessed by learners with respect to their preferred learning styles. Thus, the large variety of multimodal resources can act as a powerful motivational tool to make learning more targeted and more enjoyable. Differentiation can be done by providing learners with different content (e.g. additional resources), by differentiation the process (e.g. consider different levels of difficulty and vary the learning process) and on differentiating the products (i.e. the outcomes of each activity).

EFL learners can get exposure to language input through a considerable amount of authentic materials by accessing various digital resources. Sources of information become more and more diverse, and both teachers and students need to put to good use their critical thinking in order to access resources that are relevant and that present accurate and unbiased information.

Learners that belong to Generation Z, namely born after 1995, are digital natives and prefer to be exposed to experiential learning, to discovery and problem-solving activities and to the use of technology when performing learning activities. They feel more motivated to work with multimodal resources which present information through different channels. Even if they are digital natives, the teacher should still make sure that learners are aware of the netiquette rules that regard the use of appropriate communication norms on digital devices.

Much focus is placed on collaboration and on using collaborative tools that support and enhance instruction in the EFL classroom. Still, this collaboration can break down if the instructional context is not safe and does not promote acceptance of different views and opinions of

diverse learners, as well as respect and tolerance for cultural differences. As mentioned in chapter five while discussing about reading skills, digital technology has influenced to a great extent the way in which learners perceive, handle and make use of information.

7.2 Digital technology in the 21 century classrooms

ICT tools are created for different purposes that not necessarily regard their use in the physical environment of the classroom. Still, teachers need to find ways in which they can take full advantage of the functionalities of these digital technologies and transfer this knowledge into pedagogical aims so that they can control “where classroom practice is going” (Slaouti 2013, 103 cited in Donough, Shaw and Masuhara 2013). Therefore, one has to consider how technology is best integrated into a teacher’s practice.

In the EFL classroom, the teacher aims to develop students’ communicative competence as well as their intercultural communicative competence. In this respect, technology offers quick access to genuine and comprehensive perspectives to explore language and culture in context. A salient characteristic of using ICT tools is that they enable learners to engage in authentic tasks that resemble real life situations. By broadening communication opportunities, ICT tools help learners to “enter into the kinds of authentic social discourse situations and discourse communities that they would later encounter outside the classroom” (Warschauer & Kern 2000, 5 cited in Slaouti 2013, 96). Likewise, the EFL classroom is no longer restricted to its physical boundaries.

Nowadays, students tend to be more difficult to engage and motivate. The solution might be gamification which implies the use of some characteristics of games when providing instruction. The learning experience is enhanced because through the use of various rules and principles, participants are encouraged to take an active role in each stage of the activity and in the discovery of knowledge. Problem solving skills, critical thinking, social skills, digital skills and creativity are brought together in the same interactive activity. Learners tend to be more engaged because learning no longer seems to be a burden, but a challenging task one has to achieve when some constraints are set. The right amount of pressure and challenge gets the work done. Gamification can help learners to acquire content in a fun and

innovative way (Kim, Kibong, Lockee & Burton 2018). Like in a game, gamification activities keep learners always on the move, focused and engaged. The real values of gamification reside in “creating meaningful learning experiences” (Kapp 2012, xxii) and in providing “immediate feedback, feeling of accomplishment and success against a challenge and overcoming it” (Kapp 2012, xxii). Gamification serves as a platform for developing higher order thinking by requesting learners to analyse, reframe and predict outcomes. Gamification has to do more with enhancing intrinsic motivation than the extrinsic one. We have discussed in chapter two how in the long run intrinsic motivation is the one that is more purposeful. According to Kapp, Blair and Mesch (2014, 222), gamification provides learners with the possibility to enhance three elements of intrinsic motivation: the sense of choice and control, confidence in one’s abilities and the sense of being connected to others in achieving a task or a discovery.

By changing instruction patterns, gamification succeeded according to Sitzmann (2011 cited in Kim, Kibong, Lockee & Burton 2018, 36) to increase learners’ retention.

As regards the teaching of EFL, gamification can be applied in any area of language knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, productive and receptive skills etc.) or when developing transversal skills (social skills, intercultural competence, digital skills etc.). A short gamification activity is presented below in order to exemplify some of the characteristics presented in this section:

Title:	Jigsaw brainstorming activity
Materials used:	A newspaper article that has been cut in several sections. Each section contains at least 2-3 paragraphs.
Learners’ level:	Intermediate
Objectives:	Be able to make predictions and infer meaning Read for general understanding Read for specific details

	Learn new vocabulary related to the topic presented in the newspaper
Time:	15 -20 minutes
Stages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire classroom is divided in groups (4 - 5 students). • Each group receives a section from the newspaper and has three minutes to use different reading sub-skills in order to make sense of the section. • When the three minutes are up, sections are given to another group until every group reads the entire newspaper article but with a precise time constraint of three minutes. • After the completion of the activity (15-20 minutes), each group has two minutes to brainstorm ideas and to guess the title of the newspaper article. • The group that managed to provide the most appropriate answer receives extra points, badges etc.

Table no. 11. Jigsaw brainstorming activity

Consequently, gamification activities keep learners always on the move, focused and engaged.

Useful websites and apps

Finland has one of the leading education systems in the world. According to the Finnish National Board of Education, one of the country's 2020 strategies is to acknowledge that electronic learning materials will form in the future a key part of learning and teaching. Therefore, not only in Finland but also worldwide, teachers need to acquire digital skills in order to be able to use online digital resources and to master these ICT tools.

Table no. 11 gathers some examples of useful apps and websites that can help learners develop their language skills, as well as their intercultural communicative competence:

Language skills	Apps
<i>Listening</i>	➤ Podcasts, videos, TED talks etc. To provide language input.
<i>Reading</i>	➤ http://www.wikia.com/ Learners work in groups. They can see on their devices (tablets, laptops etc.) a wiki document created by the teacher. They have to fill in this document. They can collaborate to accomplish the task and they can see, in real time, what items of information are added by their colleagues.
<i>Speaking</i>	➤ http://www.voki.com/ Learners create unique characters and customize their appearance. They either write or record the message they want their character to utter. Afterwards learners share their creation with their peers.
<i>Writing</i>	➤ http://padlet.com/ Students use this app in order to create and upload multimodal resources. Students post on padlet.com a task or a question and these become available to all the students who have logged in.

Table no. 12. Apps and web sites

ICT tools offer diverse opportunities to learn the foreign language in an active manner. Learning no longer takes place only within the boundaries of the classroom. Students become more aware of the fact that they can use the foreign language in diverse ways, and apply their knowledge in practical situations such as: writing emails, engage in projects with other classes around the world, create blogs, watch videos in order to identify non- verbal language and observe how interlocutors make adjustments in real life interactions and use authentic resources in order to develop their cultural awareness.

Questions and tasks

1. Diane Slaouti (2013, 104-105) addresses some questions related to the use and added value brought by technology in the educational arena. Provide answers to her following questions:

a) In what ways can technology extend the learning context beyond classroom hours?

b) To what degree can technology-supported activities motivate the learner engagement with particular aspects of learning?

Take into consideration different age groups and different language levels when answers are provided.

2. Consider the characteristics of the traditional learning and those of gamification presented in section II from this chapter. Fill the grid below with other perspectives on learning and instruction.

Traditional learning	Gamification
get the job done	get the job done, have fun, enjoy each other
responsible only for one's self	responsibility for each other

3. Create a multimodal resource for your learners. Establish the objectives of an activity that makes use of this multimodal resource. Indicate the time needed to perform the activity, the interactions patterns and learner's age/language level.

4. Create a mind map and indicate some of the challenges that emerge from working with authentic resources found on the internet. Provide a group age/language level.

5. Indicate some netiquette rules that you would like to present to your students before you engage them in an inter-institutional project with a school from another country.

Summary

New demands have been established for teachers to accommodate their teaching practices to the new 'age of communication.' Thus, teachers are required to master online teaching skills, to be able to produce online learning materials, to evaluate knowledge by making use of ICT tools, to increase collaboration in the classroom by providing activities that involve the use of ICT tools.

ICT tools offer diverse opportunities to learn the foreign language in an active manner. Digital technology promotes a student-centred approach to learning by offering both personalized instruction and evaluation. Diverse digital contents such as videos, audio tracks, images, written texts can be easily accessed by learners with respect to their preferred learning styles. Thus, the large variety of multimodal resources can act as a powerful motivational tool to make learning more targeted and more enjoyable.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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8. Professional development

Introduction

Professional development or continuing professional development, since these terms are loosely interchangeable, designates a range of activities that intend to help teachers who have completed their initial training to develop further on their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Professional development aims to cover some gaps in knowledge or practice in order to facilitate and target some objectives for career progression. It includes both formal and informal learning and is either self-driven because the teacher wants it or it is imposed by national or school policies and regulations. Hoban (2002) perceives professional development as a “means of supporting educational change” (Kennedy 2005, 246) both in terms of individual needs and institutional developmental needs.

This chapter is comprised of two sections. The first section puts an emphasis on professional development as an ongoing process that can take place both in formal and informal learning situations. Details about various professional qualifications are also provided. When the teaching of a foreign language follows the guidelines of an intercultural perspective, then new implications can arise for the decision making process. Likewise, the teacher gets a deeper understanding of what teaching to linguistically and culturally diverse learners really entails.

The second section looks at self-assessment and reflective tools as ways of assessing one’s continuous development. We provide an example of a self-assessment tool.

Keywords: *professional development, professional identity, qualifications, digital skills, intercultural communicative competence, formal and informal learning situations, school policies, professional autonomy, standardization.*

8.1 Professional qualifications

A teacher's professional identity is comprised of a set of beliefs, values, experiences, personal goals, dreams and guiding principles that provide a foundation for building one's professional career. Sometimes this identity is shifting because teachers struggle to find a balance between personal theories and teaching expectations and public theories and expectations (Malderez and Wedell 2007, 34). This process can vary from one person to another but still, change is inevitable. Therefore, teachers need to set some personal goals and decide, in a conscious manner, who they want to become and how they want to continue their professional development.

In the context of various educational policies aimed at improving quality of education, "teachers have a need, as never before, to update and improve their skills through professional development" (Craft 2000, 6). One can choose from a variety of models of professional development that range from increased standardization (the training model, the cascade model) to being more transformative and focused on teachers' capacity for professional autonomy (the action research model) (Kennedy 2005,248). Professional development is a life-long learning process that determines teachers not to have a passive role in their development.

Craft (2000, 9-10) indicates some reasons for teachers to engage in professional development:

- to improve one's job performance skills;
- to develop an enhanced view of the job;
- to enable one to anticipate and prepare for change;
- to be in line with the school's or institution's policies.

All these aspects suggest that someone who seeks to engage in professional development engages in fact in a twofold experience on two different directions: firstly, one engages on a personal level in reflective practice, thus making changes from within. Secondly, one tries to adapt and consider which the available paths are in order to acquire professional development that is in line with institution's policies.

Lourenco and Andrade (2018, 17) have identified three dimensions that are often undergoing changes in teacher professional development: knowledge, practice and identity. From time to time, if not constantly, teachers need to update their subject matter knowledge and read books or research studies written in their field of activity. Likewise, teachers become more confident when they have to respond to the demands of a constantly changing world. As regards practice, teachers need to have a hands-on experience of what works or what does not work for them and their students. Conducting an action-research could help the teacher to improve his/her teaching and make him/her more aware of students' needs. The multilingual and the multicultural classroom also determine the teacher to consider different practices in order to respond to learners' cultural expectations, values and ways of establishing rapport and interaction patterns in the classroom. Moreover, dealing with diversity "is one of the most important issues facing education today" (Ball and Tyson 2011, 1 in Lourenco and Andrade 2018, 17). Therefore, teachers need to understand how they should translate all these changes into pedagogical aims. In addition, new technological advancements determine new approaches to using technology in the classroom for teaching and assessment purposes. Thus, a teacher should have a good command of these tools in order to be able to facilitate students' learning.

Another aspect of professional development regards qualifications. In the international arena, one can find a variety of ways for obtaining professional qualifications in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. The most widely known are:

- TEFL - Teaching English as a Foreign Language;
- TESOL - Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages;
- CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults;
- DELTA - Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults;
- TKT - Teaching Knowledge Test;

Teachers who are willing to undertake professional development and obtain a certified qualification can also take part in teacher training courses endorsed by the Ministry of Education in that respective country. Whatever the option, teachers should consider before choosing a formal professional development programme its relevance, its applicability and its appropriateness (i.e. if it makes appropriate use of teachers' previously acquired knowledge).

Other opportunities to enhance professional development refer to attending conferences, workshops, presentations, blended-learning courses, online programmes, job shadowing, teaching mobility or training sessions that aim to provide a hands-on experience and to acquire knowledge through practice. Professional development is an ongoing process that can take place both in formal and informal learning situations. Therefore, Earley and Bubb (2016, 37) consider that there are a multitude of professional development opportunities ranging from formal to informal ones: "observation, being observed, professional conversations, teamwork, mentoring, professional inquiry, action research, training others, on-line communities". Peer-observation constitutes an easy way to receive valuable feedback from a colleague. A teacher could also record his/her own lessons and afterwards analyse these recordings and evaluate the strong and the weak points of the teaching sequence.

The Romanian education system indicates, in view of the continuing professional development for teachers working in early childhood and school education, the following requirement:

- every five years, teachers and management staff in primary, secondary and upper education have to attend professional development programmes that amount to 90 transferable professional credits.

These credits can be obtained either by participating in a standardized development training programme endorsed by the National Centre for Training Education Staff or by taking part in different scientific, methodical and pedagogical activities.

Teachers need to be able to master well the new technology not just for classroom purposes, but also for engaging with other professionals in global contexts. Thus, they become more visible in the online educational arena. Professional and academic networking sites can favour collaboration between teachers and can provide beneficial exchange of information. Various projects such as E-Twinning or Comenius allow teachers to improve their online communicative abilities, intercultural communicative competence, digital skills and collaborative networking skills. By participating in the online educational arena teachers are expected to have an “online professional identity” (Markgren 2011, 31). Specialized platforms where academics can create their professional identity and provide details regarding their research are Research Gate, Academia.edu, Epistemio etc. One aspect to remember is that either in online or offline contexts, “efficient professional communication is a prerequisite for attaining professional development” (Pop 2016, 159).

If learners learn new things every day, one could assume the same activity is performed by teachers as well. A teacher should constantly adapt teaching practice and resources to learners’ needs and should consider ways of improving his/her didactic communication, assessment skills or digital skills. Being reflective about one’s professional identity can help teachers “to understand how they respond to various professional situations and to decide whether or not these responses are the most effective ones they could make” (Patrick and McPhee 2011, 130-131). In order to connect this reflection process to the specific context of teacher education we have used Kolb’s four-stage reflective model (1984) as a starting point for encouraging teachers to become “reflective practitioners” (Schön 1993 in Moon 2004, 5).

Kolb’s model (1984) comprises the following stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (Collier and Williams 2005, 86-87). Since experience forms the basis of this model, one has to understand one’s connection to this experience and how one is affected by this

experience (Collier and Williams 2005, 86-87). Image no. 6 indicates, in our view, how this model would be redesigned in order to encourage teachers of foreign languages to become more reflective.

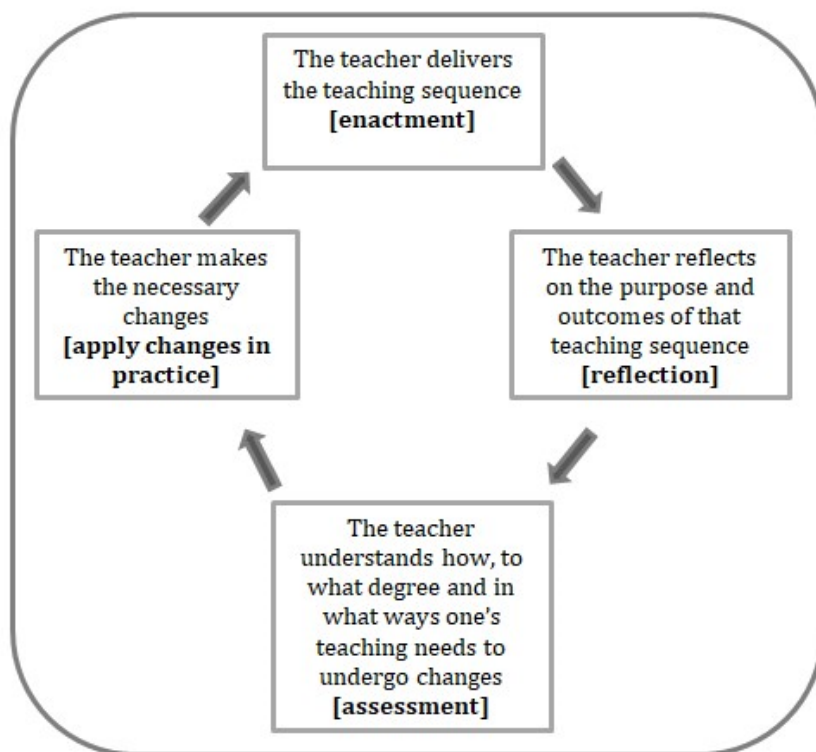


Image no. 6. Reflective practice model

Each stage of this reflective practice model indicated in image no. 6 influences the next one. Therefore, we have a cyclic process in which connections are made as one leaps from one experience to the next. Schön (1987 in Andre and Heartfield 2011, 53) considers that the skills of reflection need to start initially as a conscious and deliberate activity, but with practice they become an unconscious automatic process. Considerable professional growth and self-development is achieved through reflection. One should regard reflection “as a means of upgrading learning” (Moon 2004, 167).

A closer look at how learning takes place in the formal educational setting can help teachers to make informed decisions regarding their teaching practices. When the teaching of a foreign language follows the guidelines of an intercultural perspective, then new implications can arise for the decision making process.

<i>How learning takes place</i>	<i>Implications for making informed decisions</i>
Foreign language learners bring in the classroom their prior knowledge, beliefs, expectations and culture.	➤ Demonstrate both theoretical and practical knowledge of how to address these differences
Foreign language learners need to develop intercultural knowledge, intercultural skills and intercultural attitudes	➤ Be able to use a variety of different techniques, procedures and resources ➤ Demonstrate ability to develop learners' skills, knowledge and attitudes to manage an increasingly culturally diverse world
In order to learn the foreign language learners make use of a variety of authentic resources	➤ Be able to evaluate these resources with regard to different criteria (too culture-specific, biased, presenting stereotypes etc.)
Intercultural learning takes place in informal and non-formal environments	➤ Demonstrate knowledge of taking into consideration learners' interests and readiness
Foreign language learning takes place in a multilingual and a multicultural setting	➤ Be able to regard diversity as a resource, not as a challenge
Foreign language learning and intercultural communicative	➤ Demonstrate sound knowledge of diverse ICT tools

competence are facilitated by the use of ICT tools	in order to allow learners to develop skills in tackling multimodal resources imbued with cultural aspects
Foreign language learning implies a constant exchange of ideas and perspectives developing both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences	➤ Demonstrate knowledge of interaction and collaboration principles
Foreign language learning implies a transitioning back and forth between L1 language and culture and the target language and culture	➤ Demonstrate ability to diminish negative language transfer

Table no. 13. Implications for making informed decisions

By teaching a foreign language from an intercultural perspective the teacher becomes more aware of the fact that “all learning takes place in settings that have particular sets of cultural and social norms and expectations that influence learning and transfer” (Bredeson 2003, 45). Likewise, the teacher gets a deeper understanding of what teaching to linguistically and culturally diverse learners really entails. The roles of teachers are expanding as they have “to become cognizant of the social, cultural, economic or political factors that can have an impact on the teaching process” (Pop 2018, 103). From this perspective, being a reflective teacher implies learning from and through experience that is always placed in a socio-cultural context.

8.2 Self-assessment and reflective tools

Pre-service teachers have at hand different tools to assess their continuous development. They can make use of a variety of tools: reflective journals, portfolios, self-assessment exercises etc. The real value of these tools “lies in the reflection and learning that are generated from the activities, including the meta-cognitive action” (Andre and Heartfield 2011, 58).

The *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (EPOSTL) (Newby et. al. 2007) provides thorough perspectives into different areas of evaluation: classroom management, teaching practices, lesson-planning, cultural awareness, etc. The portfolio is intended to make prospective teachers more aware of these areas relevant for teacher training by allowing them to register their self-development. We have adapted the EPOSTL (Newby et. al. 2007) and selected only those items that referred to the ability of making use of and integrate culture in foreign language teaching (table no. 14). The EPOSTL portfolio is a self-assessment and a reflective tool that enables pre-service teachers to track their development in accordance with specific competences for planning and teaching lessons. Likewise, if filled in at regular intervals (i.e. in the beginning of the semester, during the semester and after the semester), it allows pre-service teachers to evaluate during their English Didactics course or during their teaching practice their ability to make use of intercultural communicative competence in planning activities, in organizing and providing content and in evaluating teaching resources when teaching English in a formal classroom setting.

Source: adapted from European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (Newby et. al. 2007)

Based on your own preferences, please rate the following statements.

Circle your answer:

Conducting a lesson.

Focus placed on content

Question	Survey scale				
	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
1. I can present language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of learners	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can vary and balance activities in order to respond to individuals	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good

learners' learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can relate what I teach to current events in local and international contexts.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can relate the language I am teaching to the culture of those who speak it.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can plan activities to emphasize the interdependence of language and culture	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the other language culture (cultural facts, events, attitudes and identity etc.).	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
7. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which make learners aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behaviour'.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can evaluate and select activities (role plays, simulated situations etc.) which help learners to develop their socio-cultural competence.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
9. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source material and activities which help learners to reflect on the concept of 'otherness' and understand different value systems.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5

10. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts and activities to make learners aware of the interrelationship between culture and language.	Not at all	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>What kind of didactic challenges or difficulties have you encountered during your teaching practice?</p> <p>What would you do differently?</p>					

Table no. 14. Integrating culture in foreign language teaching

By providing a Likert scale that was not included in the original EPOSTL (Newby et. al. 2007), one can evaluate, in a quantitative manner, the responses gathered from respondents.

As noted in Lourenco and Andrade (2018, 17) “to live and to work in today’s societies entails a personal commitment to a continuing process of development”. Therefore, teachers should reflect on the changing practices in education and update their views about the role of education.

Questions and tasks

1. Read the quotation below and express your opinion regarding the need of a teacher to engage in reflective practice:

“Reflective practitioners use deliberate and considered approaches to examine their practice and question otherwise taken for granted routines and practices in order to enact effective change, both in the short and long term”.

(Andre and Heartfield 2011, 52)

2. Indicate four-five digital resources that you use in order to increase your professional development. Provide arguments to sustain the choices you have made.
3. Design a mind-map in order to indicate which factors, in your opinion, influence your professional development, either in a positive or a negative way.
4. What kind of professional development courses have you attended so far? Did these professional development courses help you to improve your teaching? Provide details.
5. Think of your teacher role model. Provide details about his/her professional strengths and weaknesses.
6. Indicate some examples of networking platforms where you could communicate your research findings or read studies that are of interest to you.
7. How do you reckon teaching practices and professional development will look like in 20 years' time?
8. Download for free the EPOSTL (Newby et. al. 2007) and try to fill in all the required fields. Be reflective and indicate some of the measures you would take in order to score better in some of the fields.

Summary

Teachers' professional identities are comprised of beliefs, values, experiences and guiding principles that inevitably are undergoing changes. Therefore, teachers need to set personal goals and decide how they want to continue their professional development. Professional development aims to cover some gaps in knowledge or practice in order to facilitate and target some objectives for career progression. It includes both formal and informal learning and is either self-driven because the teacher wants it or it is imposed by national or school policies and regulations.

Teachers need to be able to master well the new technology not just for classroom purposes but also for engaging with other professionals in global contexts. Being reflective about one's professional identity can help teachers to grow and develop professionally. In the international arena one can find a variety of ways for obtaining professional qualifications in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

Takeaways/Afterthoughts

Be reflective and write down ideas and research directions that are worth remembering:

Suggestions for further reading

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