

**COMPÉTENCES PLURILINGUES :
PERSPECTIVES ET ACTIONS**
**PLURILINGUAL COMPETENCIES:
PERSPECTIVES AND ACTIONS**

Sabina Gola
Kateřina Sedláčková
Beatriz Calvo Martín
Romain Racine
Alessandra Keller-Gerber
(Editors)



**MASARYK
UNIVERSITY
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...una Europa di poliglotti non è un'Europa di persone che parlano correntemente molte lingue, ma nel migliore dei casi di persone che possono incontrarsi parlando ciascuno la propria lingua e intendendo quella dell'altro, che pure non saprebbero parlare in modo fluente, e intendendola, sia pure a fatica, intendessero il «genio», l'universo culturale che ciascuno esprime parlando la lingua dei propri avi e della propria tradizione.

Umberto Eco, *La ricerca della lingua perfetta*, 1993

Introduction

Compétences plurilingues : perspectives et actions

Ce volume propose de mettre en lumière les réflexions menées par des enseignant.e.s et chercheurs/chercheuses de provenances très diverses, autour de leurs pratiques d'enseignement favorisant le développement de compétences plurilingues (que celles-ci soient issues de contextes spécifiques ou fassent partie de projets interuniversitaires de plus grande envergure). Plurilinguisme, intercompréhension, sensibilisation à d'autres langues, innovation pédagogique, rôle des enseignant.e.s et des apprenant.e.s, autonomie et motivation sont les principaux mots-clés qui ressortent de leurs contributions, et constituent le fil rouge du volume.

Les contributions se situent dans le champ d'action délimité par l'approche du plurilinguisme définie par E. Piccardo, A. Germain-Rutherford et G. Lawrence qui soulignent notamment son caractère personnel, transitoire et flou :

Plurilingualism is thus complex, dynamic, flexible notion (Beacco & Byram, 2007 ; Piccardo 2018 ; Piccardo & Puzo, 2015 ; Stratilaki, 2005). Plurilinguals have 'one plural repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources' (Beacco et al, 2016, p. 20) acquired through their personal trajectory. This is seen as being unbalanced, partial, incomplete – dependent on each individual trajectory. It is seen as a changing or transitory competence, in which capacities in one language or variety may be very different in nature to those in another. It is embedded in an equally developing pluricultural competence. And every person's plurilingual repertoire is unique since it reflects both their background and their subsequent trajectory, interests, and experiences. (...) The plurilingual repertoire of an individual develops in a never-ending process of cycles of emergence. (E. Piccardo, A. Germain-Rutherford & G. Lawrence. (Eds.), 2022)

Les expériences présentées et recueillies dans cet ouvrage montrent toutes une grande ouverture vers le plurilinguisme et font preuve d'une volonté de recherche et d'innovation dans ce domaine. Hugues Sheeren, dans son article intitulé **L'intercompréhension entre langues non apparentées : une utopie ? Le projet romano-germanique « Well-BeIntercomprehension »**, présente le projet *Wellbe-Intercomprehension*, dont il est co-auteur. Il s'agit d'un site d'apprentissage de 12 langues – dont la mission est de sensibiliser les apprenant.e.s aux liens entre les langues et de développer leur répertoire plurilingue. Hugues Sheeren revoit la notion d'intercompréhension, la perméabilité des langues non apparentées au sein de la famille indo-européenne étant plus grande qu'on ne le pense. Au travers d'un bilan des langues en Europe – dont il s'avère que 80% des Européens parlent soit une langue romane, soit une germanique – il aperçoit un enjeu majeur dans le développement de l'intercompréhension entre ces deux familles linguistiques, où certaines langues pourraient jouer un rôle de langue-pont, ouvrant l'accès aux idiomes de l'autre groupe. L'anglais, par exemple, en raison de sa « contamination » par le français, se trouve en quelque sorte à mi-chemin entre ces deux groupes. Si le concept d'intercompréhension est désormais consolidé à l'intérieur de la même famille linguistique, l'originalité de ce projet se trouve, justement, dans le dépassement des frontières.

Pour ouvrir la voie au plurilinguisme et favoriser l'utilisation et le développement du répertoire linguistique des étudiant.e.s, plusieurs enseignant.e.s ont mis en place, au sein de leurs cours et en collaboration avec d'autres institutions, dans leur propre pays ou à l'étranger,

le dispositif tandem : un échange linguistique à deux ou en groupe, qui permet aux étudiant.e.s de pratiquer la langue ou les langues qu'ils/elles étudient. Dans les expériences relatées, plusieurs points communs ressortent : d'une part, le rôle actif de l'apprenant.e sur son propre apprentissage, la question du choix des langues à apprendre – et la question de savoir comment les apprendre –, la perception de l'interaction entre les langues apprises et l'élaboration de stratégies plurilingues. D'autre part, les auteur.e.s exposent les défis auxquels l'enseignant.e est confronté.e vis à vis de ce nouveau rôle de l'apprenant, devenant toujours plus autonome dans son apprentissage et qui tend à préférer un apprentissage collaboratif à un enseignement frontal, plus traditionnel.

L'article **Entwicklung vielsprachiger Identitäten durch interkulturelle Begegnungen : Deutsch-Französische und Französisch-Französische Sprachtandems im Vergleich**, par Sebastian Döderlein et Juliane Bertrand, décrit plusieurs types de tandems linguistiques : des tandems unilingues *in situ* facilitant l'intégration de migrants au Québec (les jumelages interculturels), le séminaire d'été franco-allemand en Allemagne, ainsi que des eTandems bilingues. L'article souligne le rôle fondamental du choix des thèmes pour stimuler la motivation des étudiants et montre comment, grâce aux tandems – interlangues ou intralingues –, ces mêmes étudiants deviennent des médiateurs entre les cultures en développant des identités plurilingues et pluriculturelles.

Malgré les tentatives courageuses et créatives des enseignant.e.s pour valoriser et développer les compétences plurilingues des étudiant.e.s, un constat s'impose : tout d'abord, dans l'enseignement et dans l'apprentissage des langues, la tendance générale reste celle de prendre en considération une langue à la fois, de ne tenir compte ni de l'influence des langues déjà connues sur l'apprentissage des nouvelles, ni de l'interaction des langues entre elles, ni de la perception par l'apprenant.e de l'interaction entre ces langues qu'il/elle sait ou qu'il/elle apprend. Néanmoins, nous savons aujourd'hui qu'on n'apprend pas une L2 comme une L3, que la motivation d'apprendre de nouvelles langues est influencée par la manière dont l'individu plurilingue perçoit l'interaction entre ses langues.

L'article **Motivation, autonomous learning, plurilingualism : students as YouTubers** (Veronika De Azevedo Camacho, Marie Červenková, Monika Ševečková) met en évidence l'incertitude des étudiant.e.s vis-à-vis de l'apprentissage d'autres langues, qu'ils/elles n'apprennent pas dans un cours traditionnel, probablement par l'influence du système d'enseignement qui ne favorise pas l'ouverture vers l'apprentissage d'autres langues de façon plus autonome. L'expérience didactique mise en place par ces enseignantes et menée dans le cadre de trois cours de langue (français, espagnol et russe pour les affaires) les a amenées à réfléchir aux stratégies pédagogiques et d'évaluation permettant de valoriser et stimuler le plurilinguisme des étudiant.e.s. Sur la base de l'exemple des youtubers, médiateurs linguistiques et culturels, les étudiant.e.s ont travaillé en tandem. L'objectif du projet était d'apprendre une nouvelle langue étrangère et d'exercer leurs compétences plurilingues au travers de la production de vidéos et de sous-titrage de celles-ci. Une question se pose : est-ce que la relation entre l'univers des jeunes (connaissance des youtubers) et l'univers académique porte à l'accroissement de la motivation à l'apprentissage ou, du moins, influence l'apprentissage ? Même si, concernant la motivation, le retour des étudiant.e.s n'est pas unanime, cette expérience a mis en évidence des points de réflexion sur la perception, de la

part des étudiant.e.s, des différences entre les langues étudiées et l'influence d'une langue connue sur les langues à apprendre. Les auteur.e.s ont constaté le rôle fondamental du choix des thèmes à travailler pour activer la motivation des étudiants.

Actuellement, dans certaines universités de la République tchèque, on constate la tendance à favoriser l'apprentissage des langues en tandem. Silvie Přeřrátilová, auteure de l'article **Plurilingual Students in Tandem Language Exchange : Motivation, Perceived Positive Language Interaction, and Plurilingual Approach**, fait remarquer que les études sur cette typologie d'apprentissage se concentrent généralement sur les pratiques plurilingues dans le cadre des échanges linguistiques et ne prennent pas en compte le répertoire plurilingue des apprenant.e.s. L'article relate l'expérience en tandem tchèque/français (L4) entre une étudiante canadienne apprenant le tchèque comme L4 (Université Charles) et une étudiante tchèque apprenant le français (Université Masaryk) et présente les résultats d'une analyse qualitative détaillée menée par le biais du background langagier de chacune des deux participantes, de leur journal d'apprentissage respectif et des enregistrements de leurs entretiens. Les questions de recherche subjacentes sont multiples et concernent les sources de motivation qui inspirent les apprenant.e.s multilingues ; les différentes façons de percevoir les interactions entre les langues apprises ; les stratégies plurilingues adoptées. L'expérience met en évidence que la perception des interactions entre les langues apprises peut être positive ou négative ; que les apprenant.e.s qui reconnaissent des interactions positives parmi les langues qu'ils ont apprises sont plus motivé.e.s par rapport à ceux/celles qui ne les reconnaissent pas ; que les stratégies plurilingues utilisées par les apprenant.e.s peuvent inspirer des stratégies d'enseignement plurilingue permettant de s'éloigner de l'approche monolingue ; que le rôle de l'enseignant.e est celui de percevoir les interactions parmi les langues apprises par les apprenant.e.s afin d'accroître la motivation à l'apprentissage. L'intérêt principal de cet article réside dans l'analyse des facteurs motivationnels (externes, fondamentalement) tels que l'influence des enseignant.e.s, des parents et des contacts linguistiques qu'ils/elles ont eus pendant leur parcours de vie et d'apprentissage des langues.

Des projets mis en place en temps de Covid-19 mettent en évidence l'influence de la technologie sur l'apprentissage des langues et, par conséquent, sur le dispositif tandem. L'article **Dal tandem all'e-tandem : dimensioni plurilingui** (Jonathan-Olivier Merlo, Rodolphe Pauvert, Elena Tea) relate une expérience de e-tandem franco-italien menée pendant la pandémie par trois universités (Università per Stranieri di Siena, Université de Poitiers et Université Grenoble Alpes). Dans la première partie de leur contribution, les auteur.e.s expliquent, dans les grandes lignes, le fonctionnement de l'échange en tandem. Ils/elle évoquent les théories sur l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, l'évolution personnelle dans l'apprentissage, les stratégies d'apprentissage multiples, l'influence des scénarios pédagogiques et des supports technologiques. De plus, ils/elle montrent que le tandem fait partie des nouvelles pratiques didactiques, qui favorisent l'apprentissage d'une langue vivante (variations sociolinguistiques de la langue) en allant au-delà du simple aspect cognitif de l'apprentissage, qui permet à l'étudiant.e de devenir responsable et protagoniste de son apprentissage et à l'enseignant.e de sortir de sa position traditionnelle pour devenir facilitateur.trice de l'apprentissage. Ce fait a pour conséquence que le double rôle assumé par les étudiant.e.s (apprenant.e/expert.e) leur permet d'être plus tolérant.e.s dans l'acceptation de la production du/de la partenaire, d'accroître leur motivation, de travailler en auto-

mie, d'être plus à leur aise dans les échanges oraux. L'analyse des questionnaires distribués à la fin de l'année aux étudiant.e.s a mis en évidence que, malgré l'instruction qui avait été donnée d'utiliser seulement les deux langues de l'échange, comme dans un tandem traditionnel en face à face, l'échange a finalement été plurilingue – utilisation d'autres langues communes, mais aussi variation des modalités (utilisation du langage juvénile à l'écrit et à l'oral, séances synchrones et asynchrones, utilisation d'applications WhatsApp, Instagram). L'article montre comment, avec l'expérience du Covid – qui a forcé la mise en place de dispositifs pédagogiques à distance ou hybrides – le concept même de plurilinguisme a évolué : la posture plurilingue, comme le montrent les auteur.e.s est, avant tout, comprise par les participant.e.s au projet comme un moyen de jouer avec la langue, de tester des formes hybrides de langages qui se distancient du savoir livresque. En considérant les différents formats que les partenaires avaient à disposition – emails, enregistrements vocaux, chats en ligne ou sur téléphone, comptes Instagram, etc. – les auteur.e.s attestent que le type de langage correspondant à ces différents cadres n'est évidemment pas le même. Les apprenant.e.s ont donc dû mettre en place des stratégies nouvelles pour communiquer. L'un des mérites de cet article est donc d'ouvrir la réflexion concernant le rôle des enseignant.e.s de langue à l'ère des échanges numériques.

Des articles de ce volume, il ressort aussi que les questions d'identité et de culture sont cruciales dans tout échange linguistique. En particulier, l'auteure de **Building Presentation and Communication Skills in a Tandem-Taught Course with Plurilingual and Pluricultural Approaches**, Athena Alchazidu, met en évidence comment la compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle peut être un outil d'inclusion et d'intégration. L'auteure décrit et réfléchit à l'expérience du cours CLIL (ÉMILE) qui a été dispensé au public de réfugiés de la guerre en Ukraine (un public pré-universitaire) et dont l'arrangement sort du cadre des cours universitaires standard à l'Université Masaryk. Les objectifs du cours étaient de développer des compétences cognitives en matière d'étude (préparer les participants aux études à l'Université Masaryk), réagir aux besoins spéciaux (traumatismes de la guerre) et développer des compétences de communication dans les contextes plurilingues et pluriculturels. Les langues du cours étaient l'anglais, le tchèque et l'ukrainien. L'enseignement a été imparti en alternance par une professeure de langues et une psychologue. Les résultats obtenus mettent en évidence une sensibilisation en matière de compétence plurilingue chez les étudiant.e.s, une ouverture et une compréhension progressive des défis pluriculturels. Du point de vue méthodologique et didactique, il ressort que l'approche plurilingue et pluriculturelle a considérablement facilité l'inclusion et l'adaptation des participant.e.s à l'environnement universitaire tchèque. Une petite enquête par questionnaires en début et en fin de cours montre que la perception de leur plurilinguisme a changé au cours de l'expérience de formation. En fin de cours, les participant.e.s valorisent des langues moins bien maîtrisées, ou moins socialement valorisées, qui n'avaient pas été mentionnées initialement. Cet article montre, dans le détail de la démarche, combien les universités sont importantes dans le processus d'accueil des réfugié.e.s – pour que la formation des élites intellectuelles du pays en guerre ne connaisse pas de rupture. Dans ce contexte, le chapitre illustre aussi, de manière fine, que les équipes pédagogiques ont changé de posture et se sont réinventées, afin que les méthodologies d'enseignement s'adaptent aux ressources humaines, et non le contraire.

L'étude de la compétence plurilingue chez les enfants constitue un autre domaine d'étude très actuel. Dans ce volume, un article y est consacré, **Plurilingual Competence in a Child : A Case Study** (Linda Krahula Doleží, Kateřina Mullerová). Cet article relate l'expérience menée avec une enfant de quatre ans, vivant dans un contexte familial plurilingue. Les auteures font référence à des théories sur l'acquisition des langues par les enfants en mettant l'accent sur le système linguistique et ses dynamiques. En effet, ce système linguistique, lié à sa propre trajectoire individuelle, peut être en équilibre mais peut aussi être mis à mal par un événement linguistique. Il n'est pas statique, il est lié à l'âge et aux caractéristiques cognitives de l'individu. Dans l'expérience relatée, il est intéressant de découvrir que l'interaction entre cinq langues ne conduit pas nécessairement à l'incompréhension dans la communication ; que des exemples d'alternance codique peuvent être considérés comme des indicateurs de multi-compétences, et peuvent avoir des effets positifs à long terme sur le bien-être des utilisateur.trice.s multilingues. Une question se pose : comment garder toutes les langues si la situation linguistique dans laquelle vit l'enfant change ? La réponse donnée par les auteures est qu'il faut respecter les préférences de l'enfant et rechercher un équilibre entre la volonté linguistique des parents et la tendance de l'enfant à préférer s'exprimer dans sa langue la plus forte.

Pour conclure, les articles recueillis dans ce volume autour de la valorisation des compétences plurilingues montrent bien que, à côté des réflexions métacognitives et métalinguistiques sur l'enseignement et apprentissage des langues dans un contexte plurilingue (utilisation du plurilinguisme, élaboration de stratégies plurilingues, l'intercompréhension, l'exploitation du répertoire linguistique plurilingue, l'acquisition des langues en contexte plurilingue ...) plusieurs actions sont menées par les enseignant.e.s en faveur de l'individualisation de l'enseignement ; par le biais – par exemple – de l'adoption d'une pédagogie de l'autonomie et de méthodes interactives, valorisant la motivation et la dimension affective de l'apprentissage et les dynamiques de groupe, et au travers de la création de ressources pédagogiques (ex. plateformes d'apprentissage). De quelques contributions il ressort, de surcroît, que la pandémie ainsi que les événements géopolitiques influencent profondément la manière de se rapporter aux langues, tant de la part des enseignant.e.s que des étudiant.e.s. Ils/elles ont modifié les dynamiques d'échange et ont mis en évidence le rôle joué par les aspects interculturels, dérivant de la rencontre entre des individus appartenant à la même culture ou à des cultures différentes.

Introduction

Plurilingual skills: prospects and actions

The aim of this volume is to highlight the reflections of teachers and researchers from a wide variety of backgrounds on their teaching practices that promote the development of plurilingual skills (whether these stem from specific contexts or are part of larger-scale interuniversity projects). Plurilingualism, intercomprehension, awareness of other languages, pedagogical innovation, the role of teachers and learners, autonomy and motivation are the key concepts that emerge from their contributions and which form the common thread running through the volume.

The contributions fall within the scope of the approach to plurilingualism defined by Enrica Piccardo, A. Germain-Rutherford and G. Lawrence, who emphasise its personal, transitory and vague nature:

Plurilingualism is thus complex, dynamic, flexible notion (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Piccardo 2018; Piccardo & Puozzo, 2015; Stratilaki, 2005). Plurilinguals have 'one plural repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources' (Beacco et al, 2016, p. 20) acquired through their personal trajectory. This is seen as being unbalanced, partial, incomplete – dependent on each individual trajectory. It is seen as a changing or transitory competence, in which capacities in one language or variety may be very different in nature to those in another. It is embedded in an equally developing pluricultural competence. And every person's plurilingual repertoire is unique since it reflects both their background and their subsequent trajectory, interests, and experiences. (...) The plurilingual repertoire of an individual develops in a never-ending process of cycles of emergence. (E. Piccardo, A. Germain-Rutherford & G. Lawrence. (Eds.), 2022)

The experiences presented and collected in this book all show a great openness towards plurilingualism and demonstrate a desire for research and innovation in this field. Hugues Sheeren, in his article entitled **L'intercompréhension entre langues non apparentées: une utopie? Le projet romano-germanique “Well-BeIntercomprehension”**, presents the *Well-BeIntercomprehension* project, of which he is co-author. This is a website for learning 12 languages, and its mission is to make learners aware of the links between languages and to develop their plurilingual repertoire. Hugues Sheeren revisits the notion of intercomprehension, the permeability of unrelated languages within the Indo-European family being greater than we think. By taking stock of the languages in Europe (80% of Europeans speak either a Romance or a Germanic language), he sees a major challenge in developing intercomprehension between these two language families, where certain languages could play the role of bridge languages, opening up access to the idioms of the other group. English, for example, because of its 'contamination' by French, is in some ways halfway between these two groups. While the concept of intercomprehension is now consolidated to applications within the same linguistic family, the originality of this project lies precisely in the fact that it transcends borders.

To pave the way for multilingualism and encourage the use and development of students' linguistic repertoires, a number of teachers have set up tandem programmes within their courses and in collaboration with other institutions, in their own country or abroad: a language exchange between two people or in a group, enabling students to practise the language or languages they are studying. A number of common features emerge from the experiences reported: on the one hand, the active role played by learners in their own learning

(the question of which languages to learn and how to learn them), the perception of interaction between the languages learned and the development of plurilingual strategies. On the other hand, the authors set out the challenges facing the teacher in relation to this new role of the learner, who is becoming increasingly autonomous in his or her learning and tends to prefer collaborative learning to more traditional frontal teaching.

The article **Entwicklung vielsprachiger Identitäten durch interkulturelle Begegnungen: Deutsch-Französische und Französisch-Französische Sprachtandems im Vergleich**, by Sebastian Döderlein and Juliane Bertrand, describes several types of language tandems: *in situ* unilingual tandems facilitating the integration of migrants in Quebec (intercultural twinning), the Franco-German summer seminar in Germany, and bilingual tandems. The article highlights the fundamental role of the choice of themes in stimulating student motivation and shows how, thanks to the tandems – whether interlanguage or intralanguage – these same students become mediators between cultures by developing plurilingual and pluricultural identities.

Despite courageous and creative attempts by teachers to value and develop students' plurilingual skills, one thing is clear. First of all, in language teaching and learning, the general tendency is still to take one language at a time into account, ignoring the influence of languages already known on the learning of new ones, the interaction between languages and the learner's perception of the interaction between the languages he/she knows or is learning. Nevertheless, we now know that we do not learn an L2 in the same way as an L3 and that the motivation to learn new languages is influenced by the way in which the plurilingual individual perceives the interaction between his/her languages.

The article **Motivation, autonomous learning, plurilingualism: students as YouTubers** (Veronika De Azevedo Camacho, Marie Červenková, Monika Ševečková) highlights students' uncertainty about learning additional languages not in a traditional course, probably due to the influence of the teaching system, which does not encourage openness towards learning languages more autonomously. The didactic experiment set up by these teachers and carried out in the context of three language courses (French, Spanish and Russian for business) has led them to reflect on teaching and assessment strategies that can enhance and stimulate students' plurilingualism. Using the example of YouTubers, linguistic and cultural mediators, the students worked in tandem. The aim of the project was to learn a new foreign language and practise their multilingual skills by producing videos and subtitling them. The question arises: does the relationship between the world of young people (knowledge of YouTubers) and the world of academia increase motivation to learn or at least influence learning? Even though the feedback from the students on motivation is not unanimous, this experiment has highlighted points for reflection on the students' perception of the differences between the languages studied and the influence of a known language on the languages to be learned. The authors noted the fundamental role of the choice of topics to work on in activating student motivation.

There is currently a trend at some universities in the Czech Republic to promote tandem language learning. Silvie Převrátilová, author of the article **Plurilingual Students in Tandem Language Exchange: Motivation, Perceived Positive Language Interaction, and Plurilingual Approach**, points out that studies on this type of learning generally focus on

plurilingual practices in the context of language exchanges and do not take into account the learners' plurilingual repertoire. The article relates the experience of a Czech/French (L4) tandem between a Canadian student learning Czech as an L4 (Charles University) and a Czech student learning French (Masaryk University) and presents the results of a detailed qualitative analysis conducted through the language background of each of the two participants, their respective learning diaries, and recordings of their interviews. The subjacent research questions are multiple and concern the sources of motivation that inspire multilingual learners, the different ways of perceiving the interactions between the languages learned, and the plurilingual strategies adopted. Experience has shown that the perception of interactions between the languages learnt can be positive or negative, that learners who recognise positive interactions between the languages they have learnt are more motivated than those who do not, and that the plurilingual strategies used by learners can inspire plurilingual teaching strategies. The role of the teacher is to perceive the interactions between the languages learnt by the learners in order to increase motivation to learn. The main interest of this article lies in the analysis of motivational factors (primarily external) such as the influence of teachers, parents, and the linguistic contacts the learners have had during their lives and language learning.

Projects set up during Covid-19 highlight the influence of technology on language learning and, consequently, on the tandem system. The article **Dal tandem all'e-tandem: dimensioni plurilingui** (Jonathan-Olivier Merlo, Rodolphe Pauvert, Elena Tea) reports on a Franco-Italian e-tandem experiment carried out during the pandemic by three universities (Università per Stranieri di Siena, Université de Poitiers and Université Grenoble Alpes). In the first part of their contribution, the authors explain, in broad terms, how the tandem exchange works. They discuss theories on learning a foreign language, personal development in learning, multiple learning strategies, and the influence of teaching scenarios and technological aids. In addition, they show that the tandem is one of the new teaching practices which promote the learning of a living language (sociolinguistic variations of the language) by going beyond the simple cognitive aspect of learning, enabling the student to become responsible for and the protagonist of his/her learning and the teacher to leave his/her traditional position and become a learning facilitator. As a result, the dual role assumed by the students (learner/expert) enables them to be more tolerant in accepting their partner's production, to increase their motivation, to work independently, and to feel more at ease in oral exchanges. An analysis of the questionnaires distributed to the students at the end of the year showed that, despite the instruction to use only the two languages of the exchange, as in a traditional face-to-face tandem, the exchange ended up being multilingual – using other common languages, but also varying the methods (use of juvenile language in writing and orally, synchronous and asynchronous sessions, use of WhatsApp and Instagram applications). The article shows how, with the Covid experience (which forced the introduction of distance or hybrid teaching methods) the very concept of plurilingualism has evolved: the plurilingual stance, as the authors show, is above all understood by the participants in the project as a means of playing with language, of testing hybrid forms of language that distance themselves from book-based knowledge. Looking at the different formats available to the partners (emails, voice recordings, online or telephone chats, Instagram accounts, etc.) the authors can attest to the fact that the project participants were

able to play with language in a variety of ways. The authors also indicate that the type of language corresponding to these different frameworks is obviously not the same. Learners have therefore had to develop new strategies for communicating. One of the merits of this article is therefore that it raises the question of the role of language teachers in the age of digital exchanges.

The articles in this volume also show that questions of identity and culture are crucial in any language exchange. In particular, Athena Alchazidu, author of **Building Presentation and Communication Skills in a Tandem-Taught Course with Plurilingual and Pluricultural Approaches**, highlights how plurilingual and pluricultural competence can be a tool for inclusion and integration. The author describes and reflects on the experience of a CLIL course delivered to war refugees in Ukraine (a pre-university audience) and arranged outside the framework of standard university courses at Masaryk University. The aims of the course were to develop cognitive study skills (to prepare participants for study at Masaryk University), respond to special needs (war trauma), and develop communication skills in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The course languages were English, Czech and Ukrainian. The teaching was done alternately by a language teacher and a psychologist. The results show that the students have a greater awareness of plurilingual competence and a gradual openness to and understanding of pluricultural challenges. From a methodological and didactic point of view, it appears that the multilingual and multicultural approach considerably facilitated the inclusion and adaptation of the participants to the Czech university environment. A small survey using questionnaires at the beginning and end of the course shows that the participants' perception of their plurilingualism changed over the course of the training experience. At the end of the course, the participants valued languages that were less well mastered, or less socially valued, and that had not been mentioned initially. This article shows, in detail, how important universities are in the process of welcoming refugees so that the training of the intellectual elites of a country at war is not disrupted. In this context, the article also illustrates in detail how teaching teams can change their approach and reinvent themselves so that teaching methodologies are adapted to human resources rather than the other way round.

The study of plurilingual competence in children is another highly topical area of research, as highlighted in **Plurilingual Competence in a Child: A Case Study** (Linda Krahula Doleží, Kateřina Mullerová). This article relates the experience of a four-year-old child living in a plurilingual family context. The authors refer to theories on children's language acquisition, focusing on the linguistic system and its dynamics. This linguistic system, which is linked to the child's own individual trajectory, can be in equilibrium but can also be undermined by a linguistic event. It is not static but linked to the age and cognitive characteristics of the individual. Interestingly, the reported experiment shows that interaction between five languages does not necessarily lead to incomprehension in communication. Rather, examples of codic alternation can be considered as indicators of multi-skilling and can have positive long-term effects on the well-being of multilingual users. The question arises: how can we help maintain all the child's languages if the linguistic situation in which the child lives changes? The answer given by the authors is that the child's preferences must be respected, and a balance sought between the parents' linguistic wishes and the child's tendency to prefer to express him/herself in his/her strongest language.

In conclusion, the articles in this volume on the development of plurilingual skills clearly show that, alongside metacognitive and metalinguistic reflections on language teaching and learning in a plurilingual context (use of plurilingualism, development of plurilingual strategies, intercomprehension, exploitation of the plurilingual linguistic repertoire, language acquisition in a plurilingual context, etc.), a number of actions are being taken by teachers to individualise teaching. For example, they are adopting autonomy-based teaching methods and interactive methods that promote motivation, the affective dimension of learning, and group dynamics, as well as creating teaching resources (e.g. learning platforms). Some of the contributions also show that the pandemic and geopolitical events have had a profound influence on the way in which both teachers and students relate to languages. They have changed the dynamics of exchange and highlighted the role played by intercultural aspects, deriving from encounters between individuals belonging to the same or different cultures.

L'intercompréhension entre langues non apparentées : une utopie ? Le projet romano-germanique

« Well-BeIntercomprehension »

Intercomprehension between unrelated languages: a utopia? The Romano-Germanic project “Well-BeIntercomprehension”

Hugues Sheeren

Abstract

This chapter concerns the phenomenon of Intercomprehension between unrelated languages. Nowadays Intercomprehension between related languages is the most widespread and the most taught approach. However, we can imagine developing a model of communication in which the boundaries between language families would be broken, in particular between Indo-European languages, which have many common aspects.

Thanks to the European lexicon, non-verbal strategies and bridge languages – English in particular – which can act as a link, two people who speak different idioms can nevertheless manage to understand each other and therefore communicate. This is what the “Wellbe-Intercomprehension” project has set out by building a bridge between the Romance and Germanic groups. A project that has resulted in the creation of a learning site in 12 languages which we introduce here.

Introduction

L'intercompréhension (IC) désigne traditionnellement une pratique orale ancienne où deux personnes se comprennent en parlant chacune sa propre langue tout en comprenant celle de l'autre. Aujourd'hui, cette notion s'est un peu restreinte car elle se réfère bien souvent à une pratique de compréhension réciproque (à l'écrit ou à l'oral) qui advient quand les deux locuteurs communiquent entre eux dans des langues qui sont proches en s'appuyant sur leur proximité génétique. Il est dès lors assez évident que lorsque deux individus s'expriment dans des langues qui n'ont que très peu d'éléments en commun, la communication, même si elle n'est pas totalement impossible, est rendue très difficile puisqu'en IC on considère qu'en principe il n'y a aucun apprentissage préalable de la langue de l'autre.

Les différents projets d'intercompréhension apparus au cours de ces dernières décennies¹, du moins en ce qui concerne les grandes langues parlées en Europe, se sont principalement concentrés sur l'IC intrafamiliale, c'est-à-dire entre des idiomes de la même famille, notamment celle des langues romanes. Excepté des activités consacrées aux enfants qui relèvent plutôt d'une forme d'« éveil aux langues » – généralement non enseignées à l'école, aucune n'étant exclue a priori (CARAP, 2012, 7) – ou encore de vastes projets comme EU&I² ou Inter-mar, les plateformes, sites, manuels et ouvrages théoriques consacrés à l'IC ne se penchent

1. Citons Galatea, EuRom5, Babelweb, Chainstories, Itinéraires romans, Euromania, Iglo, Sigurd etc.

2. EU&I – European Awareness and Intercomprehension' project (Lingua 1).

que très rarement sur l'éventualité d'une compréhension réciproque entre langues non apparentées génétiquement. Est-ce à dire que ce type d'échange est irréalisable ? S'il s'avère certainement plus compliqué, il n'est néanmoins pas inenvisageable.

Nous commencerons d'abord par proposer une réflexion sur une hypothétique intelligibilité mutuelle entre Européens, en commençant par aborder la notion de proximité/distance entre langues tout en essayant de cerner les éléments linguistiques ou non verbaux qui pourraient favoriser et permettre une intercompréhension – même partielle – entre des citoyens.ne.s de l'Union Européenne. Nous verrons que l'anglais – idiome devenu aujourd'hui celui qui prédomine au niveau mondial – pourrait davantage jouer le rôle de langue-pont entre le groupe roman et le groupe germanique, voire servir pour des locuteurs d'autres familles pour aborder les langues latines. Le deuxième volet de cette contribution s'attachera à présenter le projet « Well-BeIntercomprehension », qui propose de travailler simultanément (ou presque) sur 12 langues (romanes et germaniques) et qui a abouti à la création d'une plateforme d'apprentissage en ligne.

L'intercompréhension pourrait-elle être adoptée comme pratique dans l'Union européenne ?

Actuellement, la population de l'Union Européenne s'élève à 447,2 millions (Eurostat, 2022, 12). Si l'on fait la somme des pays dont au moins l'une des langues officielles (quand il y en a plusieurs) est romane ou germanique, voici ce à quoi on aboutit : Allemagne (83,2), Autriche (8,9), Belgique (11,6), Danemark (5,8), Espagne (47,4), France (67,7), Irlande (5), Italie (59,2), Luxembourg (0,6), Malte (0,5), Pays-Bas (17,5), Portugal (10,3), Roumanie (19,2), Suède (10,4), soit un total de 347,3 millions de personnes. Certes, 8,4% en moyenne de la population de l'U.E. est de nationalité étrangère (ce qui veut dire que certains individus résidant dans les pays cités ont une autre langue maternelle, qui n'est peut-être ni romane ni germanique). Cependant, il y a également une mobilité intra-européenne, par exemple 47% de la population qui vit au Luxembourg (Eurostat, 2022, 13) n'est pas d'origine luxembourgeoise, mais en réalité seulement 9% des personnes ne proviennent pas de l'Union Européenne. Par ailleurs, on peut supposer qu'après un certain nombre d'années, toute personne expatriée a acquis des compétences linguistiques dans au moins l'une des langues du pays d'accueil où elle s'est établie. Si l'on effectue un calcul approximatif en considérant que 347,3 millions des citoyens et citoyennes de l'Union parlent une langue néolatine ou germanique sur un total de 447,2 millions, cela signifie qu'actuellement 77,6% des personnes parlent au moins l'une des langues des deux familles comme langue maternelle, seconde ou étrangère. Un chiffre qui était encore bien supérieur avant le Brexit puisqu'on pouvait y ajouter les 67 millions d'habitants du Royaume-Uni. On pourrait également ajouter la Norvège (environ 5,5 millions d'habitants) ou la Suisse (8,8 millions) puisque on y parle des langues germaniques et romanes, même si ces nations ne sont pas membres de l'Union, ou encore tenir compte de locuteurs de l'Europe de l'Est ou du Nord parlant une langue slave ou balte par exemple mais qui ont une bonne connaissance d'une langue romane ou germanique. Au vu de tels chiffres, n'y a-t-il pas lieu de promouvoir davantage l'intercompréhension entre ces deux grandes familles ? C'est précisément ce que préconisent Caddéo et Jamet qui plaident en faveur d'un enseignement de deux langues de typologies différentes à l'école pour par-

venir à comprendre leurs sœurs par le biais de l'intercompréhension. On arriverait alors à communiquer avec 80% des 27 pays européens (Caddéo-Jamet, 2103, 32). Si on ajoutait le groupe slave, on parviendrait alors à converser avec plus de 90% des habitants de l'U.E. environ, ce qui serait extrêmement intéressant. Un leurre ? Pas autant qu'on le croit. Certes, cela exigerait un effort réciproque, l'adoption de stratégies de transfert, une réflexion sur les connexions entre langues lors d'un échange écrit ou verbal. Il s'agirait de revoir l'enseignement de celles-ci en les transmettant non plus de façon isolée mais par « bouquets ». Toutes les variétés linguistiques du vieux continent partagent de nombreuses similitudes lexicales qui devraient être exploitées davantage. Dans ce tableau qui paraît idyllique mais au fond pas si utopique, les langues-ponts comme l'anglais ont peut-être un rôle à jouer. Nous le verrons plus loin.

Langues distantes vs langues éloignées

Comme l'explique Meziane, le concept de langues proches ou éloignées est très subjectif. « Nous avons tous une représentation de la proximité ou de la distance plus ou moins grande qui subsiste entre les langues, à la fois géographique, culturelle et linguistique » (Meziane, 2017, 46). Ainsi, les Scandinaves parlent de langues « sœurs » uniquement pour se référer au danois, norvégien et suédois car les liens de parenté de cette triade sont très forts, presque comme s'il s'agissait d'une langue unique prononcée différemment selon les régions, de sorte que la compréhension mutuelle fonctionne aisément alors que d'autres langues germaniques comme l'islandais ou le néerlandais sont perçues – pour une raison ou une autre – comme plus éloignées. Les Anglo-Saxons estiment quant à eux qu'une langue est apparentée (*closely related language*) quand elle est (très) facilement compréhensible.

Il y a toutefois une sorte de proximité génétique, relative certes, entre les langues des groupes issus de l'indo-européen. Malgré les écarts entre les langues de familles différentes, des analogies existent bel et bien, mais nous ne les percevons que très peu car nous n'avons pas (plus ?) conscience des ressemblances entre elles. Or, il faudrait se focaliser sur les éléments linguistiques communs provenant de leur appartenance à la famille indo-européenne. Par exemple, il existe environ 5000 lemmes communs aux langues parlées en Europe, rappellent Bonvino et Garbarino, ce qui constitue un corpus non négligeable. « Si tratta di cultismi provenienti dalle lingue antiche (latino, greco e, in modo minore, arabo e turco) che hanno viaggiato per tutto l'occidente in epoca medievale e rinascimentale o ancora di scientismi o di parole legate alle innovazioni moderne » (Bonvino-Garbarino, 2022, 49). Les mots savants, hérités du latin ou du grec, qui ont subi peu de mutations, sont par conséquent les plus transparents alors que les termes du quotidien, plus utilisés, ont subi davantage d'altérations et sont donc moins compréhensibles (Negri, 2020, 312). Negri, se basant sur le *Dictionnaire européen des mots usuels, français-anglais-allemand-espagnol-italien-portugais*, affirme que parmi les quelque 8000 mots recensés, 15% des vocables sont presque homographes et que 80% ont une origine grecque ou latine, ce qui favorise fortement l'intelligibilité de ceux-ci. Corollaire de ce constat et vu la perméabilité des langues, on peut parler d'une sorte de « lexique commun européen » qui, selon la chercheuse, correspond géographiquement à l'aire de Charlemagne (Negri, 2020, 315-319), d'où l'idée d'un *Standard Average European* (Velásquez Cortés, 2015, 65 citant Bonvino ou encore Benveniste et d'autres chercheurs) qui, comme nous l'avons dit, représente un corpus constitué

principalement de termes techniques et scientifiques formés à partir de racines grecques et latines. Ces termes sont donc très similaires au niveau de leur graphie, bien qu'appartenant à des groupes linguistiques différents. Il faut y ajouter les anglicismes plus récents entrés dans de nombreuses langues depuis plusieurs décennies. Velásquez Cortés rappelle aussi que les langues européennes ont recours à de nombreuses constructions grammaticales semblables ainsi qu'à une rhétorique et une manière d'argumenter transparentes (*Ibid.*).

Si l'IC n'est pas forcément aisée dans la vie quotidienne entre langues européennes non apparentées (par exemple entre une vendeuse roumaine et une cliente suédoise dans un magasin), on peut cependant imaginer qu'elle pourrait être davantage pratiquée lors de colloques scientifiques, de conférences, de réunions de travail, d'assemblées de nature politique puisque ces lieux, ces contextes – où le registre de langue est plutôt élevé et où l'utilisation de termes « paneuropéens » (ou *euroversals*) est très fréquente – se prêtent bien à une compréhension réciproque. Par ailleurs, on voit apparaître de plus en plus des interventions « bilingues » c'est-à-dire que le discours oral est complété par un diaporama rédigé dans une autre langue, ce qui permet de toucher un plus large public. Charlotte Gooskens s'intéresse depuis des années aux critères d'intelligibilité entre langues, notamment par le biais d'une enquête de grande envergure menée par son équipe sur plus de 40.000 personnes issues de 16 pays différents, ayant entre 17 et 34 ans³. Les tests effectués ont montré tout d'abord – sans grande surprise – que les anglophones comprennent assez mal le suédois, le danois ou le néerlandais alors que le trajet en sens inverse fonctionne très bien. Pour les langues romanes, l'espagnol semble être le mieux compris par les autres romanophones (les lusophones en tête suivis des italophones et des roumanophones). Le roumain est la langue la moins comprise par les autres locuteurs de langues de la même famille, ce qui s'explique certainement par son lexique « contaminé » par les langues slaves. L'intercompréhension n'est donc pas forcément symétrique. Les Portugais comprennent mieux leurs voisins ibériques que les Espagnols ne les comprennent, par exemple. La compréhension mutuelle ne fonctionne pas toujours aussi bien dans un sens que dans l'autre.

Les langues-ponts : l'exemple de l'anglais

Le lexique est très certainement l'élément linguistique qui constitue la porte d'entrée dans une langue. Il est bien connu que deux tiers des vocables de l'anglais sont d'origine latine, ce qui en fait « la plus romane des langues germaniques ». A l'inverse, mais dans une proportion moindre, le français a incorporé beaucoup de germanismes, davantage que les autres langues romanes. Dans une contribution traitant des liens peu évidents existant entre le français et le norvégien, Meziane conseille aux francophones de s'appuyer sur l'anglais pour apprendre le norvégien pour les conjugaisons entre autres et pour certains vocables (Meziane, 2017, 53). Elle souligne également qu'il existe des racines grecques ou latines communes, des emprunts d'une langue à l'autre voire des correspondances phonétiques. Elle fournit l'exemple du suffixe norvégien *-itet* qui, dans la majorité des cas est équivalent au suffixe anglais *-ity*, lui-même équivalent du suffixe français *-ité*, indiquant qu'on a affaire à un substantif. Le phénomène des correspondances phonétiques aide à comprendre des

3. Voir le site du projet « Mutual intelligibility of closely related languages (MICReLa) » <http://www.let.rug.nl/gooskens/project/>

mots inconnus par analogie avec d'autres mots déjà rencontrés possédant un même suffixe (si l'on sait que *kvalitet* = *qualité* on peut déduire que *kapasitet* = *capacité*). Il s'agit d'une stratégie récurrente en IC, qui peut s'avérer fructueuse même entre langues distantes.

Le fait que l'anglais se situe, d'une certaine façon, à mi-chemin entre le groupe roman et le groupe germanique, devrait constituer un atout pour l'intercompréhension. Loin de vouloir promouvoir l'apprentissage et l'utilisation de la langue de Shakespeare – qui n'a certainement pas besoin d'être défendue ou valorisée –, nous pouvons néanmoins admettre que celle-ci peut servir de tremplin pour passer d'une branche à l'autre. La didactique intégrée des langues, qui prévoit de prendre appui sur une langue première ou seconde pour faciliter l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, se base justement sur ce principe et constitue l'une des quatre approches plurielles que l'on trouve dans le *Cadre de référence pour les approches plurielles des langues et des cultures* (CARAP, 2012, 6). Dès lors, bien que l'intercompréhension vise à proposer une alternative à une communication unilingue où l'anglais règne trop souvent en maître, on pourrait cependant parfois l'utiliser comme idiome servant de passerelle entre des langues non affines. C'est cette idée que les auteurs de l'ouvrage *English – the Bridge to the Romance languages* souhaitent avancer. Si, d'une part, l'anglais a prêté de nombreux vocables à d'autres langues au cours des dernières décennies et même précédemment, il est lui-même truffé de mots provenant du français ou hérités du latin. Un Néerlandais ou un Danois maîtrisant bien l'anglais pourront avoir accès au sens de certains termes portugais, espagnols ou français par le biais de l'anglais, comme en témoigne le tableau suivant.

ES	IT	FR	EN	NL	DE	SE
<i>comunidad</i>	<i>comunità</i>	<i>communauté</i>	<i>community</i>	<i>gemeenschap</i>	<i>Gemeinschaft</i>	<i>gemenskap</i>
<i>similitud</i>	<i>similitudine similarità</i>	<i>similitude similarité</i>	<i>similarity</i>	<i>gelijkenis</i>	<i>Ähnlichkeit</i>	<i>likhet</i>

L'anglais peut donc exercer la fonction de « passeur », surtout pour les locuteurs de langues germaniques (ou non-européennes mais ayant souvent des bases dans cet idiome mondialement présent) souhaitant appréhender les langues néolatines. De même, mais dans une moindre mesure, le français pourra servir de pont pour aller vers les langues germaniques (en particulier le français de Belgique – qui a emprunté certains termes au néerlandais ou à l'allemand – ou le français de Suisse). Si l'on prend le cas des pays du Maghreb, où le français est encore bien présent aux côtés de l'arabe, on peut imaginer que le français serve de langue-passerelle pour apprendre l'anglais.

En outre, de nombreux termes anglo-américains se sont répandus un peu partout dans le monde, tels quels ou sous la forme d'emprunts adaptés. « Learners who know English are therefore at an advantage in terms of the basis for the transfer of known internationalisms in unknown language » (Hemming-Klein-Reissner, 2011, 15). Ceci ne signifie cependant pas qu'il faille promouvoir encore davantage l'usage de celui-ci (ou, pire du *globish*, car malheureusement c'est souvent de cela qu'il s'agit), ce qui desservirait l'intercompréhension et qui, en quelque sorte, irait à son encontre. Il convient plutôt de prendre acte d'une réalité objective, sans *a priori*, de la prédominance de l'anglais et de sa position « au carrefour » de deux familles. Au lieu de mener un vain combat, pourquoi ne pas exploiter les compétences des apprenants dans cet idiome pour les diriger vers l'espagnol ou le portugais ? D'autant que dans la plupart des pays européens (Europe occidentale surtout mais pas seulement),

les classes sont pluriculturelles aujourd'hui et, quand on a des étudiants venus de tous horizons, pouvoir disposer d'une langue auxiliaire peut s'avérer bien utile. Si l'on prend par exemple le cas d'un.e professeur.e d'espagnol devant gérer des adolescents ou étudiants migrants arrivés récemment en territoire francophone, le fait de pouvoir faire référence ponctuellement à l'anglais – quand ils ont des bases dans cette langue – sera une stratégie à ne pas rejeter (et qui est parfois presque obligée). On peut évidemment s'appuyer sur d'autres langues-ponts, en fonction de la situation : pour tenter de comprendre les langues scandinaves, la connaissance du néerlandais ou de l'allemand sera utile. On pourrait imaginer agir de la même manière avec d'autres langues non occidentales. La connaissance d'une langue, quelle qu'elle soit, peut constituer un tremplin vers une autre, dont elle est plus ou moins proche ou avec laquelle elle partage certains aspects.

Les éléments non linguistiques

Ollivier (2007) insiste sur l'importance du non-linguistique dans la communication inter-compréhensive, notamment les dimensions textuelle (le fait d'être en mesure de reconnaître le genre d'un texte) et situationnelle (le contexte). Ceci est d'autant plus vrai dans le cas de langues non apparentées. L'expérience relatée par Ollivier démontre que 59% des personnes ayant participé à une enquête sont parvenues à comprendre un formulaire de réservation hôtelière en turc sans parler un seul mot de cette langue, par le simple fait de reconnaître la forme même du formulaire⁴. Notre expérience du monde est donc déterminante pour parvenir à comprendre un idiome inconnu. Quoiqu'on ait souvent l'impression que le langage constitue l'élément principal nous permettant de comprendre ou de ne pas comprendre un message, en réalité, le contexte, le type de discours entendu ou lu et le non-verbal occupent une place prépondérante. « La situation fournit donc des indices sur le contenu de l'échange et l'endroit où il se déroule est connoté socialement ». Chaque lieu induit une sorte de scénario culturel et « ceci est valable également, du moins en partie, pour des interactions entre des personnes appartenant à deux univers culturels différents, car certaines situations sont universelles (demander une information, commander une boisson, déclarer son identité...) » (Sheeren, 2021, 10). Dans ce même article, nous insistions justement sur l'importance de mettre en place des stratégies non verbales pour se faire comprendre par l'autre, des stratégies qui servent d'auxiliaire à la communication verbale (reformulation, répétition, gestuelle, recours à un objet...). Afin qu'une communication efficace advienne, *a fortiori* dans un dialogue exolingue, l'intentionnalité est primordiale car, pour que le message soit compris, il faut que le locuteur mette tout en œuvre pour se faire comprendre par son interlocuteur. Ceci est d'autant plus vrai pour l'intercompréhension interfamiliale, où le non-verbal pallie davantage l'absence de termes transparents. Gooskens (2022), quant à elle, décèle une autre composante non linguistique : l'exposition. Autrement dit le fait d'avoir été exposé, d'avoir été en contact avec une langue étrangère, même de façon purement passive (télévision, radio, contact avec des personnes natives), joue un rôle déterminant pour l'IC. Par ailleurs, elle affirme que l'attitude est un élément non négligeable, c'est-à-dire la volonté de comprendre ou non, de faire un effort pour interpréter le message.

4. Le site Eu&I proposait un type d'expérience similaire et arrivait aux mêmes conclusions.

Le projet « Well-BeIntercomprehension »

Tenant compte des différentes observations et données évoquées plus haut, tant d'un point de vue de la situation géopolitique actuelle que des constats purement linguistiques, le projet « Well-BeIntercomprehension » a tenté de proposer une nouvelle façon d'appréhender les langues, dans une optique plurilingue. Conçu en 2021 dans le cadre de l'Alliance inter-universitaire Euniwell qui l'a financé, le projet est le fruit du travail de plusieurs universités (Simmelweiss – Budapest, Nantes et Florence) et de collaborateurs externes, soit une équipe d'une quinzaine de personnes. Il a reçu le label européen 2022 en Italie, un label octroyé par la Commission européenne qui récompense un projet innovant ou la conception de matériel de qualité dans le domaine de l'apprentissage/l'enseignement des langues vivantes tout en favorisant le plurilinguisme. Le résultat de ce projet a donné lieu à la création d'une plateforme d'apprentissage (www.europaic.eu).

Objectifs du projet

Le projet a poursuivi plusieurs objectifs. En premier lieu, il s'agissait de proposer du matériel didactique consacré à l'intercompréhension entre langues germaniques. En effet, bien que l'IC se soit développée au départ entre les langues scandinaves au siècle dernier, depuis quelques décennies, cette tendance a fortement fléchi et l'on constate une carence de ressources pédagogiques (quelle qu'en soit la forme) pour la famille germanique. Ceci pourrait s'expliquer par plusieurs raisons, qu'il serait long et hasardeux d'expliquer ici. Nous pouvons cependant émettre deux hypothèses comme le rôle ambigu de l'anglais à l'intérieur de cette famille (et souvent bien maîtrisé et donc utilisé dans les pays germaniques) ou encore l'intercompréhension presque « naturelle » pratiquée dans les pays nordiques qui ne voient pas vraiment l'intérêt de développer davantage des méthodes d'apprentissage, d'autant que dans les pays nordiques, l'anglais et l'allemand sont déjà souvent étudiés.

En deuxième lieu, le projet s'est donné pour but de développer l'IC interfamiliale entre le groupe des langues romanes et celui des langues germaniques. Douze langues (norvégien, suédois, danois, anglais, néerlandais, allemand, portugais, espagnol, catalan, français, italien et roumain) sont donc abordées en parallèle dans des activités axées tantôt sur des idiomes apparentés tantôt sur des idiomes non apparentés, ce qui constitue un vrai défi.

Comme on peut aisément l'imaginer, la difficulté d'un tel travail est de concevoir des activités en douze langues, dans lesquelles parfois aucun membre de l'équipe n'est réellement compétent. Parvenir à couvrir un tel éventail linguistique n'est pas une mince affaire, d'autant que les combinaisons de langues des activités proposées sont très nombreuses, ce qui suppose une collaboration continue entre les membres de l'équipe voire un recours ponctuel à une personne externe, afin d'assurer une supervision des exercices dans telle ou telle langue.

Le site EuropaIC

Ce projet a abouti à la création d'un site ou plutôt d'une plateforme Moodle gratuite et en accès libre moyennant une inscription préalable. Le site est disponible en treize langues, soit

toutes celles envisagées par le projet plus le hongrois, puisque l'Université Semmelweiss de Budapest a contribué à son élaboration.

Six thèmes sont présentés, correspondant à 6 unités (mais le terme « unités » ne convient pas tout à fait car il n'y a pas réellement de chronologie dans la réalisation des activités) : se présenter, la vie universitaire, la vie quotidienne en ville, le logement, l'interculturel et la santé. Les sujets ont été définis en fonction des besoins supposés d'une personne en mobilité Erasmus (étudiant.e, personnel administratif ou professeur.e). L'étudiant.e ou l'enseignant.e qui arrive à l'étranger doit se débrouiller dans différentes situations : chercher un endroit pour se loger, se présenter à ses homologues, demander des informations sur les cours ou sur un colloque, emprunter les transports en commun, se rendre éventuellement chez le médecin en cas de problème de santé etc.

Les activités des six thèmes proposés peuvent être réalisées sans ordre précis, même si le thème 1 (se présenter) comporte objectivement moins de difficultés lexicales et grammaticales que le thème 6. Les langues sont abordées de façon aléatoire. Le travail se réalise en parallèle presque sur douze langues. Certains exercices sont davantage conçus dans des langues uniquement romanes ou germaniques, d'autres mélangent des idiomes des deux familles. Il a fallu veiller à garder un certain équilibre, même s'il faut admettre que pour des motifs liés à la compétence de l'équipe et à la difficulté de trouver des locuteurs/locutrices natifs/ves pour une aide étalée dans la durée, certaines langues sont un peu moins présentes que d'autres.

Chaque thème présente trois types d'activités différentes à partir desquelles ont été conçus des exercices : les vidéos (situations de jeux de rôles), les dialogues (enregistrements avec transcription) et les documents écrits sans audio (textes). La compétence en compréhension orale est développée au même titre que la compréhension écrite, ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas dans les méthodes d'intercompréhension, fréquemment axées sur l'écrit. Les vidéos sont sous-titrées et la transcription des dialogues à écouter est disponible, ceci afin de permettre aux apprenant(e)s de vérifier leur compréhension du dialogue, d'associer les sons à leurs graphies, et d'effectuer les exercices avec le texte sous les yeux.

Plusieurs exercices succèdent au document initial, qui sert de point de départ en quelque sorte, de stimulus pour lancer l'apprentissage. Ceux-ci ont pour but non seulement de vérifier la compréhension globale de ce dernier mais encore de se pencher dans le détail sur certaines parties ou phrases du document (stratégies du *top down / bottom up*) et d'apprendre du nouveau lexique, le tout dans une optique comparative.

Conclusion

La compréhension réciproque entre Européens est certainement un champ à développer, à commencer par les deux grandes familles de langues dont il a été question dans cet article et qui, au niveau numérique, occupent 80% de l'espace linguistique de l'Union. Le projet « Wellbe-Intercomprehension » est l'une des tentatives concrètes de créer des liens entre des langues non affines. Il constitue un défi, un essai témoignant de la volonté de rapprocher des idiomes apparaissant à première vue comme distants. La plateforme est une occasion de se familiariser avec des langues méconnues et de prendre conscience du fait qu'on ne part

jamais de zéro quand on en aborde une nouvelle car on parvient toujours à « décrypter » un certain nombre de mots, même restreint. Ce projet souhaite aussi fournir aux utilisateurs et utilisatrices la possibilité de découvrir les sonorités et graphies de langues voisines et pourtant inconnues. Cependant, il reste certainement du chemin à parcourir pour que se répande un type de communication éthique, paritaire et respectueux des identités de chaque Européen(ne), comme l'est l'intercompréhension. Rompre les barrières entre familles de langues à l'intérieur de l'Europe reste un défi. Il faut espérer que d'autres initiatives similaires voient le jour.

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Entwicklung vielsprachiger Identitäten durch interkulturelle Begegnungen: Deutsch-Französische und Französisch-Französische Sprachtandems im Vergleich

Sebastian Döderlein und Juliane Bertrand

Abstract

This chapter explores four intercultural twinning methods, some monolingual (French-French) and others bilingual (French-German), implemented in both classroom and online settings.

These activities foster the development of learners' communicative and intercultural competencies through mediation, encouraging genuine interaction and prompting reflection on cultural identity. Therefore, they positively impact learners' motivation in language learning, while reinforcing language skills in authentic contexts. Furthermore, these intercultural twinings underscore the advantages of plurilingualism, especially when a third language is employed by twins to navigate their weakness in the languages being used. Consequently, they are instrumental in shaping plurilingual individuals capable of navigating globalization's challenges and facilitating smoother integration into diverse cultural environments.

Einleitung und Forschungsüberblick

In der aktuellen Forschung werden Sprachtandems heute allgemein als ein wichtiger und stimulierender Begleiter des traditionellen Sprachunterrichts betrachtet. Eine Arbeitsgruppe der *École de langues* der *Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)* beschäftigt sich schon seit geraumer Zeit mit dieser Form des Sprachenlernens und hat vor über 20 Jahren damit begonnen, unterschiedliche Typen interkultureller Sprachtandems anzubieten. Ursprünglich ging es vor allem darum, ausländischen Studierenden die Möglichkeit zu geben, mit Quebecerinnen und Quebecern in Kontakt zu treten. Bald zielten diese Tandems (auf französisch: *jumelages interculturels*) aber auch darauf ab, es den Studierenden einer Zweit- oder Fremdsprache an der UQAM zu ermöglichen, sich mit englisch-, spanisch-, japanisch- und deutschsprachigen Studierenden auszutauschen. Seit 2002 haben auf diese Art und Weise über 15.000 Studierende unserer Institution an mindestens einem interkulturellen Sprachtandem teilgenommen (Carignan et al., 2022).

Da es das Ziel des vorliegenden Artikels ist, die praktischen Erfahrungen von vier Tandemprojekten unterschiedlichen Typs darzustellen, begnügen wir uns mit einem kurzen Überblick des theoretischen Rahmens, innerhalb dessen die interkulturellen Sprachtandems an der UQAM entwickelt wurden. Als weiterführende Lektüre empfehlen wir zwei dem Thema „Sprachtandems“ gewidmete Werke, an deren Publikation mehrere Akteure der UQAM maßgeblich beteiligt waren (Carignan et al., 2015 und 2022).

Sprachtandems, wie von Bhanji-Pitman et Amireault (2015) unterstrichen, folgen dem Ansatz, nach dem die kommunikative Kompetenz – seit mehreren Jahrzehnten im Herzen des Sprachunterrichts – parallel zur interkulturellen Kompetenz entwickelt werden muss, zumal sich Sprache, Kultur und Denken wechselseitig ausbilden. Sie sind somit für die Entwicklung der interkulturellen Sprachkompetenz der Studierenden äußerst förderlich, ermöglichen sie letzteren doch signifikante sprachliche und kulturelle Interaktionen mit Sprechern der jeweils studierten Sprache. Ganz allgemein wird dadurch nicht nur die mündliche

Interaktionsfähigkeit und die Entwicklung einer empathischen Grundeinstellung verbessert, auch der Blick auf den eigenen kulturellen Hintergrund wird gefördert und die Studierenden werden auf diese Weise besser darauf vorbereitet, in einem vielkulturellen Kontext zu agieren. Im Rahmen des Fremdspracherwerbs spielen sie folglich eine erhebliche Rolle bei der Entwicklung und Stärkung der eigenen sprachlich-kulturellen Identität, die Blell (2013, S. 30) als „die Entwicklung eines subjektiven kulturellen, einschließlich sprachlichen, jedoch auch partiell wandelbaren Selbstkonzepts [versteht], das dem Lernenden sowohl psychische Stabilität als auch stetig soziale und sprachliche Handlungsorientierung“ bietet.

Besonders bemerkbar macht sich dies in Bezug auf die sprachlich-interkulturelle Mediation, deren zentrale Stellung im Begleitband zum Gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmen für Sprachen hervorgehoben wird (GeR, 2018, Endfassung 2020, deutsche Übersetzung 2020. Siehe auch Vogt und Quetz 2021). Dabei geht es nicht darum, Begriffe möglichst wortgetreu von einer in eine andere Sprache zu übersetzen, Sprache wird vielmehr als soziales Handeln verstanden, bei dem man gemeinsam Bedeutung konstruiert. Ziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts muss es nach Camerer (2019) demnach sein, „Menschen in die Lage zu versetzen, über sprachliche und kulturelle Grenzen hinweg vertrauensvolle Beziehungen zueinander aufzubauen.“ Dass hier unter Umständen auch eine Drittsprache verwendet, gegebenenfalls angepasst und um Beispiele erweitert werden muss, liegt auf der Hand. Eine oder mehrere Fremdsprache(n) zu beherrschen ist folglich ein wichtiges Element bei der Entwicklung der Fähigkeit, zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen zu interagieren, um eventuelle Missverständnisse, die sich zu Konflikten ausweiten können, zu verhindern. So betrifft die Mediation, wie auch De Gioia (2014) hervorhebt, alle Ebenen des interkulturellen Miteinanders.

Dass interkulturelle Sprachandems hier einen fundamentalen Beitrag leisten können, arbeiten Bertrand und Desaulniers (2017) klar heraus. Ebenso zeigen Deraïche und Lamoureux (2015), wie Sprachandems die Kriterien einer erfolgreichen Aufgabenstellung nach Pluskwa et al. (2009) erfüllen, indem sie beispielsweise den Akzent auf die Bedeutungsvermittlung anstatt auf die sprachliche Präzision legen. Diesem Gedanken folgend unterstreichen auch Rubenfeld et al. (2007) die Notwendigkeit, dass Lernende einer Fremdsprache sich auf die Kultur des jeweiligen Gegenübers einlassen und sich in diese einfügen müssen, indem sie ihre eigenen Vorstellungen und Stereotype hinterfragen. Gerade interkulturelle Sprachandems folgen den Konzepten der gegenseitigen Kulturvermittlung und dem gegenseitigen Helfen, was sie für die interkulturelle Mediation, aber eben auch für die Identitätsentwicklung der Teilnehmenden so bedeutend macht (Bertrand et al., 2022). Dahingehend schließen sich die Autoren der im GER (2018) formulierten Grundidee an, dass die Mediation die Rezeption, Produktion und Interaktion umfasst.

Im folgenden Beitrag möchten wir die vielsprachige und vielkulturelle Kompetenz- und Identitätsentwicklung bei Sprachlernenden anhand vier unterschiedlicher Sprachtandem-Projekte analysieren, die wir in den vergangenen Jahren durchgeführt haben. Hierbei stellen wir einsprachige (französisch-französisch) und zweisprachige Projekte (deutsch-französisch) vergleichend gegenüber.

Französisch-französische Sprachtandems

Obwohl, wie oben erwähnt, in den letzten 20 Jahren mehrere Sprachtandems unterschiedlichen Typus in den Französischkursen der UQAM entwickelt und durchgeführt wurden, sollen hier lediglich zwei Beispiele diskutiert werden.

1) Im Kommunikationskurs des Niveaus B2 sind die kommunikativen und sprachlichen Ziele auf einzelne Sprechakte wie das Beschreiben von Personen und Charaktereigenschaften (Adjektive, Verben, Flexion, etc.), das Erzählen in der Vergangenheit (Zeitformen, Adverbien, etc.) oder das Ausdrücken persönlicher Projekte, Wünsche bzw. persönlichen Bedauerns (Indikativ und Subjunktiv, Nebensatzkonstruktionen, etc.) ausgerichtet. Die Kursteilnehmer, eingeschriebene Studierende, die in der Regel vor maximal drei Jahren nach Quebec immigriert sind, arbeiten während vier Sitzungen mit Studierenden im Fachbereich Sozialarbeit (*travail social*, hier *TS*) aus einem Seminar mit dem Titel *Intervention auprès des groupes en travail social*, mit besonderer Ausrichtung auf Animation kleiner Gruppen und gegenseitiger Hilfe. Der überwiegende Großteil dieser TS-Studierenden sind in Quebec geborene französische Muttersprachler, bei 10% handelt es sich um Einwanderer der 2. Generation, die in Quebec aufgewachsen und zur Schule gegangen sind und somit als „nicht gebürtige Frankophone“ bezeichnet werden können. Während diese Unterscheidung für die linguistische Komponente des Sprachtandems nicht von Belang ist, spielt es für den kulturellen Aspekt eine gewisse Rolle, auf die an späterer Stelle weiter eingegangen wird.

Die vier Treffen dieses Sprachtandems finden in kleinen Gruppen in den Räumen der Universität: Die TS-Studierenden (meist vier Personen pro Gruppe) bereiten abwechselnd Aktivitäten zu einem von den Französisch-Studierenden (vier bis sechs Personen pro Gruppe) gewählten Thema vor – beispielsweise über die Herausforderungen, die eigenen Kinder im Schulsystem Quebecs zu begleiten, oder über die zu entwickelnden Strategien, um auf dem Arbeitsmarkt Erfolg zu haben. Im Zuge dieser Sprachtandems sind die Französisch-Studierenden aufgefordert, Satzstrukturen, die sie gelernt haben, im Austausch mit den Muttersprachlern zum Beschreiben, Erzählen oder Ausdrücken ihrer Empfindungen zu benutzen. Die Lehrkräfte begeben sich abwechselnd zu den Gruppen, um punktuelle Hilfe im Falle von Kommunikationsschwierigkeiten oder gar fehlender Kommunikation zu leisten, wobei die Treffen an sich nicht evaluiert werden. Für die Französisch-Studierenden dient die Erfahrung der Sprachtandems später als Thema für die mündliche Diskussion im Rahmen der Endprüfung.

2) Im zweiten Beispiel handelt es sich um einen Kurs, in dem anhand zeitgenössischer Quebecker Kunst (Musik, Kino, Comicbücher, Theater, etc.) die phonetischen Fertigkeiten vertieft werden sollen. Diesen Wahlkurs können Studierende, die den oben behandelten Kommunikationskurs bereits erfolgreich abgeschlossen haben, zu jedem beliebigen Zeitpunkt bis zum Ende ihres Studiums (B2 bis C2.1) belegen. Im Rahmen eines eTandems arbeiten sie während des Semesters nun mit Französisch-Studierenden zusammen, die an verschiedenen Universitäten im brasilianischen Bundesstaat Paraná studieren. Je nach brasilianischer Universität handelt es sich hierbei um Studierende auf Niveau A1.2 und B1, von denen viele einen Studienaufenthalt in Quebec planen. Für die beiden ersten Treffen werden die Teilnehmenden in Paare eingeteilt, wobei die Quebecker die Aufgabe erhalten, ihren brasilianischen Tandempartnern ein zuvor im Unterricht behandeltes Werk vorzustellen und dessen

Platz in der Kultur Quebecs kurz zu veranschaulichen. Anschließend lesen sie den Partnern einen Auszug vor, wobei die gelernten phonetischen Prinzipien bestmögliche Anwendung finden sollen. Die brasilianischen Teilnehmenden bereiten ihrerseits ebenfalls eine Aufgabe vor, die sich je nach Kursziel ihrer Universität unterscheiden kann. Meist dreht es sich dabei um interkulturelle Vergleiche zwischen dem Alltag in Brasilien und in Quebec, wobei jeweils der Akzent auf der Realität der Studierenden innerhalb der beiden Gesellschaften liegt. Die mündliche Vorstellung des behandelten Werkes und das Vorlesen eines Auszugs (in verständlicher Aussprache, mit passender Intonation und angemessenem Ausdruck) werden bei den Quebecer Studierenden im Rahmen der mündlichen Abschlussnote des Kurses evaluiert.

Allerdings obliegt es den Studierenden, der Lehrkraft entweder eine Videoaufnahme der entsprechenden Tandemsitzung zukommen zu lassen – was authentischer ist – oder eine Audioaufnahme in Form eines Monologs, die später im Sprachlabor angefertigt wird.

Für die beiden letzten Treffen fügen die Lehrkräfte jeweils zwei bis drei Tandempaare in einer Gruppe zusammen. Die Quebecer Studierenden arbeiten nun zu Werken, in denen mehrere Personen auftreten (z.B. Theaterstücke). Der einleitende Monolog, der das Stück erklärt, nimmt an dieser Stelle mehr die Form einer Diskussion an. Wieder haben die Studierenden die Möglichkeit, einen Videomitschnitt des Treffens oder eine später im Labor bearbeitete Audioversion zur Benotung einzureichen. Nahezu alle Studierenden entscheiden sich für die erste Version, was unterstreicht, dass sie die direkte Kommunikation mit ihren Tandempartnern als motivierender empfinden, als im Nachhinein einen künstlichen Dialog als Audioversion zu erstellen.

Deutsch-französische Sprachtandems

Im Fachbereich DaF haben sich erst im Verlauf der letzten drei Jahre zweisprachige Sprachtandems (deutsch-französisch) zwischen Studierenden der UQAM und der Freien Universität Berlin entwickelt. Diese sollen hier näher betrachtet werden. Dabei ist zu beachten, dass die Kurse insbesondere in Bezug auf die kommunikative und interkulturelle Kompetenz sehr heterogen gemischt sind. Programmstudenten, die sich studienbedingt regelmäßig mit deutscher Kultur beschäftigen, treffen hier auf Studierende, die lediglich einen studienbegleitenden Sprachkurs als Optionskurs belegen, jedoch bisher außerhalb des Klassenraums keinerlei oder kaum Kontakt zum deutschen Sprach- und Kulturraum hatten.

1) Jeden Sommer reist eine Gruppe Studierender der UQAM für eine Studienreise nach Berlin (*école d'été à Berlin*). Der hier angebotene Kurs, *Initiation à la langue et culture allemandes*, ist ein Seminar zur Landeskunde Deutschlands. Die Unterrichtssprache dieses Kurses für Hörer aller Fakultäten der UQAM ist Französisch; dennoch haben die Teilnehmenden bis auf wenige Ausnahmen im Vorfeld schon mindestens einen Deutschkurs belegt. Ziel der Veranstaltung ist es, den Studierenden Aspekte der deutschen Kultur mit einem besonderen Blick auf Berlin näherzubringen und sie, je nach sprachlichem Ausgangsniveau, entweder in die deutsche Sprache einzuführen oder ihnen die Möglichkeit zu geben, ihre schon erworbenen Sprachkenntnisse vor Ort im Rahmen diverser kultureller Aktivitäten (und darüber hinaus) anzuwenden. Der Kurs findet in gemieteten Räumlichkeiten statt und basiert auf keiner interuniversitären Kooperation. Allerdings verbringen die Studierenden im Rahmen

des Kurses einen Tag an der FU Berlin, um dort mit Französisch-Studierenden in Tandems zusammenarbeiten. Die Studierenden werden in Kleingruppen von 4–6 Personen bei möglichst gleicher Anzahl des jeweiligen Landes eingeteilt und diskutieren – idealerweise – abwechselnd in beiden Sprachen über vorgegebene, sich am Französischkurs der FU Berlin bzw. am Landeskundekurs der UQAM orientierenden Themen. Die Französisch-Studenten aus Deutschland haben in der Regel das Niveau A2, während das Niveau der Studierenden aus Quebec zwischen dem Niveau A1 und B1 liegt. Aufgrund dieser sprachlichen Heterogenität der UQAM-Gruppe dominiert das Französische oft als Kommunikationssprache, was im Rahmen dieser Tandemsaktivität aber bewusst in Kauf genommen wird. Ähnlich wie im oben genannten Beispiel mit Paraná stehen auch hier interkulturelle Vergleiche zwischen dem Alltag und den allgemeinen Interessen Studierender in Deutschland und Quebec im Vordergrund. Der Rahmen dieser Gesprächsrunden ist bewusst offengehalten. Die Lehrkräfte der beiden Gruppen sind vor Ort, um im Falle von Kommunikationsschwierigkeiten zu helfen. Bei Bedarf oder gar fehlender Kommunikation werden die Gruppen aufgefordert, zu wechseln. Es gibt bei dieser Aktivität keine Leistungsbewertung, wohl aber Punkte für die aktive Teilnahme, welche dann in die Endnote des Kurses einfließen.

2) Im kanadischen Herbstsemester (September–Dezember) findet dann über einen Zeitraum von sechs Wochen im Rahmen des Deutschkurs auf Niveau A2.1 ein eTandem wiederum mit einem Französischkurs der FU Berlin auf gleichem oder ähnlichem Niveau statt, bei dem sich die Studierenden wöchentlich ein- oder zweimal treffen. Dabei geht es zum einen darum, dass die Studierenden gelerntes Vokabular und gelernte Satzstrukturen wiederholen, verstehen und selbst spontan anwenden, zum anderen sollen intensivere Kontakte mit den Studierenden der Partneruniversität aufgebaut werden. Die Studierenden der beiden Universitäten verwenden beide Sprachen abwechselnd aktiv und passiv. Die zu bearbeitenden Diskussionsthemen richten sich an dem in beiden Kursen benutzten Kursmaterial und den jeweils gesetzten kulturellen Schwerpunkten (kulinarische Traditionen, Studium, Medien und aktuelle Themen in den beiden Ländern, lexikalische und syntaktische Unterschiede im Französischen und im Deutschen, etc.). Häufig entwickelt sich daraus eine allgemeine Diskussion über die Unterschiede zwischen Quebec und Deutschland.

Zunächst treffen sich alle Teilnehmenden aufgrund der Zeitverschiebung online und außerhalb der Vorlesungszeit. Das Ziel dieses ersten Treffens ist es, „das Eis zu brechen“, sich als Gruppe wahrzunehmen, den ersten Kontakt zu knüpfen und von den Lehrkräften mündliche Informationen zum Ablauf des Sprachtandems zu erhalten. Im Vorfeld wählen die Studierenden zwei bis drei der vorgegebenen Themen aus, über die sie mit ihrem Tandempartner diskutieren möchten und geben an, wann sie in der Woche des laufenden Semesters Zeit für die Onlinetreffen haben. Anhand dieser Informationen werden die Paare dann von den Lehrkräften gebildet.

Die Teilnahme am Sprachtandem ist für die Kursteilnehmer nicht obligatorisch. Die teilnehmenden Studierenden können jedoch die Aktivität als Teil ihrer mündlichen und schriftlichen Endnote des Kurses benutzen, während die übrigen Studierenden andere Aufgaben erhalten. Die erbrachte Leistung bei den einzelnen Treffen wird nicht evaluiert, die Studierenden müssen aber eine Videoaufnahme der Diskussion zu einem Thema in einer Tandemsitzung einreichen. Wie auch im Falle des Tandems mit Paraná, steht es ihnen auch hier

offen, später eine überarbeitete Audioaufnahme anzufertigen. Aus den oben bereits angeführten Gründen hat sich aber bisher noch kein Studierender für diese Option entschieden. Gleichzeitig schreiben sie einen kurzen Erfahrungsbericht auf Deutsch, in dem sie kurz ihre Beweggründe für die Teilnahme am Sprachtandem erklären und über ihre Erfahrung (i.e. Verlauf der Diskussionen, kulturelle Unterschiede, etc.) und über neu Gelerntes berichten.

Vergleich und Analyse

Eine kritische Analyse soll im Folgenden die Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Organisation, Evaluierung und Erfahrung dieser einsprachigen beziehungsweise zweisprachigen Sprachtandems gegenüberstellen. Dabei soll auch ein Blick auf die sprachlich-kulturelle Entwicklung der Fremdsprachenlernenden in ihre Rolle als interkulturelle Mediatoren geworfen werden.

Unabhängig von ihrer Natur setzt die erfolgreiche Durchführung aller hier vorgestellten Projekte eine gute Zusammenarbeit der Lehrkräfte sämtlicher Partnerinstitutionen voraus. Die während der Unterrichtszeit im Klassenraum durchgeführten Tandems (Französisch + Sozialarbeit) müssen so beispielsweise lange im Voraus organisiert werden, damit sichergestellt werden kann, dass beide Kurse zur gleichen Zeit stattfinden. Um das Erreichen der sprachlichen Lernziele mittels des Sprachtandems zu gewährleisten, müssen die jeweiligen Aufgaben sorgfältig geplant werden. Gleichzeitig werden aus Zeitgründen gewisse Aktivitäten im Sprachunterricht verringert, wie das beispielsweise das gemeinsame Anhören von Sprachdialogen, da die Studierenden während der Tandemtreffen ihr Hörverständnis trainieren. Im Falle der eTandems müssen die Lehrkräfte im Vorfeld Paare so bilden, dass es diesen im weiteren Verlauf des Semesters und trotz des Zeitunterschieds möglich ist, einen gemeinsamen Zeitpunkt zum regelmäßigen Austausch zu finden.

Pluskwa et al. (2009) unterstreichen zu Recht, dass Handeln im Sinne der Handlungsorientierung am effizientesten ist, wenn die Akteure ein klares und nachweisbares Ziel verfolgen, und das Erreichen dieses Zieles, nicht aber die Aufgabe selbst, evaluiert wird. Gemäß diesem Ansatz werden den Studierenden in allen hier genannten Beispielen zwar Punkte für die aktive Teilnahme am Sprachtandem gegeben, nicht aber für die konkrete sprachliche Leistung während der Aktivität. Die Teilnehmer der online-Projekte wissen jedoch, dass sie in der mündlichen Abschlussprüfung am Semesterende auf Fragen zur jeweiligen Tandemarbeit antworten müssen, wobei auch das Erreichen der Sprachziele des Kurses benotet wird. Die Option, eine im Nachhinein erstellte Aufnahme einzureichen, erlaubt ihnen, das Sprachtandem nicht als Selbstzweck zu betrachten, sondern im Sinne der Mediation eher als eine Möglichkeit, ihre Sprech- und interkulturellen Kompetenzen in einem authentischeren Kontext zu entwickeln, als dies im Klassenraum möglich wäre.

Durch die Teilnahme am Sprachtandem werden die Studierenden in allen vier hier dargestellten Beispielen dazu animiert, ihre eigenen vielfältigen Sprach- und Kulturzugehörigkeiten und somit ihre eigene sprachlich-kulturelle Identität zu reflektieren und beispielsweise gewisse Stereotypen wie „Muttersprachler“, „Nicht-Muttersprachler“, „Quebecer“, „Deutsche“ oder „Immigranten“ zu hinterfragen. Beim Tandemprojekt mit den TS-Studierenden äußern die Französisch-Studierenden sehr häufig den Wunsch, mit „echten Quebecern“ im Gegensatz zu nicht muttersprachlichen Frankophonen zu arbeiten. Die Gespräche und Dis-

kussionen während der vier Tandemtreffen führen jedoch sehr häufig dazu, dass sie diese Gegenüberstellung überdenken und erkennen, dass die Gesellschaft Quebecs – wie auch andere Gesellschaften – in Wahrheit ein weit gefächertes Spektrum verschiedener Akteure unterschiedlicher Herkunft ist. Dass dies auch für die beiden Tandemprojekte UQAM – FU Berlin gilt, liegt auf der Hand. Gerade das Beispiel der Gruppentandems an der FU Berlin zeigt, dass sich im Klassenraum häufig mehrere Studierende unterschiedlicher Herkunft gegenüber sitzen, was bei ihnen unweigerlich zur Erkenntnis führt, dass es „den“ deutschen oder „den“ Quebecer Studierenden nicht gibt. Folglich diskutieren die Teilnehmenden neben allgemeinen Unterschieden oder Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Quebec und Deutschland, beziehungsweise den Großstädten Montreal und Berlin, auch mit einer auffallenden Regelmäßigkeit immer wieder über verschiedene Aspekte der multikulturellen Gesellschaft, wodurch sie häufig ihre Sicht über die eigene und über die Realität im Land des jeweiligen Gegenübers reflektieren.

Diese Diskussionen zeigen auf – ganz im Sinne von Rubenfeld et al. (2007) –, wie die Sprachlernenden als Vermittler auftreten, indem sie dank einer besseren Kenntnis der eigenen und der anderen/fremden Kultur dazu gebracht werden, zwischen zwei oder mehreren kulturellen Kodizes zu agieren. Im Falle der Französisch-Studierenden der UQAM ist im Verlauf der beiden Tandemprojekte darüber hinaus eine beeindruckende Entwicklung hinsichtlich ihrer Selbstwahrnehmung als in die Quebecer Gesellschaft integrierte, selbstständige Akteure festzustellen. Während der Treffen mit den TS-Studierenden arbeiten die Gruppen Vergleichsansätze zwischen der sozialen Realität in Quebec und in den Herkunftsländern der einzelnen Teilnehmenden heraus, was es ihnen ermöglicht, gemeinsame Werte zu entdecken. Die Gruppen beruhen einerseits auf dem Willen des gegenseitigen Helfens, aber auch auf dem mehr oder weniger eindeutigen Postulat, dass die TS-Studierenden eine Führungsaufgabe übernehmen. Die Französisch-Studierenden sehen sich selbst als sich im Prozess der Integration befindende Neuankömmlinge an. Im Fall der Sprachtandems mit Brasilien ist die Situation dann eine andere. Die Studierenden der UQAM, die alle zu einem früheren Zeitpunkt am Projekt mit den TS-Studierenden teilgenommen haben, werden nun gewissermaßen zu Sprach- und Kultur-Experten, beziehungsweise qualifizieren sich als „echte Quebecer“, da sie ja jetzt die Kultur, mit der sich ihre Tandempartner vertraut machen wollen, am besten kennen. Die von den Brasilianern gestellten Fragen drehen sich fast ausschließlich um den Alltag in Quebec (Leben im Winter, Aktivitäten, Essen, ist Kanada wirklich ein zweisprachiges Land? Werden Immigranten gut empfangen oder nicht? etc.). Folglich wird den Studierenden der UQAM bewusst auch zum großen Teil die Auswahl an Kultur-elementen, die sie den brasilianischen Partnern vermitteln möchten, überlassen. So beteiligen sie sich beispielsweise aktiv an der Erstellung einer Liste von Liedern, Texten oder Filmen. Gleichzeitig müssen sie auch aufgrund des sprachlichen Ungleichgewichts eventuelle Kommunikationsstörungen beheben. Dies führt zu einer Steigerung ihres Selbstvertrauens und ihrer Motivation, weil sie merken, wie stark sie sich in ihrem Lernprozess zu sozialen Akteuren entwickelt haben, die Schlüsselemente der Kultur Quebecs integriert haben und vermitteln können.

Wie oben erwähnt, basiert ein Sprachtandem im Idealfall auf einer gegenseitigen, ausgeglichenen Beziehung zwischen den Partnern, was jedoch nicht bei allen hier dargestellten Beispielen der Fall ist. So sind es die TS-Studierenden, die die Gruppen animieren, was dazu

führt, dass die Französisch-Studierenden ihnen die Aufgabe überlassen, sämtlichen Kommunikationsschwierigkeiten zu begegnen und Lösungen zu finden. Einerseits hat das sicherlich den großen Vorteil, dass eventuelle Ängste seitens der Französisch-Studierenden reduziert werden, andererseits lernen sie so nicht unbedingt, selbst aktiv Sprachbarrieren zu überwinden.

Am Beispiel der Sommerschule in Berlin kann man wiederum sehen, dass die sprachliche Komponente bei den Quebecer Studierenden mit geringen oder gar keinen Deutschkenntnissen in den Hintergrund tritt. Hier geht es vor allem um kulturelle Aspekte und einen (oftmals ersten) Kontakt zu Muttersprachlern. Das stille Übereinkommen, als Umgangssprache das Französische zu nutzen, hindert aber in keiner Weise daran, eine ausgeglichene Diskussion zu führen. Für viele Quebecer handelt es sich um den ersten Kontakt mit deutschen Studierenden, die, noch dazu in Berlin, automatisch als „Experten“ für deutsche (Jugend-) Kultur betrachtet werden. Ihrerseits haben die deutschen Studierenden i.d.R. keinen oder nur selten Kontakt zur Französischen Sprachvarietät bzw. zur Kultur Quebecs. Diesbezüglich treten also ihrerseits die Studierenden der UQAM als „Experten“ auf. Gleichzeitig findet in jeder Tandemgruppe ein regelmäßiger Austausch deutsch-französischen Vokabulars statt, wodurch selbst diejenigen Quebecer Studierenden, die keine Vorkenntnisse haben, mit viel neu erworbenem Wortschatz aus dem Sprachtandem gehen.

In dieser Hinsicht ist es im Fall des deutsch-französischen eTandems während des Semesters leichter, ein ausgeglichenes Verhältnis herzustellen. Da sich beide Seiten in Bezug auf die Sprache und Kultur in etwa auf gleichen Lernniveau des jeweiligen Tandempartners befinden und somit niemand im Vorteil ist, arbeiten die Teilnehmenden gemeinsam daran, eventuell auftretende Kommunikationsstörungen zu beheben. Sofern eine Umformulierung mit anderen deutschen oder französischen Wörtern nicht ausreichend zum Verständnis eines Phänomens beiträgt, ist das Ausweichen auf eine Drittsprache (meist Englisch oder Spanisch) gängige Strategie, die – im Übrigen bei allen Tandemprojekten – nicht unwesentlich zu einer interkulturellen Mediation beiträgt. Dies reiht sich in den oben genannten Geist der Kompetenzentwicklung in interkultureller Kommunikation und einer positiven Sicht auf Vielsprachigkeit ein. Häufig kommt es dann vor, dass Tandempartner ein Konzept in allen ihnen (auch nur teilweise) zur Verfügung stehenden Sprachen benennen, um sich besser zu verstehen. So lernen sie, ihre Vielsprachigkeit und Vielkulturalität positiv für die sprachliche und soziale Interaktion zu nutzen.

Im Zuge der Kursevaluation am Semesterende äußern sich die Studierenden regelmäßig zu Ihren Erfahrungen bei den Sprachtandems. Hierbei sind sie sich einig, dass hinsichtlich der Entwicklung ihrer Sprechkompetenz die Tandemprojekte generell stimulierender und effizienter als beispielsweise mündliche Partnerarbeit im normalen Kursraum seien. Durch den lockeren Rahmen, in dem die Treffen stattfinden, falle es den Studierenden leichter, sich auf eine Diskussion in der Fremdsprache einzulassen. Immer wieder finden sich in den Evaluationen Hinweise darauf, dass die Abwesenheit von Stress oder Angst, einen Fehler zu machen, große Auswirkungen auf die Progression im Fremdsprachenlernen zu haben scheint. Vom Tandempartner korrigiert zu werden, wird meist als positiver Effekt bewertet und von den Studierenden in direkten Zusammenhang mit dem Lernen neuen Vokabulars beziehungsweise neuer Ausdrücke gebracht. Ferner unterstreichen vor allem Studierende,

die an mehreren Tandems teilgenommen haben, wie sehr sich diese auf ihre interkulturelle Identität auswirken. Über den sprachlichen und interkulturellen Rahmen hinaus ist der Kontakt zu Muttersprachlern und die Möglichkeit, diese eventuell in ihren Heimatländern zu besuchen, ein weiterer Punkt, der positive Erwähnung findet. Positiv wird auch hervorgehoben, dass fast alle Tandemaktivitäten in die Kurszeit fallen und keine extra Arbeit außerhalb des Kursplans entsteht. Eine Ausnahme bildet hier das deutsch-französische eTandem. Aber wenngleich die Quebecer Teilnehmenden diese Tatsache bedauern, unterstreichen sie regelmäßig in ihren Berichten, dass sich die regelmäßigen Treffen mit ihren Tandempartnern motivationsfördernd auf ihr Lernverhalten im Fremdsprachenunterricht ausgewirkt haben.

Gleichzeitig bestätigen sie, dass es durchaus wichtig ist, die Wahl der Themen im Voraus klar zu definieren und festzulegen, sodass diese mit dem allgemeinen Kursziel einhergehen. So kritisieren Französischstudierende der UQAM, die an mehreren Sprachtandems teilgenommen haben oder teilnehmen, dass sie mit ihren unterschiedlichen Tandempartnern immer wieder über ähnliche Themen diskutieren (z.B. das Leben als Immigrant in Quebec), was sich negativ auf ihre eigene Motivation auswirken kann. Auch im Fall des eintägigen Tandems in Berlin bedauerten einige Teilnehmer, dass das Nicht-Vorhandenseins eines gemeinsamen Ziels bei gleichzeitiger zufälliger Zusammenstellung der Gruppen manchmal dazu geführt habe, dass es zu unüberwindbaren Kommunikationsschwierigkeiten gekommen sei, oder sich einige Studierende gar gänzlich aus der Diskussion ausgeklinkt haben. Diese Probleme können überwunden werden, indem man die Teilnehmer gemäß vorher erfassten Interessengebieten oder Studiengängen in Gruppen einteilt, beziehungsweise die Diskussionsthemen klarer definiert.

So zeigt sich am Beispiel des deutsch-französischen eTandems, wie effizient und motivierend das Fremdsprachenlernen bei klarem und fassbarem Ziel sein kann (Pluskwa et al., 2009): Einige Tandempaare, die sich neben oder im Rahmen der Aufgabenstellung zusätzlich ein spezifisches Ziel gesetzt haben (z.B. über feministische Literatur, Traditionen, tagespolitische Aktualität oder Popkultur zu sprechen), führen ihre Treffen sogar über die Dauer der offiziellen Aktivität hinaus fort. Teilweise über den Zeitraum von mehreren Monaten.

Zusammenfassung

In einer Welt, in der die gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen in immer größerem Maße einen globalen Charakter haben (Covid, Klimawandel, globale Konflikte, etc.), ist es für die Menschen umso wichtiger, sich mit Sprechern anderer Sprachen auszutauschen zu können, um gemeinsam Lösungen zur Bewältigung von Konflikten zu finden. Interkulturelle Sprachtandems, wie die hier vorgestellten Beispiele, liefern in dieser Hinsicht interessante Ansätze für eine positive Entwicklung der sprachlich-kulturellen Identität von Lernenden einer Fremdsprache. Diese vielsprachige und vielkulturelle Identität wird es sicherlich den Studierenden ermöglichen, als Vermittler zwischen den Sprachen und Kulturen zu agieren, um Konflikten konstruktiv entgegenzuwirken.

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Motivation, autonomous learning, plurilingualism: students as YouTubers

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Abstract

In this chapter, we present the results of a didactic experiment we conducted in 2021/2022 with 63 students of Spanish, French, and Russian in foreign language courses at the B1+/B2 level at the Faculty of Economics and Administration of Masaryk University, Czech Republic. We asked ourselves whether, how and for what purposes students follow YouTubers channels, and how we (and our students) might further integrate the use of these video performances into language learning. We assumed that students watch mainly English-language videos, and the main goal of the project was, on the one hand, to highlight the role of YouTube as a useful tool for learning a foreign language, and on the other hand, to allow students to practice their plurilingual competence, as well as collaborative and interactive learning, through making videos and subtitles.

Introduction

Each generation of students looks for motivation to give their studies a deeper meaning and to prepare them well both for their professional future and private life. A teacher who takes a responsible approach to his/her work uses interactive methods that promote student autonomy and make the learning process more attractive. In order to develop plurilingual competence and motivation in students, teachers can offer students in Generation Z a foreign language learning environment in which they can actively participate in curriculum development by reflecting on the learning process and on the results of their learning. Generation Z is the first generation to have grown up with digital technology, and therefore prefers an online learning environment. To capture their interest teachers should use even more targeted visually engaging learning materials. “Gen Z students are digital natives who prefer an independent learning style with less passive but more visual and kinaesthetic learning. They also desire convenience and are open to honest feedback.” (Shorey, S., Chan, V., Rajendran, P., Ang, E., 2021).

When learning a foreign language, students greatly appreciate being able to perform meaningful tasks, to observe the similarities between languages, to pick up on interesting aspects of those languages’ auditory and visual components, and primarily, to engage with current topics. YouTube (as a learning tool), vlogging, and watching videos, either with or without subtitles, offer all this.

In our contribution, we present the results of a research and didactic experiment we conducted in the second semester of 2021/2022 with 63 students of Spanish, French, and Russian in foreign language courses at the B1+/B2 level at the Faculty of Economics and Administration of Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. As our students belong to the target group of many YouTubers, we asked ourselves whether, how, and for what purposes students follow them (research question). To find out, we decided to further integrate the use of these video performances into their learning. We assumed that students watch mainly

English-language videos, and therefore the main goal of the didactic project was to highlight the role of YouTube as a useful tool for learning another foreign language, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to allow students to practice their plurilingual competence through making videos and subtitles. Throughout the semester, we asked students to watch and analyze some model YouTube videos. Then we placed them in 31 pairs, each pair made up of students studying two different languages. Each pair filmed a bilingual video on a given topic and created their own subtitles in the foreign languages being learned. In this way, we encouraged collaborative and interactive approaches to learning among students.

In this paper we describe the course of the didactic project as well as the research part, which was carried out through a questionnaire survey, students' self-reflective responses and teachers' observations.

Theoretical background

We decided to use YouTube for our project because it helps to convey the knowledge and skills of the language and culture of the country in a more direct and often entertaining way, offering cross-cultural overlap (foreign-language YouTubers who themselves live in a foreign country and report on intercultural critical incidents that might have happened to them), as well as training for real-life situations, thus strengthening autonomy, independence (Kim, Sumi, and Hyeon-Cheol Kim, 2021; Yang, P., 2020), and motivation for foreign language study (Isakovna, T. N., and Kosimov, A., 2023). Motivation and self-confidence can be also increased by effective vocabulary learning and acquisition, and multimedia is one of the functional resources that facilitate and accelerate the process, bringing authenticity and realistic situations to the learning process (Sadiku, A., 2018). Subtitle use strengthens the learner's working memory and thus contributes significantly to L2 understanding and learning. The importance of multimedia learning in second language acquisition is especially evident in motivating learners (Gass, S., 2019). The importance of subtitles in the foreign language learning process has been commented on by many experts in their research (Yang, P., 2020; Kanellopoulou, C., et al., 2019; Gass, S. et al., 2019; Danan, M., 2016). Research on multimedia learning theories provides valid evidence that subtitles are a useful aid for understanding and learning new vocabulary (Gass, S., et al., 2019). That is why in our project we focused on the use of vocabulary and the implementation of YouTube channels in learning foreign languages.

We can find many channels on YouTube focused on different interest groups and target audiences. Creating a mutual link between users, YouTubers bring a horizontal and egalitarian approach, focusing on community and collaboration (Moeglin, P., 2007) and enable the connection of social and educational context (Cf. Cancelas Ouviaña, L.-P.; Herrera Barba, J. M., 2014) especially in the case of language learning YouTubers which we call for short "LinguoYouTubers". In our conception, LinguoYouTuber works on YouTube in the role of a teacher of a foreign language, providing not only linguistic but also cultural and intercultural content. Based on our research of the content of vlogs and videos of LinguoYouTubers in the languages we teach (French, Russian, Spanish), we can classify these videos into the following four categories:

- linguistics (videos dedicated to the pitfalls of false friends, or to problems of understanding between speakers of Francophone/Romance languages or speakers of European/American Spanish, etc.)
- sociolinguistics (videos focusing on courtesy expressions, greetings, expressions of different registers, slang expressions, etc.)
- pragmalinguistics (videos explaining the most common or interesting collocations, idioms, figurative expressions, etc., or emphasizing the role of context –linguistic, situational, etc.)
- non-verbal communication (videos about intercultural similarities and differences in proxemics, the importance and role of gestures, eye contact, etc.)

For better illustration we include some specific examples of these YouTube channels:

<https://www.youtube.com/@FrenchmorningswithElisa>

<https://www.francaisavecpierre.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@EasyFrench>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SpanishwithVicente>

<https://www.youtube.com/@Sergimartinspanish>

<https://www.youtube.com/@espanolconjuan>

<https://www.youtube.com/@orussskomporusski>

<https://www.youtube.com/@ElenaKundera>

<https://www.youtube.com/@ElenSheff>

These videos are a source of information about, among other things, the cultural aspects of the home country of the YouTuber (history, art, daily customs, lifestyle, etc.) and authentic intercultural situations and ways of avoiding intercultural conflicts (e.g. descriptions of intercultural misunderstandings after moving to a foreign country). LinguoYouTubers aim to create a community of learners of the foreign language, and invite people to share their own experiences and knowledge in the comments, thus contributing to the creation of attitudes of openness and respect (cf. the CEFR descriptors of pluricultural repertoire, Council of Europe 2020, 124). One aspect of the videos that greatly facilitates their use in learning a foreign language is the fact that the videos are typically accompanied by subtitles in the language of the creator, but in the vast majority of cases also in English, which can serve as a mediating language for students who are studying another language but also know English.

In our courses, we wanted to apply the idea of plurilingual comprehension in accordance with the CEFR descriptors, especially B1 (the choice of this level was made because although the required language level in our courses is B2, the actual level of most of our students is lower). As the Council of Europe has stated, “the plurilingual vision associated with the CEFR gives value to cultural and linguistic diversity at the level of the individual. It promotes the need for learners as ‘social agents’ to draw upon all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to fully participate in social and educational contexts,

achieving mutual understanding, gaining access to knowledge and in turn further developing their linguistic and cultural repertoire.” (Council of Europe 2020, 123). These CEFR descriptors served as a theoretical framework for the application of plurilingualism within our didactic project.

According to the CEFR descriptors (Council of Europe 2020, 126, 127), students at the B1 level:

- can use parallel translations of texts (e.g. magazine articles, stories, passages from novels) to develop comprehension in different languages
- can deduce the message of a text by exploiting what he/she has understood from texts on the same theme written in different languages (e.g. news in brief, museum brochure, online reviews)
- can extract information from documents written in different languages in his/her field, e.g. to include in a presentation
- can recognize similarities and contrasts between the way concepts are expressed in different languages, in order to distinguish between identical uses of the same word root and 'false friends'
- can use his/her knowledge of contrasting grammatical structures and functional expressions of languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire in order to support comprehension

Another aspect we focused on is the autonomous approach to the learning process, which is related to a student's intrinsic motivation to learn. Learner autonomy is a central theme in foreign language learning. Because educational paradigms and school curricula encourage a pedagogy for autonomy (Council of Europe, 2020), we included this aspect in the project. It has been proven that vlogging, adapted to the educational setting, could be a way of fostering more autonomy in a language class by giving students more choice and agency (Combe, Ch. and Codreanu, T., 2016; Codreanu, T., Combe, C., 2019).

The principle of collaboration mentioned above is carried over into our project with a strong emphasis on collaboration between students. Interesting material triggers the need to analyze, synthesize, compare and summarize information, promoting interpersonal communication (Azimov, E., 2018) and, through that communication, the acquisition and practice of language for specific purposes.

We wanted to include all these concepts – students' motivation, autonomy, plurilingual competence, and collaboration – in our didactic project, since these concepts enhance the knowledge of how to learn and the capacity to enter into relations with others and new situations (Council of Europe 2020), skills which will be indispensable for our students at the Faculty of Economics and Administration in their future professional life.

Methodology

We prepared a didactic project for our students of French, Spanish and Russian at the Faculty of Economics and Administration. In the first part of the project, students watched and analyzed some model YouTube videos. Then we placed them in 31 pairs, each pair made up of students studying two different languages. Each pair filmed a bilingual video on a given topic and created their own subtitles in the foreign languages being learned. At the end of the project, we asked students to create a trilingual (the two study languages and Czech) glossary of selected words used in the video. The students were asked to reflect on the similarities of the two languages used in their videos and to think about the process and outcome of their learning.

The objectives of these activities were twofold. On the one hand, the aim of our research was to determine whether our students watch videos of YouTubers (or LinguoYouTubers), and possibly how and why they watch them. On the other hand, we assumed that students do not often watch YouTube videos in languages other than English, so we wanted to show them that this is another means of learning a foreign language. The aim of the teaching project was therefore practical, with an impact on the development of students' language skills as well as soft skills. We introduced the project into our courses to support and develop autonomous learning (to acquaint students with other resources for their autonomous learning, to process a long-term practical task outside the classroom), soft skills (presentation in a foreign language, collaborative learning, teamwork and cooperation), use of reflection (self-reflection, mutual/peer evaluation) and plurilingualism (acquaintance with Linguo-YouTubers on the internet, creating their own videos in bilingual teams, and understanding another foreign language not studied).

Research methodology

To collect and analyze the data for our research, we used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods: questionnaires at the beginning (see Appendix No. 1) and end of the course after the didactic project was completed (see Appendix No. 2); students' self-reflective responses; and teachers' observations. Both questionnaires were sent to the students in electronic form and consisted of MCQs and open-ended questions in the studied foreign language. The quantitative method of data collection was mainly used to obtain initial information – subjectively perceived language level, frequency of watching YouTubers, and use of subtitles. We also asked which other foreign languages the students were already learning; we used that information to sort the students into teams of two (due to the odd number of students, one team of three was formed). Where possible, pairs were made up of students who had already learned the second foreign language in question. Thus, 31 pairs and one team of three were formed with the following language combinations: Spanish–Russian, Russian–French, French–Spanish. Qualitative data collection was used primarily to determine students' motives for following YouTubers and to ascertain the impact of the project on particular aspects of their learning and skills (impact on motivation, autonomy, etc.). The qualitative research method included descriptive and evaluative aspects (according to Hendl, J., 2016), whereby describing the phenomena, we could evaluate the project and use the obtained results in future teaching practice.

Didactic project

Description of the project

The project was part of the compulsory second foreign language course at the B1+/B2 level taught by the teachers of the University Language Centre and was offered to master's students at the Faculty of Economics and Administration during the 2022 spring semester. This language is the students' second foreign language after English and is taught as a foreign language for specific purposes. The duration of the course is 100 minutes per week for 12 weeks. All students of the courses participated in the project – 24 students of Russian, 24 students of Spanish and 15 students of French, resulting in a research sample of 63 students.

Schedule of tasks:

Week 1: Questionnaire I (Appendix No. 1)

Week 2–4: Watch 3 videos from the menu, compare the 3 videos in writing (form, content, use of subtitles, contribution of the video, personality of the YouTuber, usefulness of the video)

Week 5–8: Upload videos, create subtitles in teams

Week 9: Create a glossary

Week 10: Peer viewing of selected videos, peer review

Week 11–12: Classroom evaluation, language teaching assistant evaluation, Questionnaire II (Appendix No. 2) and self-reflection

Description of tasks:

In the 2nd–4th weeks of the semester, each teacher offered students a list of YouTube videos, from which students chose three and then briefly reflected on them in writing according to a given prompt (Appendix No. 3).

Starting in the 4th week, the students prepared a video on a given topic in pairs in two different languages (i.e. French–Russian, French–Spanish, Spanish–Russian). They also received basic instructions on the content and preparation of the video (Appendix No. 4), as well as tips on technical processing (Appendix No. 5).

In the ninth week, student pairs created a glossary of 20 expressions or phrases used in their video with the equivalents in Czech and in the two other languages used (e.g. directeur (French), director (Spanish), ředitel (Czech)). 50% of the words had to be professionally oriented (specific vocabulary of communication that is appropriate and expected in a professional-business environment).

In weeks 10–12, students had the opportunity to watch and comment on each other's videos, which were also evaluated by teaching assistants (native speakers who are participating in the Erasmus study placement).

At the end of the semester, students reflected on the process and outcomes of their learning during the project. They answered 10 open-ended questions in the foreign language they were studying (Appendix No. 2). These answers as well as the answers from the first questionnaire were the basis for the research part.

Didactic project results

The main outcome of the entire project, which was based in the theoretical framework of social, (meta) cognitive and affective functions of YouTube, was the creation of bilingual student videos. A total of 31 videos were created, including 8 videos in French and Russian, 16 videos in Spanish and Russian, and 7 videos in French and Spanish. The length of each video could not exceed 6 minutes and was supposed to be filmed in at least 3 places related to the topic, photos could also be used. Most bilingual pairs chose the environment of the faculty's indoor and outdoor spaces; a quarter of the pairs also filmed in a cafe, a multiplex cinema or near important monuments of the city of Brno. The variance of the language level of the filmed videos mostly corresponded to the language level that the students reported in the first questionnaire (more than 50% of students rated their language level as A2; more than 40% as B1; almost 10% as B2; and two students as C1), but overall, the level was slightly higher, as it was a pre-prepared speech. The topics most frequently heard in the videos were professional careers, previous work experience, professional plans and goals for the future, evaluation of studies at the faculty, and leisure activities. Students most often chose the form of dialogue with a bilingual script. We did not ask the students which technical form of video processing they chose, even though they were provided with instructions and links to editors and programs for video processing (OpenShot Video Editor, DaVinci Resolve 17, Blackmagic Design, free versions for Mac, Windows, and Linux, Lightworks).

The last part of the project consisted of a glossary, a mini-dictionary of 20 expressions or word combinations (50% of which had to be professionally oriented) from the two foreign languages into Czech. The aim of creating this glossary was to help students acquire a new professional vocabulary, but also to demonstrate the linguistic kinship of professional expressions and indirectly motivate students to a plurilingual perception of the learning process. However, the glossary was not processed further, nor was an analysis of the overall content and comparison of student versions carried out; these could be interesting lines of investigation in a similar project in the future.

The goals of the whole didactic project were to strengthen and increase students' responsibility for their own foreign language learning; to help them become more aware of their skills, the cross-cultural overlap (avoiding intercultural critical incidents), including the plurilingual aspects; and to individualize the learning process. For many of the students, as can be seen from the results of the questionnaire, it meant stepping out of their comfort zone and resetting their established model of learning a foreign language.

From a didactic point of view, it seems that our goals and expectations were set quite ambitiously, especially in terms of students' readiness to self-reflect on the different stages of learning and to interpret abstract concepts in the learning process. It turned out that students are not able to reflect to a greater extent on the theoretical issues of the learning process as we expected, nor do they have a deep knowledge of autonomous or intercultural

learning. From this perspective, the expected result was not fully achieved. This implies the need to include much more preparatory tasks before starting such projects and also to lower the expectations to a maximum of two didactic outcomes.

On the other hand, the project has at least succeeded in opening the way for students to adopt an autonomous approach to language learning, so that in the future it may be possible to build on this. What has also been demonstrated during the project is the fact that students are more motivated to learn a third language by regularly watching YouTube tutorial videos with appropriate content. And moreover, the collaboration and peer-to-peer communication have proven to be effective in the environment of business students.

Research results

Results of the 1st questionnaire

The first questionnaire was distributed to the students after the first lesson, that is, after explaining the objectives and description of the project. The questions were about the students' language level and proficiency, their motivation to learn the language, and whether, how often, and why they follow foreign language YouTubers.

More than 50% of students rated their language level as A2; more than 40% as B1; almost 10% as B2; and two students as C1. Around 85% of students wanted to continue studying French/Spanish/Russian after the course and around 95% said they would like to use their knowledge of the language in the future. In addition to English, most students had previously studied Spanish, French, German, Russian, or Italian; some of them had studied Japanese, Croatian, Slovenian or Korean.

About 90% of students said they found watching foreign language YouTubers beneficial for improving their foreign language skills; however, only 2 students watched these videos regularly, 4 students sometimes, and 5 students rarely. The remaining students (80%) said they do not watch foreign language YouTubers. Seven students said they follow YouTubers who focus on teaching foreign language or culture and real-life situations. Their reasons for watching these videos included: content/topic; comprehension training; vocabulary enrichment; absorbing pronunciation and intonation; the personality of the YouTuber; interest in the video; gaining motivation; learning grammar; and opportunity to learn more about culture/everyday reality. Five students said they use subtitles when watching YouTubers' videos.

It is clear from the questionnaire that most of our students were not aware of LinguoYouTubers – this generation may grow up surrounded by technology, but without the guidance of an experienced educator; they are unlikely to learn about the possibilities of supporting foreign language learning on YouTube.

Results and result interpretation of the 2nd questionnaire

The second questionnaire was distributed to the students after the completion and submission of the videos. Students were asked to answer 10 open-ended questions in a foreign

language about their feelings concerning the role of YouTubers, about the relationship between the development of the project and their motivation, autonomy and teamwork, and about the process and outcome of the project in relation to their foreign language learning. Part of the questions dealt with the time and technical aspects of the project.

To stay in line with the main theme of the article, we only present here the results of the questions dealing with motivation, autonomous learning and plurilingualism.

More than half of the students stated that they were not motivated by the project to study the language more. Only 16% of the students were more motivated to study a foreign language, and two students answered that they did not know.

One reason for this result is that some students at the Faculty of Economics and Administration find the compulsory study of a second foreign language too demanding and are worried that they will not be able to successfully complete their economics studies because of this language subject. In addition, some students still believe that a good knowledge of English will be sufficient for them in their professional and personal life. Another reason for this result may be the fact that the Czech and Slovak students of our courses pragmatically expect the content of the course to be designed as targeted preparation for the final exam (which includes a written and an oral part), and do not realise that they are learning primarily to be able to communicate in a foreign language in various practical situations in the future.

About 21% of students believed that the project had an impact on their autonomy. Some comments they made about this:

“We had to learn something new on our own, so it was definitely positive.”

“For me, the project served more to test both autonomy and cooperation with a colleague, which worked very well.”

It was necessary to agree on several steps during the project. The project thus gave students practice in making decisions independently but also working together in a team; in creating a certain concept for the video, but also agreeing on it with a teammate; in creating a compromise and a mutually satisfactory solution; and in bringing a specific task to an end. One student said:

“Yes, I liked to be in charge of the project and to be able to use my creativity (it was a bit limited by the other person) and influence the result.”

However, almost a third of the students answered that they did not know if the project had influenced their autonomy or said that they did not understand the question (“I guess the project didn’t affect my autonomy, but maybe I just don’t understand the question.” and “I was pretty autonomous before.”). Therefore, in the future, the question will need to be better formulated or the meaning of autonomy will need to be explained better to students.

About 57% of students said they believe that by watching YouTubers and their multilingual channels, they can learn/practice several languages at the same time. Some of their comments on this:

“I really think so. It’s great and I did it while learning English.”

“I think it’s possible and it would be good for the brain.”

“Yes. It’s easier to learn languages when you hear them.”

We see it as important to remind students of the benefits of learning multiple languages at once – they can listen to part of the video in a foreign language, read the subtitles for the other part, and realize which skills need more practice. Nevertheless, some say this is limited by certain conditions (for example, the personality of the student, their language level, or the similarity of target languages). They said:

“I think it depends on the person. I don’t watch YouTubers, so I wouldn’t like to watch. Instead, I watch series in another language with English subtitles.”

“I think it depends on your language skills. I don’t think watching YouTubers is for beginners.”

“I think it’s possible to improve in both languages at the same time if they’re from the same language families.”

At this point, it should be stressed again that the aim of the project was not primarily to lead students to follow the LinguoYouTubers, but to stimulate motivation and curiosity and, above all, to offer students another channel where their self-study of a foreign language could be made more effective. If learners seek out foreign language stimuli and interact with the foreign language as often as possible, their knowledge will be multiplied; this can be done through watching films, listening to music, or talking to friends in a restaurant – the important thing is that it is a casual contact with the language, but one that brings new impulses into everyday life.

The project allowed students to compare their knowledge and performance in a foreign language with those of their peers. (“I felt that I would have to improve my grammar to become confident in the language like my colleague.” and “Now I probably want to study French more than before, because I want to be better.”) One student was even more motivated to start studying a 3rd foreign language (“During the recording, we agreed to work more on the Spanish language together.”).

Working with a student of another foreign language enabled some students to become aware of additional opportunities for learning foreign languages collaboratively and comparatively, as evidenced by some responses:

“I enjoyed listening to what I understood in another language.”

“It was interesting to observe the creation of similar sentence structures with the same meaning in a totally unknown language.”

“When you realize the similarities (French + Spanish; Russian + Czech), languages together can be easier to learn.”

“I won’t mind watching videos in Russian, especially if the YouTuber switches from Russian to English or uses English subtitles.”

Regarding issues related to plurilingualism, as we can see above, almost two-thirds of students said that they believe that by watching YouTubers and their multilingual channels, they can learn/practice several languages at the same time. Some students explicitly expressed that after this project they were more aware of the effectiveness of the simultaneous perception of the heard form and/or written form of a language. At the same time, they also repeatedly mentioned the effectiveness of watching multilingual channels of YouTubers. According to the responses, working in multilingual teams on a common task allowed the students to become more familiar with another foreign language, to gain understanding of many unfamiliar words, to become aware of the similarity between words or whole language structures, and to overcome fears of lack of comprehension when watching foreign language videos.

The relatively high number of positive responses to the plurilingual aspect of the project is probably due to the personal experience of the students, since the plurilingual approach to language learning was new to most of them. Although the vast majority of students at the beginning of the semester found watching foreign language YouTubers as an effective means of learning a foreign language, 80% did not practice this activity (the question was related to their second foreign language, not English). The project allowed students to get acquainted with some foreign language YouTubers, to work more closely with a student of another foreign language and to interact (dialogue, subtitling), albeit in a prepared way, in the foreign language being studied.

Forms of evaluation and assessment of student videos

Good assessment is best achieved through the gathering of information about learners over time, and through a combination of methods. It is up to the teacher to encourage learner awareness, and to make the process as effective as possible. This is why we are inclined to an action-oriented approach to teacher assessment in the classroom. As stated in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020), “the aim is to switch the focus to what learners show they can do, providing assessment as and for learning (“learning-oriented assessment”) and not exclusively assessment of learning.” The students’ work during the entire didactic project was therefore assessed in different phases by several subjects, and from different perspectives and with different aims.

Teacher – evaluator

The teachers provided oral and written feedback during the entire project, especially when comparing the selected three YouTube videos in week 4, when creating the glossary, and during the final evaluation of the bilingual videos. We provided mostly formative feedback with an emphasis on how the teachers and learners perceived the program’s goals and learning experiences.

Peer viewing of selected videos, peer review

In weeks 10–12, students had the opportunity to watch and comment on each other’s videos. The students had to choose the three most interesting videos in their language

group, the task being to evaluate, with a maximum of 500 written words, the quality of speech, originality, content, interaction between the two authors of the video, the quality of the subtitles, and the technical processing of the video. Emphasis was placed on the fact that making judgments and evaluations is an integral part of everyday and professional life, as we are constantly evaluating all aspects of our life and work. The ability to give and receive feedback is a key soft skill that is essential for advancing students' careers. Providing feedback is widely acknowledged as a critical part of formative assessment affecting students' learning outcomes (Van der Kleij, F, 2019).

Teaching assistants

In order to strengthen the authenticity of the task, the students were informed before starting to create their own videos that their result would also be viewed and evaluated by Language Teaching Assistants, who were peers as well as native speakers of the given language. This cooperation with Language Teaching Assistants is institutionalized at the MU Language Center, and foreign exchange students have the opportunity to receive not only credits but also a valuable experience from this cooperation. By telling the students that the Teaching Assistants would evaluate their work, the teachers tried to motivate the students to approach the task in such a way that it was not considered as an assignment for the teacher, but for themselves and their classmates. The Language Teaching Assistants selected the three most successful videos and provided detailed feedback, justifying their selection in the form of a recorded video presented by the teacher in a seminar (in the Spanish and French classes) or in person in class (in the Russian class). In contrast to the evaluation of the videos by the teachers, the assistants put more emphasis on creativity, originality, and quality of the subtitles than on students' speech when compiling the ranking of the best videos.

Self-evaluation and self-reflection

During the entire project, the students were required to reflect on their progress, the way they cooperate in a team, their own results and the results of their classmates, the evaluation of their language level, and their progress in the foreign language. For students of economics, i.e. non-philology majors, this phase of self-reflection in the process of learning a foreign language was a great challenge.

Conclusions

The aim of our research was to determine whether our students watch videos of YouTubers (or *LinguoYouTubers*), and if so, how and why they watch them. *LinguoYouTubers* create YouTube videos that are intended to facilitate the learning of foreign languages and the cultural specificities of the countries where the language is spoken, turning YouTube into a tool for learning. What interested us even further in our research was the question of whether students consciously or unconsciously perceive and use this tool plurilingually. Last but not least, we investigated whether students perceive the active inclusion of YouTubers' videos in teaching as a motivational aspect and to what extent this motivation can influence their

positive participation in learning another foreign language, as well as the efficiency of their self-regulatory learning process.

From a didactic point of view, by introducing this project into our courses of business French/ Spanish/ Russian, we wanted to support and develop autonomous and reflective learning, and provide the students with a new path to foreign language acquisition. Our goal was also to point out the importance of the ability to give and receive feedback as a key soft skill that is essential for advancing their career. However, we also wanted to implement a synthesis of project-based (authentic tasks) and competency-based (measuring skills and learning rather than time spent in the classroom) learning elements in professional language teaching.

Research conclusions and implications

We believe that the project was generally beneficial in showing students that YouTube could be a potential tool for language learning. In the first questionnaire, 80% of students stated that they do not regularly watch LinguoYouTubers; while at the end of the semester 57% of students stated that they considered watching LinguoYouTubers and videos in multiple languages as helpful in their learning process. This positive reaction to the involvement of multiple languages when watching selected videos was already evident after the analysis of the first phase of the research, after studying the students' papers in which they compared and commented on the three watched videos of YouTubers. Students were exposed to a variety of information and creative content about the given country and language. Therefore, based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using YouTube on students' motivation in learning multi-language vocabulary.

As expected and hoped, the project helped many of them realize that the knowledge of one foreign language helps in the process of learning another foreign language (through perception of the differences among languages, or gaining motivation to study or improve the other foreign language). The students got to know the concept of plurilingualism in a participatory way. If at first this might have been unconscious, after the final phase of the project, they were consciously aware of what they were able to gain by watching YouTube videos.

Another conclusion is that the students positively evaluated the experience of trying and verifying in practice that using YouTube tools as part of their self-regulatory learning process could be part of their continuous life-long language education.

Regarding the follow-up to the research and challenges to its improvement, we would consider it beneficial to elaborate more on the final questionnaire regarding positive participation and motivation, and to gauge the effect of long-term viewing of multilingual videos on the development of their plurilingual competence. We would also devote more time to the analysis and subsequent evaluation of the trilingual glossaries. From a plurilingual perspective, for the effective utilization of this part of the project to streamline the conscious learning process, it will be necessary to guide students towards peer evaluation and reflection on the extent to which parallel words in the glossaries resemble or differ.

Didactic project conclusions and implications

Knowing that effective vocabulary learning and acquisition increases students' motivation and self-confidence (Edwards, E, Roger, P. S., 2015, Isakovna, T. N., Kosimov, A., 2023), and being aware that our students do not study linguistics or didactics, but economics, we intended to promote student autonomy and make the learning process more attractive for them by involving the Language Teaching Assistants and giving the students an authentic assignment (transfer to practice). While the students positively evaluated the experience of working with audio and visual elements and subtitles as a more effective way of learning a foreign language, some of them also expressed doubt that the project had any relevance for improving their language level and that they had spent too much time on the technical processing of the video (editing and subtitling). We believe that this partially negative attitude is due to the fact that some of the students expect that the language course will merely help them master certain material for the final test, and are not aware that project teaching develops not only their language skills, but also targets soft skills (collaboration, time management, providing feedback, etc.). Our didactic goal is to gradually include more small project tasks in the teaching, to link them to the students' field of study and to build the students' awareness of the need to develop comprehensively in all respects.

Although social interaction was not one of the main didactic objectives of the project, this aspect was one of the most highly rated in the students' final reflections (new friendships, meeting students of another language, having fun, losing fear of speaking, communicating with a colleague). Nevertheless, 44% of students had some negative feelings due to their insecurity with speaking in a foreign language and being filmed, their individual personality features (shyness/introversion, dislike of working with an unknown colleague) and teamwork difficulties (not being able to meet in person, failing to communicate well with a colleague, poor division of labour). This finding was rather surprising, as the profile of a successful economics graduate typically emphasizes teamwork and interaction. In this regard, we plan to conduct a survey among the students of our courses as to what extent they work in a team in their economics subjects, speak in public and present the results of their work publicly. Based on the results of this survey and in cooperation with the departments of the faculty, it will then be possible to incorporate more activities of this type into the curriculum so that students can better adapt and gain self-confidence.

From our didactic point of view, the two areas of autonomy and motivation were the most interesting, as these areas showed the most discrepancies and contradictions in the answers. The majority of students did not think that this project influenced their autonomy or did not understand the question. It is clear from the student answers that they are not very used to evaluating their own learning. Perceiving it as a continuous process, they are not familiar with terms such as autonomous learning, and often answered that they do not actually know what it means (that an autonomous learner will set their own learning goals, choose their own tasks and exercises, and seek out opportunities to apply their knowledge outside the classroom). Therefore, in our next project, we would dedicate more time to explaining what learner autonomy is and how to promote it, i.e. asking learners what they want to learn, providing multiple options for learners, supplying a wide range of resources,

trying the “can do” exercise, suggesting learners keep a journal, building an online learning community, offering multimedia learning content, outlining helpful tools, etc.

Likewise, more than half of the students stated that they were not motivated by the project to study the language more. Although it might seem that if motivation has not increased for more than half of the students, the project should be deemed unsuccessful, we believe that this is not the case. In our view, any enhancement in motivation is significant, and we care about every student who, thanks to the project, becomes more motivated to study a second foreign language. However, it is important to note here that the answers in the forms in this part of the questionnaire contradicted each other, from which we conclude that the students were not able to theoretically name the facts asked. In the same way, in the answers regarding intercultural communication, they could not grasp the question exactly and often did not know what to write. This insight was very important for us teachers, because in future projects of this type, we will have to focus more on the preparatory phase, explaining in more detail what these terms mean, as well as paying more attention to different types of assessment and self-evaluation of language progress. In the end, these concepts can provide another level of added value to the language education at the Faculty of Economics and Administration.

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Appendix No. 1

Questionnaire 1

What do you think is your level of foreign language?

What other foreign languages have you ever learned?

Do you want to continue to actively improve your *French/*Russian/*Spanish (used depending on the course in which the questionnaire was distributed) after you have passed the language exam?

Would you like to apply your knowledge of *French/*Russian/*Spanish (used depending on which course the questionnaire was distributed in) in the future?

Do you think that watching foreign language YouTubers can help you improve your knowledge of *French/*Russian/*Spanish (used depending on the course in which the questionnaire was distributed)?

Do you follow *French/*Russian/*Spanish YouTubers (used depending on which course the questionnaire was distributed in)?

Which *French/*Russian/*Spanish YouTubers (used depending on which course the questionnaire was distributed in) do you follow?

Do you also follow YouTubers who focus on teaching *French/*Russian/*Spanish or *French/*Russian/*Spanish realities (used depending on which course the questionnaire was distributed in)? Which ones?

For what reasons do you follow YouTubers?

On average, how often do you watch YouTubers' videos?

Do you use the option of reading subtitles when watching videos?

What do you appreciate about the videos of the mentioned YouTubers?

Appendix No. 2

Questionnaire 2

How did you feel in the role of YouTuber?

Please rate how your motivation to learn a foreign language(s) has changed as a result of making your (own) video.

Please indicate what impact this project had on promoting your autonomy.

What elements of interculturality in connection with this project could you list?

Please indicate how you reflect on your foreign language learning outcomes as a result of your participation in this project.

What are the pros and cons of this project for you?

Do you think that by watching YouTubers and their multilingual channels you can learn/practice multiple languages at the same time? Why yes, why no?

How do you rate teamwork? Was working with a colleague with a different second language beneficial/interesting in any way?

Were you also involved in the post-production of the video (technical design, editing, etc.)?

How time-consuming was it for you to create the video, edit it and create the subtitles? (specify in hours)

Appendix No. 3

Instructions for written evaluation of three videos chosen from YouTube

- Rate the form.

- Rate the content.
- Did you use subtitles in the language of the video or in another language? Justify.
- What specific benefit did the video and the personality of the YouTuber have for you?
- Which of the three videos was most useful to you and why?

Appendix No. 4

Instructions for creating the videos

Theme

- why you chose your study field
- what your expectations were
- how you feel about your studies so far
- your ideas about your professional future
- min. 3 places related to the topic (photo can also be used)

Creating subtitles in another language for parts of the video spoken by your colleague

Preparation phases

Concept, division of roles (e.g. interview, dialogue), bilingual script, shooting video, editing, possibly adding music and other effects, subtitles (e.g. if you have a combination of R and F in your pair, the one who speaks Russian subtitles in French and vice versa)

Appendix No. 5

Propositions for producing the videos

- 1) Video Editor (MS Office)
- 2) Software such as Openshot, Shotcut, Blackmagicdesign, Sony Vegas, Adobe Premier Pro
- 3) Mobile phone apps (e.g. Adobe Premiere Rush – Iphone)

Plurilingual Students in Tandem Language Exchange: Motivation, Perceived Positive Language Interaction, and Plurilingual Approach

Silvie Převedřilová

Abstract

Languages in the speakers' repertoire influence additional language acquisition and the learners may perceive interaction among them. This chapter presents a study on plurilingualism¹ in a language exchange course (language tandem), exploring the ideal multilingual selves, perceived positive language interaction (PPLI) of languages that the learners have studied, and plurilingual strategies employed in the tandem course. Data were collected using reflections, learner diaries, interviews, and a recorded lesson. The qualitative study presents profiles of a pair where a Czech student learns French as L4 and a Canadian student learns Czech as L4. The results underscore the role of the teacher in perceiving interaction among languages learned and language learning motivation, and challenge the monolingual bias in tandem language learning.

Introduction

While the official and primary language of instruction at Czech universities is Czech, university programs promote multilingualism. Besides courses in Czech, students can study in other languages, and some universities offer programs (usually paid) in languages other than Czech (for more information on language management at Czech universities, see Sherman, 2020). In line with the language policy of mother tongue + two additional languages, European university students are users of at least two foreign languages when they enter university. Their language learning experiences offer a wide range of plurilingual personal histories and various motivational profiles relating both to global world languages and languages with limited ethnolinguistic vitality (Ehala, 2015), such as Czech. Although the acquisition process of L2 differs from L3+ (Henry, 2011, 2017), and there may be different sources of motivation to learn an additional language, most empirical studies have examined individual languages (Henry, 2020). The motivation to learn an additional language may also be influenced by how the plurilingual learner perceives interaction among the languages learned (Thompson & Aslan, 2014; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016; Thompson, 2020). While languages other than English (LOTEs) have received research attention recently, minor Slavic languages still need to be investigated (Mendoza & Phung, 2019). As plurilingualism continues to flourish within the European higher education landscape, it is

1. Note on terminology: The distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism has yet to be fully established in applied linguistics. While plurilingualism often refers to an individual level and multilingualism is associated with societies and nations (Council of Europe, 2007), some theoretical approaches refer to multilingualism on an individual level, for example, the concept of multilingual self. This chapter adheres to the principle of plurilingualism on individual level. However, concepts established in literature as multilingual (ideal multilingual self or multilingual motivational self system) are referred to as such. Another terminological problem arises from the foreign/second language dichotomy. Although *second language* usually refers to learning a language in the country where it is spoken and *foreign* to language learning where the official language is different, which has some implications on learning and teaching, the boundary is sometimes blurred, and for the sake of this chapter not essential.

crucial to broaden the research scope to understanding of plurilingual language acquisition and motivation.

This chapter presents the preliminary research stage on plurilingualism among Czech and international students at Charles University in Prague who participated in a language exchange self-directed course (language tandem). The study examined one language tandem pair practicing Czech, French, and English, exploring the motivational profiles to learn multiple languages (Henry, 2020; Ushioda, 2017), with a link to the positive language interaction perceived by the individuals, and the plurilingual approach in their tandem course.

Multilingual Motivational Self System (MMSS) and Perceived Positive Language Interaction (PPLI)

The most prominent model to operationalize motivation in applied linguistics (Boo et al., 2015) is the L2 Motivation Self System (L2MSS, Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). It consists of three main components: 1. the ideal L2 self as the image of the self the language learner would like to become, 2. the ought-to L2 self as “the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 86), and 3. the L2 Learning Experience. Similar to other theoretical approaches, the model considers learning only individual languages, ignoring the learner’s integrated communicative competence, where languages intertwine and mutually engage (Council of Europe, 2001, 13). Such integrated plurilingual competence may impact the acquisition of an additional language shaping the strategies, cognitive skills, and linguistic insights employed when engaging with a new language. Hence, in settings where learners engage with L3+ languages, the L2 Motivational Self System should be modified to the Multilingual Motivational Self (MMSS, Henry, 2017; Thompson, 2020) and the ideal *multilingual* selves of the plurilingual learners should be examined.

Furthermore, within their unique plurilingual competence, learners may perceive positive or negative interaction among the languages. Thompson (2020) in her study on perceived positive language interaction (PPLI) indicated a favourable association between PPLI and language learning motivation: Learners who recognized positive language interaction among the languages they acquired exhibited higher motivation compared to those who did not. While the study provided insights into certain aspects of plurilingual learners, there remains a distinct research gap in the adoption of plurilingual strategies in language acquisition. Particularly in languages like Czech, where research has been limited due to a predominant focus on global world languages, further investigation will bring valuable insight into learning an additional language.

Language Learning Tandem

Tandem language learning is a cooperative pedagogical approach that embodies principles of collaborative learning, learner autonomy, and reciprocity (Brammerts, 2003). This informal learning format, an alternative or complement to traditional language classrooms in formal settings, fosters mutual language acquisition and helps learners gain insights into the associated target culture and community as learners engage in authentic communication

with peers from different cultural backgrounds (Sabbah-Taylor, 2021; Lockey & Yoshida, 2016; Yeh & Heng, 2022; Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020). Active engagement in setting goals, discussing teaching and learning strategies, and exchanging language expertise may positively affect learners' motivation and enthusiasm (Little, 2007; Little et al., 2017).

Recent technological advancements have ushered in a new era for tandem language learning, further catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the language learning community promptly adapted to the virtual landscape, leveraging online platforms and videoconferencing tools to facilitate online exchanges (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). The integration of technology in tandem language learning has provided language learners with diverse opportunities and triggered research interest in on-line collaboration (Sieglová & Gaish, 2022; Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020; Yeh & Heng, 2022). Face-to-face tandem exchanges have also been investigated, exploring their unique benefits and outcomes (Grasz, 2021; Karjalainen et al., 2017; Sabbah-Taylor, 2021), including the role of mentors in tandem courses (Pörn & Hansell, 2020).

Unfortunately, most language tandem research investigates learners' experiences in the individual target language while overlooking the richness and complexity of their plurilingual repertoire. Grasz (2021), on the contrary, investigated plurilingual practices in tandem language learning, offering a novel perspective on tandem language learning and plurilingualism. Exploring plurilingual strategies corresponds to the aim of embracing learners' multiple languages and fostering a more enriched language education environment as recommended by the Council of Europe (2007).

Tandem Courses in Czech Universities

Language learning in tandem has seen varying levels of adoption in educational institutions worldwide and has found its place in Czech higher education institutions. While some universities offer the "buddy program" as an extracurricular activity to support incoming students, the review of publicly available information on credited language courses offered at six prominent Czech universities with the highest number of enrolled students (Univerzita Karlova v Praze /UK/, Masarykova univerzita v Brně /MU/, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci /UP/, Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze /VŠE/, České vysoké učení technické v Praze /ČVUT/, Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze /ČZU/) revealed that tandem language learning had gained prominence at Masaryk University and Charles University, namely at faculties of medicine, where pioneering tandem programs have been organized since 2017. Additionally, Fakulta humanitních studií (Faculty of Humanities) UK introduced tandem initiatives in 2018, followed by Fakulta sociálních věd (Faculty of Social Studies) UK in 2021. Additionally, UP organizes a summer tandem German/Czech tandem exchange program. On the other hand, VŠE, ČVUT, and ČZU currently do not offer any tandem language learning opportunities based on the public sources review. This situation highlights the disparities in the integration of tandem language learning across Czech universities, and it underscores the potential for further exploration of this language-learning approach in higher education institutions.

The Language Tandem Course at the faculty where the data was collected is a one-semester autonomous language course for students learning a foreign language at the faculty (includ-

ing Czech as a second language for international students). Students work in pairs, where the international student learns Czech as a second language, and the Czech student practices the foreign language. For both participants of the language exchange, the target language is usually L3+.

At the time of this research, the tandem course participants had to attend three sessions with the supervisor. In the first one, the course supervisor introduced them to the nature of the course and some basic principles of autonomous learning essential for working in the tandem course, such as self-assessment, goal setting, interdependence, reciprocity, and reflection (Little et al., 2017), course requirements and Moodle support. While the students were encouraged to utilize the guidelines in Moodle to enhance their tandem work, they did not receive any specific training in language teaching or the plurilingual approach to language learning. The second (mid-term) session provided space for sharing experiences and discussing problems. The final meeting offered room to reflect on the experience. In all three sessions, students received guidelines for the tasks they needed to complete to receive credits for the course (2 ETCS). The tandem pairs had to perform three tasks: 1. Create a worksheet for the tandem partner, 2. Keep a learner diary, 3. Write a final reflection that made the students reflect on the course and simultaneously served as a data collection tool.

Research Questions and Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the ideal multilingual selves, the perceived positive language interaction (PPLI), and plurilingual strategies among two participants engaged in the language tandem course. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences, providing an understanding of their motivation that quantitative methods might overlook (Ushioda, 1994). The data sources for the analysis were learner diaries, tandem course reflections, semi-structured interviews, and a lesson recording.

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What sources of motivation shape the participants' multilingual motivational profile?
2. How do participants perceive the interaction among the languages they have learned?
3. What plurilingual strategies do they employ in their tandem?

Participants

This study focuses on a tandem language exchange involving two participants, identified by the pseudonyms Ella and Aneta. Both learners were in their early twenties and enrolled in a bachelor's program at the faculty. While Ella was pursuing a program conducted in English, Aneta was a student in the standard Czech language program.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were asked to maintain a learner diary throughout the language tandem course and write a reflection at the end. Learner diaries documented activities and the length of their sessions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. The interviews delved into their language background, language learning journey, and perceptions of positive language interaction. The open-ended interview questions aimed to elicit narratives about the participants' motivations, experiences, and feelings related to plurilingualism and tandem language learning. Moreover, a forty-five-minute recording of their tandem session documented the communication dynamics throughout the tandem interactions. A thorough conversation analysis of all the submitted recordings surpasses the current scope of this paper and will be discussed in a forthcoming study. Table 1 summarizes the data sources.

Tab. 1. Data sources

	Final Reflection	Learner Diary	Interview	Lesson Recording
Ella	312 words in Czech	374 words in Czech	20 minutes in English 2920 words (incl. questions)	45 minutes
Aneta	376 words in Czech	382 words in English	22 minutes in Czech 3815 words (incl. questions)	

Participants submitted their course reflections and learner diaries in Word documents. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed. All the supplied data were anonymized before being securely archived within the Zenodo database (Převrátilová, 2023), where they can be retrieved for future research.

The data analysis focused on examining the central elements of investigation: participants' motivation to embrace plurilingualism and their PPLI, along with the emergence of various languages during their tandem sessions. The origins of PPLI and motivation were evident in the interview transcripts, where the questions addressed them directly. Conversely, scrutinizing the diaries indicated specific plurilingual approaches that warrant further exploration in the conversation analysis of lesson recordings. For the preliminary analysis, two sessions were transcribed (those that focused on Czech). A timeline of languages used in the sessions demonstrated the flow of languages, showcasing the transitions and dynamic exchanges between them.

Results

Participants' Language Background and Tandem Organisation

Ella's language background was rich, as shown in Table 2 below. She was born in Toronto, and her native language was English, the only language they spoke at home. At a low age, in kindergarten, she started learning French as the second official language in Canada. Her family moved to the USA when she was seven years old. As a part of the US school curriculum, she took one year of Spanish in addition to French. In the seventh grade (aged 11), she opted for French when choosing between French and Spanish due to her family in the

French-speaking part of Canada and her previous background in French: her grandparents immigrated to Canada from Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. Ella's mother was born in Canada and grew up speaking Czech at home and French and English outside. Her mother and grandmother would speak Czech to each other sometimes, and Ella would naturally pick up some Czech vocabulary. Her mother and grandmother also spoke German and sometimes used it as a "secret language" when they discovered that Ella could understand some Czech. That motivated Ella to learn German. After graduating from high school, she attempted to learn Czech and enrolled in the English-speaking program at Charles University. Before studying in Prague, she practiced Czech with Duolingo.

Tab. 2. Ella's language background

Language	Length of formal instruction	Level achieved
French	5 years	B1
Spanish	1 year	A1/A2
Czech	3 or 4 years	B1
German	6 months (self-learning)	–

Aneta's language background was more modest than Ella's and followed a standard pattern similar to a typical Czech student, as shown in Table 3. Aneta came from a Czech town in eastern Bohemia, where she attended primary school for five years, followed by an eight-year high school (*osmileté gymnázium* in Czech). Her mother tongue was Czech, and similarly to many Czech pupils, Aneta started learning English at a young age (7) in her second year of school attendance as a compulsory subject. She remarked that the school was a language-progressive one because most schools in the country started with English a year later, in the third grade. In the second year of high school (aged 11), Aneta started learning French, in addition to English, and continued until her final year, graduating in French. Later, at university, she added a two-semester Spanish course.

Tab. 3. Aneta's language background

Language	Length of formal instruction	Level achieved
English	11 years	B2
French	7 years	B1
Spanish	1 year	A1

Regarding tandem course organization, they said they tried to meet two times a week and separate the languages in the sessions. Each time they planned to focus on one (they first had the tandem in Czech/English, and later in the semester, they changed the tandem languages to Czech/French and only used English as the mediatory language). Sometimes they would switch languages, and English helped them explain ideas or vocabulary. Aneta wrote in her reflection that such organization of work in the language tandem increased her ability to shift between languages naturally and efficiently due to their constant translations of stories and fairy tales in Czech and French.

Perception of Language Interaction

As evident from their language backgrounds, both participants had ample experience in acquiring at least three foreign languages. The inquiry into PPLI prompted Ella to draw upon her extensive linguistic repertoire, concisely captured in the following paragraph:

I think when I started learning Czech, [...] I realized how different Czech is from French and English. [...] French and English are pretty similar, so many words, the grammar structure, vocabulary, it really made it smoother to learn it, and so then learning Czech was like, "Oh, this is very different! There are no helpful hints for you to realize, okay, comfortable is comfortable, wow, easy." [...] No, they're very different. And pronunciation, too, is harder. It's sometimes like saying a sentence in Czech is like doing a tongue twister, whereas in French, [...] the accent is not perfect, but it's somehow smoother to transition into. And the same thing with German – just from looking at some basic vocabulary words and even listening to my friend speak with her mom, [...] I can kind of guess what, if it's simple, [...] because so many of their words and grammar are similar to English.

This reflective excerpt summarizes her comparisons across languages, illuminating how she navigated her linguistic journey, offering a wide potential for plurilingual approach in her learning experience.

Adding to the discourse, she pointed out that even though she had only studied Spanish for a year, it gave her insights into shared linguistic traits among these languages. She proposed that a reasonable proficiency level in French might enable her to decipher basic sentences in Spanish. Similarly, she speculated that familiarity with English and German in terms of structure and vocabulary could facilitate a smoother learning process compared to Czech. Conversely, her encounter with Czech revealed a distinct linguistic paradigm, diverging significantly from her prior language experiences.

Aneta, on the other hand, seemed to perceive the languages she learned more isolated when she studied them at school:

At that time, the connection just wasn't there; I didn't realize it because [my] English wasn't that good, I didn't even look for it [the interaction of languages] because it seems to me that when we were learning French, the teacher never mentioned: Here it's similar to English, or here it's different in English. It was just English only – French only.

Despite disparities in teaching styles, she recognized that her grasp of French positively impacted her learning Spanish. She emphasized the significance of tandem sessions with Ella in enhancing her ability to discern differences and similarities. Through this collaborative exchange, she gained insights by learning French through English, with Ella adeptly pointing out linguistic nuances:

I just feel like I was more aware of that [interaction of languages] with Ella. She said to me, for example, [...] that there may be a sentence similar to English in some way. That English people would say it similarly, but only in English [...], so it was only through her and our tandems that I became more aware of it because I was learning French through English with Ella, I think.

The references to the perceived lack of language interaction highlight the significance of educators' role in fostering awareness of plurilingual education.

While Aneta acknowledged that her awareness of positive language interaction had developed relatively recently through her tandem sessions, she also underscored the constructive impact of her prior language learning experiences on her approach and strategies. She expressed that her proficiency in acquiring languages in the past had a favourable influence on her current language learning methods, suggesting that the achievements she attained

in previous language endeavours served as a foundation for her approach to acquiring additional languages:

I already knew what to expect, and it wasn't completely new to me. It wasn't a completely new system [...] I had to learn the vocabulary, and because I had already learned it in English, I knew a little bit about how to approach it in French.

As previously observed, Aneta struggled to identify positive interactions between the languages she was learning. However, she exhibited a remarkable ability to employ effective learning strategies instinctively and spontaneously without external prompting.

Language Learning Motivation

Previous language learning experience showed as a vital language learning factor. In the interview, Ella elaborated on the various languages she learned at home and formally at school. Family and geographic background served as crucial motivational sources. On the contrary, Aneta mentioned her parents, who paid for her extracurricular language courses and study abroad. Her main motivational (or demotivational) sources were the language teachers: She talked about five different language teachers, their methods, and their effect on Aneta as a language learner. The French and Spanish classes taught in the grammar-translation method appeared ineffective and demotivating. She praised the teachers who emphasized the communication aspect of language learning. Interestingly, she overcame the demotivation by compensating for the lack of communication in the language classroom by communicating with the target language speakers outside the class, enrolling in extracurricular courses, and studying abroad in the summer. Thus, she demonstrated high self-discipline, motivation, and autonomy in language learning, which are key pre-requisites for successful learning in language tandem.

Plurilingual Approach

The exploration of plurilingual approaches within the tandem pair leaned chiefly on the learner diaries, course reflections, and the lesson recording. The diaries, although modest in extent, do unveil noteworthy dimensions related to the plurilingual approach. As an illustration, Ella's account of their language exchange sessions revealed occasions where they discussed their language preferences: Czech, French, or English. One entry documented Ella proof-reading an English paper that Aneta had, followed by reading a Czech fairytale that Aneta chose. Furthermore, Ella's description included Aneta initially reading the fairytale in English before subsequently reading it in Czech for Ella. Aneta also shared her language learning experiences, indicating her intention to focus on French during a session and highlighting Ella's support in enhancing her written English production elsewhere. Moreover, the lesson recording demonstrated a situation where all three languages interacted simultaneously in a spontaneous conversation and an instance where Aneta referred to and used Spanish. The participants' engagement with several languages – Czech, French, English, (and Spanish) – showcased their linguistic versatility within the tandem pair. Their ability to efficiently navigate these languages exceeded the primary intent of practicing two, underscoring the dynamic nature of their language interactions.

The thematic analysis of the data further revealed a salient aspect emphasized within the literature on tandem language learning – interculturality. This component manifested in the participants' exchanges spontaneously. They harnessed resources such as videos and traditional narratives, including the French rendition of *Snow White*, the Czech literary canon's work *Svatební košile*, Czech animated series for children, and cartoon series on Czech history. Hence, this tandem serves as an illustration of intercultural exploration, showcasing facets of the plurilingual approach.

The data also unveiled indications of plurilingual teaching strategies adopted by the participants in the teacher's role. While the participants' central responsibility within the tandem is to provide context for using the target language, the inherent nature of the exchange necessitates deploying specific strategies to facilitate the language learning. These strategies encompass the selection of language input, the strategies to process it during the session, and potentially devising exercises or tasks. These instances draw from the learners' past language learning experiences and, at the same time, direct to the plurilingual strategies in the tandem exchange: translations of stories, watching a film in the target language, discussing historical events, or translanguaging (García & Otheguy, 2020).

Discussion

The study's qualitative design yielded ample data via interviews, reflections, learner diaries, and a lesson recording to answer the research questions. Exploring the participants' multilingual motivational profile has illuminated motivational specific influences contributing to their language learning journey. However, while specific motivational sources emerged—such as parents for Ella and language teachers for Aneta—other factors remain unexplored, resulting in a partial depiction of the ideal multilingual selves. Further research should examine additional sources that play a role in shaping the multilingual motivational profiles of participants. Future interviews should focus more directly on aspects of the ideal multilingual self, complemented by questionnaires covering various multilingual motivational self system factors.

The participants' perceptions of language interaction unveiled a subtle and complex interplay. Ella established meaningful links between languages, adeptly connecting languages by identifying patterns in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. On the other hand, Aneta struggled to identify positive interactions between her acquired languages. Nevertheless, she intuitively employed learning strategies without external prompting. Therefore, the plurilingual approach should benefit from intentional prompting, potentially yielding productive outcomes. Such intervention should be empirically tested to validate the role of external guidance as observed by Pörn and Hansel (2020).

In the tandem context, participants demonstrated plurilingual strategies aimed at enhancing communication and learning, including translation, translanguaging, and intercultural comparison. Simultaneously, the findings highlighted the necessity for guided utilization of students' plurilingual abilities in language acquisition. This gives rise to two fundamental questions pertaining to plurilingual pedagogy. Firstly, it became evident that despite possessing a comprehensive linguistic background, language instructors might face challenges in effectively imparting plurilingual learning strategies to their students – as illus-

trated by Aneta's experience with insufficient PPLI while learning French after English at school, caused by the French teacher's monolingual approach to teaching French as an additional language. This underscores the potential imperative for educators to actively foster students' awareness and involvement in language interaction.

Nonetheless, the monolingual approach remains rooted in language teaching (Woll, 2020), including the recommendations on tandem language learnings organization, as Vassallo & Telles (2011, p. 87) summarized. The findings presented here underscore the necessity to challenge the conventional monolingual approach, advocating instead for a shift towards promoting and prioritizing plurilingualism within tandem language learning experiences.

Unfortunately, a notable gap currently exists within Czech higher education teacher training programs, as formal training in plurilingual teaching approaches remains largely absent. This underscores the urgency of prioritizing plurilingual didactics and fostering increased attention, research, and discourse in this domain to pave the way for effective multilingual classrooms (Council of Europe, 2007).

Revising the research design for future investigations has the potential to yield more robust data. One line for exploration involves capitalizing on the potential of reflective writing (Bassot, 2020), where the tandem supervisor should prompt the participants. Additionally, in-depth examination of tandem session interactions, such as utilizing conversation analysis (Ahn, 2016), is necessary to gain a more profound comprehension of plurilingual practices (Grasz, 2021). These adaptations to the research design offer promising ways to gather more detailed data on plurilingual approaches in language exchange courses in future studies.

Moreover, as demonstrated, the participants were not provided with explicit guidance, instructions, recommendations, or exemplars of plurilingual practices, yet these practices naturally emerged. Looking ahead, a study that measures the impact of such explicit instruction, assessing whether such interventions enhance learners' utilization of and engagement with plurilingual strategies should be carried out. Additionally, an investigation into learners' responses to suggested plurilingual practices would offer valuable insights into their adaptability to the plurilingual approach.

Conclusion

The study validated the research among plurilingual students as a promising research direction. In addition to the portrait of two plurilingual learners in the tandem course, the study highlights the potential benefits of challenging the monolingual principle in language education and emphasizes the role of teachers in adopting plurilingual approach, as learners often lack guidance on incorporating their linguistic repertoire into the learning process. Despite inherent limitations, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the motivation to learn languages other than English, the learning and teaching of L3+, and multilingualism/plurilingualism. Its implications extend beyond the context of European higher education.

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Dal tandem all'e-tandem: dimensioni plurilingui

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Abstract

During the pandemic emergency, an e-tandem was set up between Italian-speaking FLE students and French-speaking Italian L2 students. Although e-tandem is an evolution of the traditional vis-à-vis tandem, the technological tools available to the students generated multimodal communication, both synchronous and asynchronous, which in turn allowed the development of skills and savoir-faire beyond mere linguistic skills. After some theoretical hints related to project pedagogy and e-tandem we briefly give an account of the organization and course of the telecollaboration project. The collection of numerous observations, during the experiment and through a subsequent online questionnaire made it possible to show how much the communication between partners within the e-tandem project also opens between L1 and L2 plurilingual dimensions.

Introduzione

Immediatamente successivo all'inizio della pandemia, l'anno accademico 2020/2021 è stato caratterizzato da un ricorso significativo alla didattica a distanza (DAD). In questo contesto gli insegnamenti di lingua straniera (L2) figurano fra le discipline che hanno subito l'impatto maggiore nel passaggio dall'aula reale a quella virtuale, principalmente per la difficoltà a impostare nuove modalità di interazione scritta e orale, sia tra gli apprendenti e l'insegnante sia tra gli apprendenti stessi. Per ovviare in parte a questo deficit di interazione è stato condotto un esperimento di e-tandem francese-italiano che ha coinvolto 172 studenti e studentesse, metà italiani e metà francesi, appartenenti a tre atenei¹.

Per tandem linguistico si intende una relazione comunicativa tra due apprendenti che, idealmente, sono entrambi parlanti «nativi» della lingua oggetto di studio da parte del proprio interlocutore o partner e che non utilizzano mai le due lingue simultaneamente bensì a fasi alterne come unica lingua di scambio. Questo alternarsi delle due lingue con gli apprendenti che si avvicendano nel ruolo di apprendente della L2 e di parlante «esperto» della L1 fa sì che si verifichi costantemente una situazione di comunicazione diglossica. Conseguentemente, e in linea teorica, le due lingue non dovrebbero mai essere sovrapposte e il loro alternarsi dovrebbe essere determinato dall'organizzazione e dalla progressione nel percorso di (auto)apprendimento da parte dei partner.

Dopo alcuni cenni sulla pedagogia a progetto, sull'e-tandem e sul plurilinguismo – concetti alla base di questa riflessione – ci siamo interrogati sul ruolo dei dispositivi e-tandem usati come strumento per sviluppare non solo le competenze comunicative relative alla L2 ma anche per valorizzare le competenze plurilingui degli apprendenti.

Considerazioni teoriche

Per ideare strategie d'insegnamento di una L2 vanno tenute presenti le basi cognitive sulle quali poggia l'acquisizione delle lingue. Come già evidenziato dai lavori di Klein (1989, 6–8), l'apprendimento di una «nuova» lingua non ha le stesse dinamiche di acquisizione della L1,

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nella misura in cui quest'ultima s'impara e si costruisce di pari passo allo sviluppo fisico, cognitivo e sociale dell'individuo.

Per raggiungere una buona padronanza della L2 partendo dalla L1, un apprendente passa attraverso una fase linguistica intermedia, ovvero un sistema linguistico transitorio, definito «interlingua» che non è più la L1 ma non è ancora la L2 (Klein, 1989, 39–42). L'interlingua, alla stregua di un sistema linguistico autonomo, polimorfo e instabile nella misura in cui è in continua evoluzione, è plasmato dall'apprendente a forza di prove, di errori e di correzioni (Câșlaru & Andrei, 2016, 57–64). L'apprendente rappresenta l'elemento variabile dell'equazione: ogni individuo si costruisce ed evolve in un contesto sociopsicologico, socioculturale e materiale proprio. Quindi, in linea di massima, a ogni profilo di apprendente corrisponde uno specifico percorso di apprendimento della L2 (Skehan, 1991, 275–298): conseguentemente, rovesciando la prospettiva come fece a suo tempo Atlan (1997, 7–17; 2000), ogni apprendente genera più o meno consapevolmente strategie di apprendimento proprie influenzate tuttavia dallo scenario pedagogico e quindi anche dai supporti tecnologici adoperati.

Va fatto osservare che negli ultimi vent'anni il concetto di interlingua è stato più volte criticato (ad es. Galligani, 2003) in quanto veicola una compartimentazione delle lingue, ponendo implicitamente come modello la lingua dei parlanti nativi totalmente ripulita da qualunque traccia della L1 dell'apprendente. Tuttavia, pur ammettendo in primo luogo che la padronanza della L2 è necessariamente influenzata dal repertorio dell'apprendente e che, in secondo luogo, la padronanza di una L2 – così come di una L1 – è un processo costantemente in atto, il concetto di interlingua ci appare utile proprio perché permette di concepire il processo di apprendimento come un processo plurilingue.

È utile sottolineare quanto la conoscenza di una L2 non si raggiunga esclusivamente sommando conoscenze di tipo esplicito poiché, nell'ambito di una qualsiasi interazione, i locutori tendono ad essere concentrati maggiormente – se non esclusivamente – sul significato piuttosto che sulle forme o sulle strutture linguistiche. Ciò conduce a ricordare la distinzione che fece Krashen (1985; 1987, 10) tra «acquisizione» come risultato di un processo inconscio e «apprendimento» come frutto di un'attività cosciente per cui, in base a questa distinzione, il processo di apprendimento della L2 può essere sia guidato sia non guidato (Klein 1989, 13–15). Recentemente queste intuizioni hanno portato la didattica della L2 ad ampliare lo sguardo oltre la semplice portata cognitiva dell'apprendimento, come ad esempio con la prospettiva interazionista o con gli approcci detti *usage-based* che partono prima dall'esperienza comunicativa per poi categorizzarla sul piano cognitivo (per uno stato dell'arte si veda Leone 2023, 46–54).

Queste evoluzioni in ambito glottodidattico hanno quindi portato ad interrogarsi sempre di più sul ruolo dell'insegnante in classe, spingendo quest'ultimo a tentare di ricreare contesti di apprendimento con caratteristiche simili a quello immersivo. In questa prospettiva l'ausilio dei nuovi mezzi digitali consente anche nell'insegnamento universitario pratiche pedagogico-didattiche particolarmente duttili ed interattive vicine alle modalità comunicative che gli studenti già usano, in particolare nella loro quotidianità.

E-tandem: oltre l'approccio comunicativo

Introdurre modalità comunicative maggiormente spontanee che possano rispecchiare meglio la lingua nei suoi usi quotidiani richiede da parte degli insegnanti competenze pedagogiche che vanno al di là della mera dimensione linguistica. Questo approccio impone di superare la visione dell'insegnamento intesa come semplice trasmissione di un sistema logico da acquisire tramite una somma di saperi, e di guardare non solo alla linguistica ma anche alla pedagogia e alla psicologia (Germain & Nettem 2010). Allo stesso modo, l'ausilio delle nuove tecnologie – specie con quegli strumenti che permettono di aprire agli studenti la possibilità di comunicare a distanza con i loro pari – permette di impostare progetti e attività pedagogiche che ricordano la pedagogia a progetto di Freinet (Schleminger 1995, 149; 161-165) o la didattica montessoriana basata sul *learning by doing*.

Così l'obiettivo è quello di modificare il paradigma pedagogico tradizionale per fare dell'apprendente non un destinatario passivo dell'insegnamento bensì un attore del proprio apprendimento, e trasformare l'insegnante da detentore del sapere a facilitatore (Pauvert, 2012) e motivatore (Tarantino 2008; 2009).

I vari dispositivi di e-tandem – o tele tandem – organizzati nelle tre università (Grenoble Alpes, Poitiers e Università per Stranieri di Siena) si inseriscono quindi in questa dinamica: proprio perché le coppie di partecipanti devono alternare le lingue, essi sono chiamati ad alternare anche i ruoli di apprendente della lingua del partner e di esperto della propria lingua, per cui sono maggiormente sensibili a pretendere dall'altro solo ciò che sono in grado di dare e ricevere (Vassallo & Telles, 2006, 96-97). Conseguentemente, i partecipanti traggono beneficio dallo scambio non solo in termini di motivazione – per l'autonomia derivante dall'autogestione della relazione con il partner – ma anche in termini di sviluppo delle competenze conversazionali, anche se non necessariamente in modo identico e/o equivalente (Lewis & Stickler 2007, 165), grazie anche alle retroazioni correttive e agli atteggiamenti di pazienza e benevolenza e agli incoraggiamenti reciproci (Marneffe, 2019).

Dispositivi e-tandem e dimensione plurilingue

Per quanto riguarda i dispositivi e-tandem organizzati tra febbraio e maggio 2021, riportiamo brevemente qualche dato utile. Innanzitutto, è necessario premettere che l'organizzazione e le eventuali attività didattiche previste non sono state concordate tra gli insegnanti delle tre università per via delle numerose contingenze istituzionali o curricolari – studenti specialisti e non di ogni livello – e delle differenze di calendario accademico. Ad esempio, mentre la partecipazione al progetto è stata resa obbligatoria per gli studenti dell'UGA (16 partecipanti, non specialisti della L2), l'adesione agli scambi è stata su base volontaria per quelli di Poitiers (66 partecipanti, specialisti e non specialisti) e di Siena (86 partecipanti, specialisti) – determinando direttamente la valutazione di fine corso per i primi e solo parzialmente per i secondi.

Le informazioni che seguono risultano sia dalle osservazioni raccolte durante lo svolgimento del progetto – scambi orali in classe e produzioni scritte in itinere e a conclusione degli scambi per raccogliere le reazioni degli studenti – sia dai dati quantitativi e qualitativi ottenuti grazie ad un questionario online distribuito agli studenti delle varie università al ter-

mine dell'anno accademico. Sebbene un'analisi dettagliata del progetto, dell'elaborazione e diffusione del questionario nonché dell'insieme dei dati raccolti sia già disponibile (Granata et als., 2022), ci sembra doveroso fare alcune precisazioni:

- il questionario online elaborato all'Università per Stranieri di Siena è frutto di una collaborazione tra insegnanti di francese L2 e spagnolo L2; è stato rivolto ai partecipanti degli scambi e-tandem italiano-francese (168 partecipanti in tutto) e italiano-spagnolo (175 partecipanti di cui 90 dell'ateneo senese e 85 tra Spagna e università ispano-americane); le tele collaborazioni tra tutte le università coinvolte – anche di lingua spagnola quindi – sono state organizzate con le medesime modalità, per cui tutte le 168 risposte raccolte (per 343 partecipanti complessivi) sono state prese in considerazione;
- il questionario era composto di 19 domande (18 chiuse, di cui 6 per le variabili indipendenti) con intento esploratorio; tra gli obiettivi si cercava anzitutto di capire le modalità degli scambi (6 domande in tutto) liberamente scelti dai partecipanti in assenza di direttive specifiche a riguardo e poi di capire le modalità delle retroazioni correttive (3 domande), il tutto nell'ambito di un ricorso massiccio alla Dad dato il contesto pandemico;
- tra le informazioni tratte dall'analisi del questionario, va sottolineato quanto la frequenza degli scambi (metà dei partecipanti dichiara un solo scambio a settimana) e il tempo complessivo (4 su 10 indicano una durata media degli incontri di 30/60 minuti, che diventa di 60/90 minuti per quasi 3 su 10) sia da relativizzare tenuto conto dei mezzi di comunicazione impiegati, e quanto proprio questi dati abbiano rivelato una comunicazione segnata da un maggiore ricorso a modalità di comunicazione plurilingue rispetto a quanto inizialmente preventivato;
- la domanda conclusiva, di tipo aperto, ha fatto emergere varie richieste da parte dei partecipanti prevalentemente riconducibili alla sfera motivazionale (in particolare richiesta di un tutoraggio più efficace, di maggiori input conversazionali da parte degli insegnanti durante il periodo degli scambi e di una maggiore motivazione da parte dei partner) per i quali si rimanda al lavoro già indicato (Granata et als. op. cit.).

Rispetto al tradizionale tandem in presenza, l'e-tandem sfrutta i molteplici supporti a disposizione dei partecipanti. L'interazione e la comunicazione non sono più da intendere prevalentemente orali, diventano anche scritte, in modalità sia sincrona sia asincrona – con la posta elettronica (Chotel & Mangenot, 2011, 4) o i forum presenti sulle piattaforme didattiche o ancora le chat telefoniche. Se nell'intento iniziale la partecipazione all'e-tandem è stata pensata per compensare il deficit di interazione orale in L2 causato dal passaggio della didattica in classe alla DAD, gli studenti hanno spontaneamente privilegiato le forme asincrone di comunicazione, sia scritta via chat sia orale con audio registrazioni, specie con le app: 8 su 10 hanno dichiarato di aver usato Whatsapp e 4 su 10 Instagram mentre solo 2 su 10 hanno usato almeno una volta Meet o Zoom. Ma il dato più significativo è rappresentato dal fatto che in pochissimi hanno usato i mezzi tecnologici a disposizione per interazioni

orali, mentre invece si è osservato un uso preponderante delle chat e, sebbene in minor proporzione, delle registrazioni vocali, rispetto a tutte le altre forme di comunicazione.

Ai partecipanti è stato richiesto di dedicare pari tempo alle due lingue, evitando così di mescolare i codici linguistici: 7 studenti su 10 hanno dichiarato di aver rispettato questo principio di «separazione» dei due codici. Il dato in sé non è negativo perché è probabile che i partner abbiano più facilmente optato per una comunicazione mistilingue sia durante i momenti di retroazione correttiva sia per cooperare nella scelta delle modalità degli incontri – tempistiche, mezzi, temi da trattare – e delle strategie da attuare per raggiungere gli obiettivi didattici fissati dagli insegnanti – lavori scritti *in itinere* da consegnare e presentazioni orali in classe o finali da preparare. Ora, le strategie plurilingui che probabilmente sono state messe in atto nelle fasi negoziative sono altresì importanti; sebbene gli aspetti cooperativi sembrano obiettivi secondari nell'impostazione di tele collaborazioni di tipo e-tandem, sono proprio questi meccanismi che determinano il successo o meno dello scambio (Brammerts & Calvert, 2006, 49).

Ultimo dato rilevante: proprio per l'assenza di un insegnante durante gli scambi e per il carattere di autoapprendimento dell'e-tandem, era lecito aspettarsi dai partecipanti, quasi tutti studenti universitari ventenni, l'uso di una lingua maggiormente informale e giovanile. A questa tendenza naturale si è sommato, come accennato precedentemente, l'impiego preponderante delle chat telefoniche che favorisce l'uso di forme ibride tra scritto e orale, tipiche delle nuove tecnologie, come è già stato documentato ad esempio per il francese (Gadet 2007, 134). Dalla lingua descritta dai manuali all'oralità dei giovani e passando per forme ibride innovative, l'esperienza dell'e-tandem moltiplica le occasioni di incontrare varie forme o registri della L2 da parte degli apprendenti. Ora, se alla stregua di De Mauro (1977, citato in Lo Duca, 2003, 57), si considera il plurilinguismo come *la compresenza sia di linguaggi di tipo diverso (verbale, gestuale, iconico...), cioè di diversi tipi di semiosi, sia di idiomi diversi, sia di diverse norme di realizzazione d'un medesimo idioma*, allora anche sul versante interno alla L2 si può considerare che la partecipazione a questo progetto di tele collaborazione in tandem abbia contribuito ad accrescere le competenze plurilingui degli apprendenti. I vari feedback raccolti a conclusione del progetto e-tandem sperimentato durante l'anno accademico 2020/2021 hanno messo in evidenza quanto gli studenti fossero desiderosi di un maggior coinvolgimento degli insegnanti, sia in fase preparatoria sia sotto forma di tutoraggio *in itinere*, per garantire un miglior andamento negli scambi. Dato che il progetto è poi proseguito nei due anni seguenti, gli insegnanti dell'Università per Stranieri hanno avuto modo di ideare un Vademecum in otto punti per sensibilizzare i futuri partecipanti ad un e-tandem sulle potenziali difficoltà di comunicazione che potrebbero incontrare i partner (Granata, Merlo, 2023). Se da un lato, nel punto due, si è messo l'accento sulla necessità che i (futuri) partner si accordino sulle modalità di svolgimento degli scambi, si è soprattutto insistito nel punto otto che *en el tándem se aprende la lengua del compañero (de cada participante) y la de los intercambios en línea, no la lengua de la gramática o de los libros de texto (ibid. 146)*.

Considerazioni conclusive

Inizialmente concepito durante i vari lockdown che hanno dettato il ricorso alla DAD, il pro-

getto e-tandem portato avanti tra gli atenei di Poitiers, Grenoble Alpes e l'Università per Stranieri di Siena era stato pensato per dare l'opportunità ad apprendenti universitari di L2 di potenziare le loro competenze di interazione orale. Il seguito ha dimostrato che gli studenti, in modo spontaneo, si sono appropriati di questa esperienza in modo talvolta diverso da quanto ci si sarebbe aspettato.

Certamente la dimensione di autoapprendimento che ha caratterizzato gli scambi ha permesso ai partecipanti non solo di rinforzare le loro competenze linguistiche e pragmatiche, e l'interlingua dei partecipanti – intesa anche come percorso di appropriazione in essere della L2 a partire da una L1 che serve di base allo scopo – si è mossa verso una migliore padronanza della L2. Le esitazioni, gli errori e le «creazioni» linguistiche a partire dal repertorio linguistico degli apprendenti, hanno consentito loro, con l'aiuto del partner, di convergere verso l'identificazione e l'acquisizione di elementi linguistici corretti della L2. Proprio questi elementi ci consentono di verificare l'impostazione dell'e-tandem nell'ambito del plurilinguismo.

Ciononostante, sono stati gli aspetti della cooperazione tra pari ad aver introdotto, a nostro avviso, una maggiore dimensione plurilingue all'esperienza. Oltre alla lingua standard dei manuali, concepiti in una prospettiva monolingue e mono normativa, gli studenti hanno avuto modo di confrontarsi attraverso il contatto con altri registri e altre varianti sociolinguistiche della lingua studiata, muovendosi quindi in una dimensione pluri normativa di ogni lingua, ovvero *polylectale* (Berrendonner *et al.* 1983; Chambers & Trudgill 1995, 77–79). Nel caso dei partecipanti francofoni, l'adesione al progetto e-tandem ha permesso di venire a contatto con l'italiano parlato – anche nelle sue forme scritte tramite la messaggistica delle app su smartphone – fortemente caratterizzato da variazione diatopica, poiché ancora oggi vale l'osservazione di Sobrero (2008, 4) per cui *non esiste un unico repertorio linguistico panitaliano, valido per tutti gli italiani*. La consapevolezza che risulta dal contatto con la variabilità degli usi – e delle lingue – rappresenta in sé un ulteriore passo verso un'educazione plurilingue.

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Building Presentation and Communication Skills in a Tandem-Taught Course with Plurilingual and Pluricultural Approaches

Athena Alchazidu

Abstract

This chapter explores the development of a unique pilot project course based on plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in language education provided by the Language Centre at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. This CLIL course, named “Development of Communication and Presentation Skills”, was taught by two educators teaching in tandem during the spring semester of 2023. There were three languages of instruction—English, Czech and Ukrainian—because the course was designed to address the needs of a particular group of Ukrainian students with diverse educational backgrounds and experience. In addition, these students of very young ages had become war refugees, and their journeys in search for security and safety had exposed them to critical and traumatic experiences. Such circumstances always represent a true challenge to any teacher, and this case was no exception. This article provides an overview of the methodology and pedagogical strategies that were employed to create a course taking into account not only the linguistic and cultural dimensions of learning but also the specific needs of this atypical group of students. One significant aim of such courses is to equip students with the skills and competences important for successful university-level studies. However, this specific situation required one more goal, considering the necessity to account for the particular context and challenges that the Ukrainian students brought to the classroom. This article also reflects on the strengths and benefits of plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in language education, highlighting effective strategies and methodologies in plurilingual and pluricultural teaching and learning process, in order to provide a good practice example.

Introduction

Over the past few years, the situation in the sphere of education has changed considerably, mirroring the process of globalisation in our interconnected world. Therefore, it is crucial to introduce adequate reforms and to adopt new perspectives on language and cultural competences that would respond to the needs of our transforming societies. This article uses the distinction between plurilingualism and multilingualism and between multiculturalism and pluriculturalism as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (cf. CEFR, 2020) to show the enormous potential of plurilingual approaches in language education.

In this respect, the plurilingual approach is implemented to achieve the main aim, i.e. to develop the participants’ cognitive and communication skills in plurilingual and pluricultural contexts. Therefore, the emphasis is mostly on practical exercises, activities, and tasks that contribute to fostering a plurilingual and pluricultural awareness and supporting the development of a variety of skills and competences necessary for successful university study.

In accordance with this perspective, it is worth mentioning the following expert opinions:

If we conceptualize language as an activity – *linguaging* – we open doors to a plurilingual view, and the concept of *social agent*. [...] plurilingualism has both a social and an individual aspect: it is on one hand a sociolinguistic/sociocultural phenomenon and on the other hand a cognitive/emotional one. (Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford, Lawrence, 2022, 7)

The Language Centre has long prioritised issues concerning plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. Consequently, it has developed over recent years numerous courses based on this approach for students at Masaryk University (MU). Moreover, several academics from the Language Centre focus their professional interest on issues of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and therefore dedicate their own research to topics from this field. The increased academic interest is reflected in the fact that the Language Centre organises conferences dedicated to these particular issues.¹

In the spring of 2022, however, a completely new situation arose, due to which the teachers of the Centre had to face unexpected challenges. When the war broke out in Ukraine, a huge number of refugees came to the Czech Republic as well as to Poland, Slovakia and other European countries. According to data provided by the Czech Ministry of Interior, there are currently 325,000 refugees registered in the Czech Republic, and as a result the country stands among those with the highest number of Ukrainian refugees relative to total population (Dlubalová, 2023).

Many young Ukrainians fleeing the war seized the opportunity to apply to study at Czech universities. Masaryk University was also in great demand, and an exceptional admission procedure was organised just for Ukrainian applicants outside of the regular terms. As a result, at that occasion 1,800 applicants from Ukraine decided to sit for the entrance exams (cf. Masaryk Helps Ukraine, 2023). Moreover, in order to prepare these applicants for their studies in the best possible way, Masaryk University offered numerous specialised courses, including CLIL and intensive language courses organised by the Language Centre.² Due to the given circumstances, this support was expanded even further in the academic year starting September 2022, centred mainly on language learning combined with CLIL courses. This extraordinary situation represented a unique challenge for all teachers, precisely because of its major social overlap.

Plurilingual and Pluricultural Approaches in Education

Especially in the first phase, there was an urgent need for Ukrainian students to acquire a command of Czech language sufficient to be able to attend the Czech study programmes in the shortest possible time. In the following semesters, courses focused on the development of study competences became part of the special offer prepared exclusively for this group of students. As part of this curriculum, the Language Centre also designed courses aimed at developing diverse skills essential for university students. One of these courses implemented in the spring semester of 2023, called “Development of Communication and

1. Within this context at least three conferences are worth noting. The first one to be mentioned is “Teaching Languages in the Shadow of Lingua Franca”, held in 2019, which was followed by “Appreciating Plurilingual Competencies: Current and Future Perspectives” three years later. Finally, a third conference took place in June of 2024, entitled “Thinking, practicing and living plurilingualism” (cf. Colloque Brno 2019, 2022 and 2024). All these academic events highlight the Language Centre’s considerable pedagogical experience, supported by a solid research base.

2. At this point it is convenient to underline the importance of the format of the CLIL courses, i. e. Content and Language Integrated Learning Courses, promoting particular approaches to language education that involves teaching various subjects through a foreign or second language, simultaneously developing both content knowledge and language proficiency (cfr. Bentley, 2010). This approach, tailored for university students, became an integral part of course preparation, aligning with plurilingual and pluricultural approaches.

Presentation Skills”, was based on the principles of plurilingual and pluricultural education (cf. CEFR, 2020). This pilot course was considerably successful and has therefore since then been included in the regular university course offer.

There is also another fact to be mentioned. Due to differences between the Czech and Ukrainian educational systems for secondary and especially higher education, teachers encountered numerous Ukrainian students in classrooms whose needs differed quite substantially from those of Czech and Slovak university students. Many of the specific needs were related to the fact that the incoming students from Ukraine were relatively young, some aged only 16 to 17. According to the Czech educational system’s set-up, students coming to the University are usually between 19 and 21 years old, thus two to three years older than the Ukrainian students. Such age gap may seem minor or insignificant, but practice has shown otherwise. Young people at the age of 16 are often experiencing turbulent personal development, which the trauma of war can compound. Such circumstance also represented a new situation for the teachers, which could not be ignored.

In this context, it is necessary to highlight an important fact related to the traumatic circumstances under which students from Ukraine came to Masaryk University. As stated by Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth of the European Commission: “Schools and higher education institutions have a key role to play in ensuring refugee learners’ return to stability and in helping to alleviate their psychological stress.” (2022, 3)

Here it is important to emphasise that Czech Republic had no previous experience with receiving large numbers of war refugees, and therefore its educational institutions were not prepared for such situations. On the other hand, as the role of schools in the social sector is constantly expanding, substantial reforms have already been underway. However, it is evident that further re-evaluation will be necessary. The Czech educational system is already facing an imminent need to deal with these global challenges and introduce inevitable innovations in all spheres, including the area of language education.

Academic and Social Contexts of Projects for Ukrainian Refugees

Masaryk University has always been very responsive to society’s needs, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when its Volunteer Centre *MUNI pomáhá – MUNI Helps* was founded in order to provide material aid, social and psychological support, and other assistance to the general public (cf. MUNI Helps, 2023). This high-level social commitment was later confirmed within the context of the war against Ukraine. Masaryk University promptly responded to the situation, extending aid to Ukrainian citizens in humanitarian crises. This help and support at a general level addressed all persons in need and provided them with material aid or counselling (cf. MUNI Helps Ukraine).

In parallel, at the level of the university environment itself, similar aid was also directed towards students and academic staff. This support initiative involved the development of specialised courses tailored to the needs of Ukrainian students. At the same time, opportunities were provided to academics, researchers, and others seeking job placements. Once the official decision had been made and the rector had defined the main framework for assistance

to be provided by Masaryk University, teachers and educators decided to implement new approaches, different methodologies, and diverse strategies in their courses. Occasionally, these new strategies included co-teaching and the tandem format, enabling teachers to effectively collaborate and benefit from their combined strengths and synergies. This was also the case with the aforementioned course, *Development of Communication and Presentation Skills*, because one of its pluses is precisely the fact that the two educators involved come from different academic fields: one is a philologist specialised in teaching foreign languages, while the other is a psychologist. Another favourable factor to be mentioned is that while the language teacher comes from the host country, where these students, who are refugees, are currently residing, the other educator is herself a Ukrainian war refugee, who works as a psychologist providing support to students from Ukraine now studying at Masaryk University.

The simultaneous involvement of two different teachers in a new course focusing on communication and presentation skills for Ukrainian war refugees was of considerable importance given the unique and sensitive nature of the students. In this regard, it was essential that one of the tutors was specialised in CLIL courses, with a particular emphasis on developing a variety of skills and competences. This expertise ensured the students received quality language instruction using plurilingual approaches and equipped them with tools to improve their communication skills.

It was equally important that the second lecturer was a Ukrainian psychologist who was herself a war refugee. Thus she brought the invaluable dimension of her own experience to the course. It is worth noting that this educator was a beneficiary of the help provided by Masaryk University in the very first moment, when career opportunities were offered to those affected by the war in Ukraine (cf. Masaryk Helps Ukraine, 2023).

Given the traumatic experiences the young Ukrainian students had faced, the role of the Ukrainian educator and psychologist in this course was essential. Although the course was not primarily designed as a psychological aid, it nevertheless fulfilled this function. The psychological supportive aspect was crucial, even though it was not explicitly stated in the course objectives, as it facilitated students' emotional well-being, stress management and overcoming of difficult past experiences.

As a result, the course pursued a double goal: to provide students with language and study skills while offering them the means to manage their emotions, cope with stress, and address the psychological consequences of their traumatic experience. This dual focus was essential for fostering the students' development and well-being, as it allowed them both to improve their language skills and communication competences and at the same time to strengthen their emotional resilience. They had to adapt to new conditions in their host country and cope with their unfamiliarity with the language and cultural and social environments. In addition to all this, there are the demands of studying at university and the need to adapt to new teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the involvement of a Ukrainian psychologist in a teaching role was essential to ensure the effectiveness of the course and to address the specific needs of the students.

Course Preparation and Organisation

The combination of the above-mentioned factors enabled the educators to take into consideration all the special needs of their students and to prepare a new tailor-made course with a fixed syllabus and well-defined lesson plans. Given the pluricultural focus, the topics concentrated on the cultural and social aspects of different societies, but at the same time students were provided with ample space to bring their own suggestions for topics that interested them and that fitted within the outlined framework. The syllabus of the course thus included topics related to a wide range of issues, such as cultural differences in etiquette and conduct manners, body language, and cultural stereotypes.

Three languages of instruction were officially established in the course, namely English, Czech and Ukrainian. As Slavic languages, Czech and Ukrainian are close to each other such that the linguistic distance is relatively small but this affinity can have certain pitfalls. That is why students were invited to observe similarities and differences specifically between these two languages. As the distinguished Czech linguist Vladimír Skalička stated already in the middle of the 20th Century: "If we get to know our own language thoroughly, we will be able to penetrate more deeply into foreign languages." (Skalička, 2004). Here it may be necessary to mention another remarkable and unusual situation related to the course. Many of the students from Ukraine came from originally Russian-speaking backgrounds, and therefore their mother tongue or first language was Russian, not Ukrainian. However, under the impact of events related to aggression and war, they decided to consciously abandon Russian, and choose the Ukrainian language for everyday communication with their friends and family instead.

Seventeen students enrolled in this new CLIL course, and they were divided into two seminar groups, in which classes were mostly held in parallel. Every week teachers alternated between the seminar groups, which were intentionally small given the particular format. During the semester, however, four joint workshops were also scheduled—two at the beginning of the course and two at the end—in which both seminar groups participated together and the teachers conducted the activities in tandem.

At this point it should be emphasised that the course was attended exclusively by Ukrainian students, though this does not mean they represented a homogeneous group. The students had diverse educational backgrounds and were enrolled in various programmes at the different faculties of Masaryk University. Most students came from the Faculty of Social Studies, represented by 7 students, and this was followed by the Faculty of Computer Science with 6 students. There were 3 students from the Faculty of Economics and Administration, 2 students from the Faculty of Science, 2 students from the Faculty of Law, and 1 student from the Faculty of Sports Studies.

The confluence of all the aforementioned factors were foundational to the course design. Apart from the determination and desire to contribute to the urgent need to prepare a specialised course in the shortest possible time, designed for a specific group of students from Ukraine, another challenge was the imminent need for flexibility and especially for the synergy of both teachers, based on close cooperation not only during the preparation of the course, but also during its actual implementation. As in any other course, an emphasis was

placed on a high-level curriculum corresponding to university standards for content-based teaching. Given the circumstances in which the teachers found themselves, however, it was necessary to choose a flexible model of teaching in which the context was adapted to the human resources and not the other way around. Therefore, the main objective was the development of various skills, including communication and presentation skills, as well as the acquisition of specific knowledge, rather than the improvement of linguistic competences in the languages of instruction, as these were clearly secondary objectives. Consequently, plurilingual approaches and the use of microactivities were favoured.

In this regard it is necessary to point out that the concept of microactivities refers to small, targeted learning tasks or activities that are designed to focus on specific learning objectives or skills within the broader educational process. These activities are typically brief and aimed at engaging students actively in the learning process. They often involve short tasks, exercises, discussions, or problem-solving activities that allow students to practise, apply, or reinforce specific concepts, knowledge, or skills. Microactivities are intended to be concise, targeted, and easily integrated into larger lesson plans or learning modules to enhance understanding and facilitate active learning. According to some researchers (cf. Mills, 2019, Lang, 2016), there are several reasons why microactivities are considered very helpful tools for teachers. Firstly, it is thanks to the fact that these formats of small engaging activities enable educators to check how well students learn concepts or master skills. Secondly, they help learners remember information better in the long run (cf. Mills, 2019).

Another advantage of microactivities is that they can be strategically employed at any moment during a lesson to optimise learning engagement and reinforce comprehension. This is the reason why the preparation of the lesson plans was constructed with microactivities as essential and strong components. At the beginning of a lesson, the microactivities were ideal warmers to set a conducive learning atmosphere, stimulate previous knowledge, and prompt student engagement. These activities included brief brainstorming sessions, riddles, polls, and even discussions.

During the lesson, microactivities served to sustain student attention and concentration. Short exercises or quick discussions were incorporated to re-energise and refocus students as needed. Additionally, microactivities were introduced as a transition element to smoothly shift between lesson segments, ensuring the flow of the content. Similarly, upon lesson completion, feedback microactivities were implemented to evaluate comprehension and solidify learning. The list of microactivities to wrap up a lesson included exit tickets, reflective writing, and brief discussions that aided in assessing students understanding of the day's lesson. This strategic use of microactivities was included to engage students, sustain their focus, and assess their comprehension, thereby contributing significantly to an effective learning environment.

Content Implementation

At the beginning of the course, the concepts of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism were introduced to the students. An initial survey was conducted wherein students were invited to answer simple questions that allowed the teachers to create an accurate pedagogical diagnosis of the group needs. As the answers revealed, most students had no previous ex-

perience with a plurilingual approach (see Fig. 1). Thus, the very first step consisted in presenting the concept of plurilingualism as such and explaining that it was going to be applied in the same way as it is defined in CEFR (2020).

Do you have any previous experience with plurilingual approaches in your previous studies?
17 answers

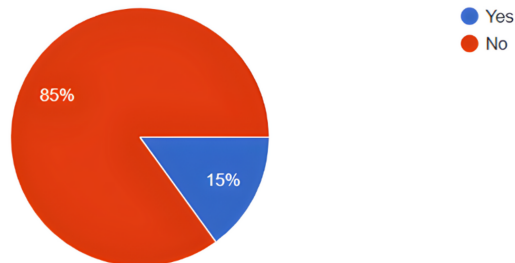


Figure 1: Question regarding students' experience with plurilingual classes. Semester Start. Source: the author, 2023

The second question in the survey was centred on the language repertoire of the students (see Fig. 2). Further discussions during the semester revealed, however, that students tended to underestimate their competence in other languages. In this regard, there was a constant need to encourage students, motivate them, and especially convince them that their potential mistakes did not obstruct effective communication, because in given situations they were irrelevant. As a result, students finally abandoned the idea of the high proficiency concept as a necessary requirement for successful active communication.

In how many languages are you able to communicate, i.e. understand the information being transmitted, and respond, even if it is only in a very simple way?
17 answers

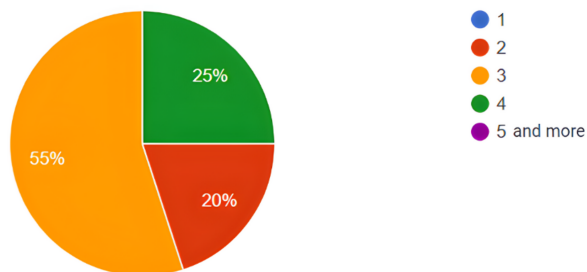


Figure 2: Question regarding students' linguistic repertoires. Semester Start. Source: the author, 2023

During the course, the axis of each lesson consisted of exercises based on the concept of microactivities, which targeted one specific phenomenon or topic at a time. The microactivities lasted from 5 to 10 minutes and by their nature allowed for natural code-switching in a non-invasive way. In this regard, it was important for the teachers to know what the students' attitudes towards swift changes of languages were. The third question in the survey revealed that 15% of students were willing to accept code-switching as a communication strategy, while for 35% of the group it was a challenge they were likely to accept depend-

ing on the circumstances, and 50% of students would prefer to avoid such situations (see Fig. 3).

What is your attitude towards language code-switching within one communication situation?

17 answers



Figure 3: Question regarding students' attitudes towards code-switching. Semester Start. Source: the author, 2023

The lesson plans were structured in a way that permitted working with the basic concepts, which were presented through various microactivities arranged in a predetermined order. Several microactivities were then linked together, allowing the relevant topic to be viewed in a holistic way, and from different perspectives. This gave the student a complete picture of the reality in question, which could be perceived in relevant real-life contexts. Thus, the alternation of languages, which was based on thoughtful code-switching, was not motivated only by a mere intention to provide reasonable opportunities for language practice.

At the end of the semester, students were given an identical set of questions they had already answered in the opening seminar of the course. Some of the answers yielded quite intriguing results. In particular, the students' answers to the question regarding the number of spoken languages differed from those received at the beginning of the semester. On this second occasion students reported an increased number of languages they were able to speak or understand (see Fig. 4).

In how many languages are you able to communicate, i.e. understand the information being transmitted, and respond, even if it is only in a very simple way?

17 answers

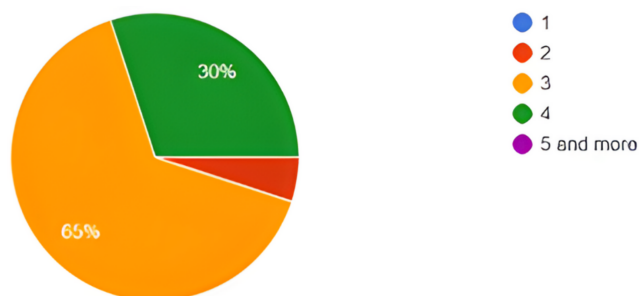


Figure 4: Question regarding students' linguistic repertoires. Semester End. Source: the author, 2023

In the follow-up discussion, they clarified that in the first questionnaire they did not include in their repertoires those languages they considered knowing to a lesser extent (see Fig. 1).

The aim of the two-part survey conducted at the beginning and the end of the semester was to explore students' opinions about their own language repertoires and their attitudes towards code-switching. The findings revealed interesting shifts over time.

At the beginning of the course, 55% of respondents reported being able to communicate in three languages, 25% reported proficiency in four languages, and 20% reported proficiency in two languages. At the end of the semester, a remarkable change emerged as 65% of respondents declared to communicate in three languages, while 30% expressed the ability to communicate in four languages, and only 5% remained limited to two languages. This shift suggests that the plurilingual and pluricultural course may have stimulated growth in language skills and contributed to the fact that students reconsidered their own view of their knowledge of those languages they were less proficient in. As a result, this academic course experience may have encouraged students to expand their language repertoires and plurilingual awareness (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 4).

As for the results concerning code-switching attitudes, the first survey revealed a wide span of positions. At the beginning of the course 15% of students were willing to accept code-switching and perceived it as unproblematic, 35% of students accepted code-switching depending on the situation and considered it a manageable challenge, while 50% would avoid it whenever possible.

In contrast, the second survey conducted at the end of the semester revealed an interesting change related to this particular question. An overwhelming 85% of respondents were now open to code-switching without any reservation, with only 5% declaring that it depended on the situation, and 10% continuing to resist the practice and avoiding it (see Fig. 5).

What is your attitude towards language code-switching within one communication situation?
17 answers



Figure 5: Question regarding students' attitudes towards code-switching. Semester Start. Source: the author, 2023

This shift in attitudes towards code-switching indicates the potential impact of the course. It suggests that the experience with the plurilingual and pluricultural course may have played a key role in promoting more positive attitudes towards the use of multiple languages in a single communication context. In fact, this is in line with the course objectives, which emphasise practical exercises and plurilingual awareness, promoting students' linguistic flexibility and encouraging them to make use of all the languages that form part of their repertoires.

Plurilingualism via Microactivities: Examples of Best Practices

As mentioned above, the concept of microactivities was crucial for this course because in the context of CLIL classrooms with a plurilingual approach it has proven to offer substantial advantages. These concise and dynamic exercises helped significantly to enhance learning in several important ways. First and foremost, microactivities excelled at capturing and maintaining students' attention, which was challenged due to the fact that the lesson was scheduled for late afternoon. The short duration of the microactivities and their interactive nature kept students actively engaged. This aspect was especially valuable in this CLIL course, where students needed to focus on both content and language aspects simultaneously. Moreover, microactivities proved to be considerably effective in all phases of the learning/teaching process, including acquisition of knowledge and skills, reinforcement of proper retention of important concepts, and capacity to recall all sorts of relevant information. All of this happened in a natural way allowing for effective communication free from inhibitions and limiting factors.

Additionally, these brief activities substantially promoted the development of fluency. By encouraging students to use the language in practical situations, microactivities helped them develop language skills in a natural way. Microactivities also supported personalised learning, which was one of the key aspects of the plurilingual approach. As mentioned above, in both seminar groups there were students with various language repertoires. That is why tailoring activities to individual needs ensured that learners received the necessary support for both content and language acquisition.

For teachers, the flexibility of microactivities was another compelling feature because it enabled incorporating language learning into content instruction without disrupting the flow of the lesson. Furthermore, microactivities were designed to focus on communication and presentation skills as well as specific language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, the integration of microactivities enriched the learning experience in many ways and supported the effectiveness of the plurilingual approach.

An example of a particularly useful microactivity is pair matching, used in a lesson dedicated to cultural differences that turned out to be very convenient. The lesson topic was dedicated to world cuisines, typical national dishes, and cultural differences in eating habits. The microactivity can be carried out in different ways. In this CLIL course, the teachers opted for the collaborative format. Students were arranged in small groups, and they had to match images of typical dishes with their corresponding names or descriptions provided in various languages. The material was printed, but it also works well with electronic formats. In the latter case, it is recommended to use online collaborative tools like Padlet or Jamboard. Overall, this activity contributed to increased engagement, reinforced language retention, and initiated cultural exploration. It also provided an opportunity for students to use their language skills in practical contexts.

The second microactivity with a cultural topic encouraged students to explore the complex world of table manners and etiquette across diverse cultures. By researching and presenting on the dining customs associated with chosen dishes, students not only enhanced their language proficiency but also gained insights into the importance of cultural awareness.

The integration of these plurilingual microactivities served as a suitable pedagogical approach in this CLIL course. These activities fostered not only language skills but also cultural understanding and opened dialogues about diverse perspectives. Thanks to exploring differences in culinary traditions and table manners, students engaged in meaningful discussions where they were forced to make effective language use. At the same time, they could broaden their horizons by discovering other cultures through gastronomy.

Meaningful and conceptualised incorporation of such microactivities proved to be essential. These activities provided opportunities to emphasise plurilingualism and cultural sensitivity. They also offered a practical and accessible means to promote language proficiency and intercultural competence.

As mentioned before, plurilingual microactivities turned out to be an extremely powerful tool for teachers seeking to develop culturally aware students.

Regular Feedback

Continuous and regular feedback after each seminar also proved to be beneficial. It allowed comparison between seminar groups and enabled possible adaptations to the specific needs of each group. Exit tickets were, in fact, a sort of a very useful microactivity that served as a valuable tool for collecting feedback at the end of every class. They provided students with a chance to showcase their comprehension of the lesson's content, and at the same time they also allowed teachers to confirm the achievement of teaching goals.

While the exit ticket by Socrative that was used in this course had instructions in English, the students were encouraged to use any language from their repertoire. Some students actually preferred to answer in Czech (see Fig. 6).

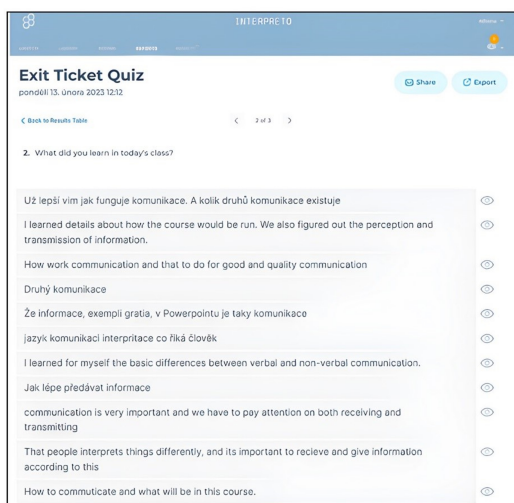


Figure 6: Socrative Exit Ticket. Source: the author, 2023

Moreover, there is another advantage to be highlighted. Regular feedback helped students set achievable goals and monitor their progress. This was very significant for these students

who found themselves in unfamiliar academic environments. We should also mention that this is closely linked to self-assessment, i.e. the ability of learners to make use of a wide variety of mechanisms and techniques through which they define and monitor their own learning progress. In this regard, however, it is crucial to keep in mind some important aspects of self-assessment, especially those emphasised by Heidi L. Andrade: “This learning-oriented purpose of self-assessment implies that it should be formative: if there is no opportunity for adjustment and correction, self-assessment is almost pointless.” (2019)

In this course, continuous feedback elevated the educational activity, giving it an additional meaning in the larger context. As a result, regular feedback turned out to be a greatly useful means that helped students and teachers evaluate the learning/teaching process at any stage. At the same time, it made the learners reflect not only on the fulfilment of the intended or declared goals but also on other circumstances outside the core focus but nevertheless extremely important for the learner. Last but not least, in addition to fostering students’ academic development, regular feedback also attended to their specific needs, promoted cultural awareness, and encouraged a supportive and welcoming learning environment.

Tandem Teaching Experience

As mentioned above, this course for a specific group of Ukrainian students implemented in 2023 was organised in such a way that two teachers with different expertise were involved in tandem teaching. The tandem seminars were always designed in order to make the most effective use of the presence of both teachers. The language teacher focused on activities aimed at developing communication and presentation skills that inherently support competences such as collaboration, self-expression and communication. At the same time, the teacher-psychologist provided students with assessments that went beyond pure language learning, addressing students’ emotional intelligence, resilience and self-awareness.

In practice, the main part of the seminars had a workshop format with different types of activities dedicated to a specific topic. The students worked on a particular assignment that was generally divided in three steps. The first step always consisted in independent work, such as analysing texts or videos provided in one language and summarising the main thesis and formulating their own value position on the issues raised in another language. The second step was based on working in pairs or groups of three, where students both compared their summaries of the main points and checked their level of understanding of the texts or speeches. Here, space was also reserved for mediation. This stage was followed by an exchange of points of view on a given topic, question, or issue in order to formulate common conclusions. The third step was a whole-class session where students in pairs and groups of three presented their conclusions to their classmates. This part of the activity was open to creativity, as students were encouraged to use different formats for their presentations, such as mind maps, handmade posters, infographics, comic strips, or the like. Finally, there was a discussion. It should be noted that students could choose the language while presenting or discussing. This pedagogical scenario contributed to develop transversal competences such as intercultural communication skills, cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity.

As to the precise involvement of the two teachers in the seminar, it proceeded as follows. When working with the whole class, the teachers continuously took turns and complemented each other, particularly when presenting the main topic or assigning tasks. However, the main part of the seminars consisted of workshop activities, where both teachers worked in parallel, each with a different group of students. The arrangement proved to be crucial for the assessment conducted by the teacher-psychologist, who could work with the students individually or in pairs. Such an approach was especially appreciated by students suffering from excessive stress, nervousness, or anxiety, which was manifested, among other things, when they had to present in front of the class and when the attention of their classmates was focused on them. Thanks to these arrangements, the teacher psychologist could provide targeted and individualised guidance and specific recommendations tailored to the particular needs of each student.

As an illustrative example, the workshop on cultural differences in the context of body language and facial expressions can be mentioned. On that occasion students were given various texts, either in English or Czech, which mentioned specific examples of the meaning of particular gestures and facial expressions used in different countries around the world. Students were asked to read the text individually and then summarise the main ideas using a language other than that of the source text.

Since the discussion on facial expressions included the reflection of different emotions, the teacher-psychologist was able to converse with the students in a natural way also about their own feelings, asking about how they managed their emotions in particular situations or which moments they found particularly challenging and why. Within this conversation, the teacher-psychologist could then sensitively provide support and give specific advice, e.g. on coping with negative emotions and mindset changes.

The tandem approach to teaching adopted in this course thus allowed for the simultaneous addressing of a range of transversal competencies. During whole-class sessions, teachers complemented each other in different languages, presenting topics and assigning tasks, which enhanced students' ability to adapt to different learning styles and perspectives, promoting flexibility and adaptability. During workshop activities, where both teachers worked with different groups of students, individual guidance from the teacher-psychologist provided support tailored to students' specific needs, promoting individualised learning and self-efficacy. This was particularly beneficial for students experiencing significant emotional strain or unease.

Regarding this complex issue, it was particularly notable how easy it was to apply the plurilingual and pluricultural approach in this course. This should be seen in the light of the specific profile of the students, as it quite significantly led to a close blending of personal experiences. Indeed, very often students' perspectives on different cultural expressions of other societies passed through the filter of their own experience as a migrant or refugee. As students often stated, they could approach these realities from different perspectives, based on having to deal with different culturally conditioned realities on an almost daily basis.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the experience of the teachers supported by the survey results reveal the enormous potential of plurilingual and pluricultural education. During the course, students reconsidered their linguistic knowledge and as a result expanded their own language repertoires. Consequently, their attitudes towards code-switching evolved as well. Such courses clearly can enable students to get acquainted with the inspirational and practical aspects of plurilingual and pluricultural approaches in language education. This experience was significant because thanks to it students became aware of diverse linguistic realities and thus became better prepared for their university studies in the host country. At the same time, they gained greater confidence and developed their competence.

While pluricultural approaches are beneficial for all students, a special benefit can be observed in the case of the Ukrainian students, given that such approaches support inclusion. At the same time, the increasing awareness of cultural diversity allowed students to effectively implement a pluricultural view of the world around us while adopting a sensitive approach to cultural differences. Greater awareness of pluricultural education not only helps students with diverse backgrounds and specific needs to succeed but also promotes acceptance and helps prepare them to thrive in a constantly changing world with its many new challenges. At the same time, it helps students who arrived as refugees to succeed as citizens by fostering a smooth, natural integration and inclusion in the new society that has received them.

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Plurilingual Competence in a Child: A Case Study

Linda Krahula Doleží, Kateřina Müllerová

Abstract

In our study we would like to contribute to our understanding of plurilingual language acquisition in children by sharing data from our research involving spontaneous speech collection focusing on a 4-year-old plurilingual child whose mother tongue is Hebrew and who has been acquiring Czech as a second language as well as other foreign languages such as English, Spanish and French. We analyze the data in terms of interlanguage relations and believe that by observing the plurilingual repertoires and competences we can contribute to understanding how multiple languages acquisition works and apply this knowledge in all the fields related to plurilingualism including education.

Introduction

In this study we focus on a plurilingual competence in a child and understand plurilingualism¹ as “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner” (Companion Volume, 2020, p. 28). Plurilingualism is a term that encompasses various other concepts (Piccardo, 2022, p. 1) which may still be widely used depending on the field of research (for example multilingualism) including the term linguistic multi-competence. Cook (2016, p. 2) defines it as “the overall system of a mind or a community that uses more than one language”. Furthermore, and similarly, Dewaele and Pavlenko (2003) state that multi-competence is an “ever-changing and highly complex system. Parts of the system can be in equilibrium for a while, but an unexpected change in the internal and external environment, i.e. a change in the frequency or nature of the linguistic input, or a specific linguistic activity – such as the reading of a book or the watching of a film with an unfamiliar sociolect – can cause widespread restructuring with some ‘islands’ remaining in their original state” (Dewaele, 2016, p. 462 in Cook, Wei, 2016). In this paper we would like to gain an insight into such a fragile and highly dynamic system in a child who is getting familiar with five languages at a certain point of her life.

Methodology

In our research we had a unique opportunity to collect data in a naturalistic environment and in spontaneous situations. The data collection was accompanied with questionnaires that map the language acquisition that had happened before the research took place and that try to see how the languages of the child as well as the family work generally and not only in the situations captured by the recordings and to understand the family language policy. We used several approaches to gain data to see the whole picture. Family language policy and language development of the child were covered by a questionnaire that was filled in by both parents. Naturalistic linguistic data was collected for three months, usually twice a week for one to two hours, recorded on a mobile phone. Altogether 40 recordings

1. For a detailed terminology analysis see Piccardo (2018, 2022) and for various perspectives on terminology use see Busch (2021).

were gathered, the length of the recordings is approximately four hours and thirty minutes. The communication was spontaneous, usually connected to typical activities the child was indulged in, such as reading books, drawing and playing. Some recordings also contain conversations between parents and the child or between child and other members of the family, including a nanny, nevertheless, most of them capture dialogues between the researcher and the child. Data transcription was inspired by conversation analysis by Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sidnell, 2010). In the dialogues we use the first letter only to refer to its participants, i. e. K (Katka), A (Adele, the child and subject of this study), M (mother) and B (babička – Czech word for grandmother). The dialogues contain not only the linguistic material in square brackets but also the non-verbal, pragmatic or contextual information in double round brackets. The transcriptions of Hebrew recordings were Romanized.

Subject

The data we are presenting in this paper come from a research focusing on a four-year-old child born in 2017. Her family comes from Israel and has been living in the Czech Republic since 2014. Subject's younger sister and the subject herself were born in the Czech Republic. Her mother speaks Hebrew, English and Russian, her father speaks Hebrew and English. Both parents know a little Czech. The family visits their country of origin three times a year to see their relatives for two or three weeks. The grandparents speak Hebrew and English, however, they speak only Hebrew with their granddaughter. At home mainly Hebrew is spoken, only sometimes English to gain more practice in it. The subject had nannies that spoke Czech and English, they were both native speakers of these languages. At the time of the research the subject had a Spanish speaking nanny. When the subject was one-and-half-years old she started to attend a nursery school every day for six or seven hours where only Czech was spoken. English songs were sung on a daily basis too, sometimes the subject was confronted with object naming in English, for example when describing pictures. The child continued in a similar way in her kindergarten that she was attending at the time of the research.

Even though the aim of this paper is not to give an account of an overall linguistic development of the child observed², we would still like to present some pieces of information concerning the development of the multiple languages before the research started to get a context for our observations. The subject's first word was Hebrew, although her mother confronted her with Russian too via reading Russian books. The subject started to speak Czech at the age of 13 months. So, before the age of one year this child was in touch with four languages – Hebrew, Czech, English and Russian. At the age of three the subject started to acquire Spanish through being in touch with a Spanish speaking nanny and through a Spanish teacher. Ten months later the subject started to learn French. Her mother stated, nevertheless, that she had not heard her speak French so far. Parents estimate that the strength of the languages goes as follows – Hebrew (50%), Czech (20%), Spanish (15%), French (10%) and English (5%). Parents observe some influence of the strongest language – Hebrew – on

2. In the context of multiple language acquisition we believe in a highly individual approach to observed subjects as in Purkharthofer and Flubacher (2022).

other languages, mainly in the area of syntax. Mother also reported the influence of Czech on Hebrew, for example by adding the suffix “-ová”³ to Hebrew words. Furthermore, when the subject does not know a word in French, she compensates by using a Spanish or an English word. Czech is almost never spoken at home among the family members.

Data analysis

We decided to observe the language contact phenomena and include examples illustrating code-switching and the way the child is using her linguistic repertoire in interaction with her caregivers. We have discussed language contact phenomena in relation to language attrition concerning Czech as L3 in Doleží (2020) and also in this study we follow Manfredi, Simeone-Senelle and Tosco (2015, p. 286) in defining code-switching as the presence of lexical or sentential material belonging to different linguistic systems, provided that its different origin is still transparent in the speaker’s output. In literature three types of code-switching are usually distinguished – inter-sentential, intra-sentential and intra-word (Bordag, 2013, p. 17).

Code-switching – single words

There are various reasons for code-switching. One of the usual assumptions could be that code-switching is a result of deficits in language proficiency or cognitive control (Wei, 2016, p. 175). Nevertheless, we believe that it is not the case in example 1 below where the answer to a Czech question comes in Hebrew.

Example 1

1. K: a máš nějaký pastelky?
/K: and do you have any crayons?/
2. A: IMA ((zarazí se)) [já musím jít]
/A: IMA ((she stops talking))[I need to go]/
3. K: ((smích)) [mamka]
/K: ((laughter)) [mum]/

Some words have the right meaning and carry the corresponding emotional load only in some languages. Not surprisingly is the word “mother” expressed in the language of family communication and intimacy – that is Hebrew. Pavlenko (2005, p. 131), nevertheless, stresses that L1 does not necessarily mean “we-ness and intimacy” and L2 distance and detachment.

Similarly, some words may be representatives of other languages, for example of Czech as a second language. In the dialogue below, example 2, we can see the Czech word “lízátko” used as an answer to a question in Hebrew given by the child’s grandmother.

Example 2

3. Suffix “-ová” is a suffix that might be used for gender inflection or creation of feminines, for example “Merkel – Merkelová” or denotes one of possible endings of adjectives derived from nouns (Šimandl, 2017).

1. B: ((babička odchází do obchodu a loučí se)) bye
/B: ((grandma goes to the store and says goodbye)) bye/
2. K: bye (...) Adélko (.) řekneš babičce ahoj?
/K: bye (...) Adélka (.) will you say hello to your grandmother?/
3. A: ((sedí u stolu a maluje)) bye
/A: ((sitting at a table and painting)) bye/
4. B: ((mluví k A)) tesovevi lahh et happanim sheani ereh otahh?
/B: ((talking to A)) can you turn your face towards me, so I can see you?/
5. A: ((otočí se k babičce)) Bye bye
/A: ((turns to grandmother)) bye bye/
6. B: ma att rotsa sheani avi lakh behaftaa?
/B: what do you want me to bring for you, as a surprise?/
7. A: Lízátko
/A: lollipop/
8. B: ((zopakuje česky)) lizatko?
/B: ((repeats in Czech)) lizatko?/
9. A: lo (.) mits tappuim
/A: no (.) apple juice/
10. B: mits tappuim
/B: apple juice/

We could interpret this particular instantiation as a result of memory limitations or it might be the case that the child was lacking its equivalent in other languages, that is that the child did not have the corresponding term as it probably had not been confronted with it in the other languages' reality yet. Similarly, example 3 below. Again, possibly the fact that the English word came in the dialogue might be connected to regular activities concerning English in the kindergarten, in particular object naming when describing pictures.

Example 3

1. K: myslíš severní pól? (...) jo? (...) tam jak jsou lední medvědi?
/K: do you mean the north pole? (...) yes? (...) where the polar bears are?/
2. A: pingvíns
/A: penguins/
3. K: a (...) tučňáci?
/K: and (...) penguins?/
4. A: tučňáci
/A: penguins/

Code-switching – sentences

In the last example 4 we can see an interesting language use among the child, her babysitter and her mother. Languages used are Czech, English and Hebrew. The mother, the child and her younger sister speak Hebrew. English is a language common to all communication participants, and Czech to a certain degree, too.

Example 4

1. A: moje nová kamarádka se jmenuje Simonka ((prasknul balónek, mladší sestra pláče)
/A: *my new friend's name is Simonka ((the balloon popped, younger sister is crying))*/
2. K: ((do pokoje vešla matka)) the balloon (...) ((nemůže si vzpomenout na anglické slovo)) prasknul (...) i think she is scared
/K: *((mother came into the room)) the balloon (...) ((can not remember the English word)) popped (...) i think she is scared*/
3. M: ((mluví k mladší sestře)) bou navi kamma tishu (...) zeh lo bappeh shellakh nakhon?
/M: *((talking to younger sister)) let's bring some tissues (...) It isn't in your mouth, is it?*/
4. K: ((mluví k A)) prasknul balónek? (...) Míša se asi lekla že?
/K: *((talking to A)) did the balloon pop? (...) Míša is probably scared, isn't she?*/
5. A: ((mluví s K)) joo
/A: *((talking with H)) yes*/
6. K: hm
/K: *hm*/
7. M: ((mluví s K)) I'm so scared of this (...) because we had a story (when) the small girl who (...) and then (...)
/M: *((talking with K)) I'm so scared of this (...) because we had a story (when) the small girl who (...) and then (...)*/
8. K: hm
/K: *hm*/
9. M: ((mluví s K)) so (.) [balloons] (...) but there should be more pieces (.) right?
/M: *((talking with K)) so (.) [balloons] (...) but there should be more pieces (.) right?*/
10. A: ((mluví k matce)) (...) [popped popped]
/A: *((talking to mother)) (...) [popped popped]*/
11. A: ((mluví k matce)) ani imma ani lo roa atikhot!
/A: *((talking to mother)) mom, I don't see the pieces!*/
12. M: tserikhim limtso et shear haalakim shel habbalon hazzeh
/M: *We need to find the rest of the pieces of this balloon /*
13. A: osim avir veaz hu mitpotsets
/A: *We do () air, and then it burst ((she probably trying to explain situation with balloon))*/

Apparently, the child is able to use all three languages organically and sensitively. When speaking to her babysitter she used Czech. When talking to her mother, who had addressed the babysitter in English, she also uses English. Finally, when talking to her mother only, she switches to Hebrew. She also offers an English translation for the word “prasknul” which the babysitter could not remember in English.

Neologisms

Sometimes the outcomes of the language contact are unique items that are the result of the child's creativity and can be analyzed and understood in terms of intra-word code-switching as the word “salmonová” as an answer to “What colour is the butterfly?” The child combined an English word “salmon” with the Czech suffix “-ová”. The corresponding Czech expression would be “lososová” (salmon colour). Last but not least, the child also coined a new term

“vandéla” for which we have not found an explanation from the language contact perspective nor any evidence of its existence in other languages so that translation could be possible. This word appeared in a dialogue accompanying playing with magnetic blocks. The child discussed with the babysitter a picture of a castle.

Summary and conclusion

In this paper we could not cover a full analysis of the child’s linguistic development but we wanted to offer an insight into a small and probably transitory part of her linguistic trajectory involving five languages – Hebrew, Russian, Czech, English, Spanish and French. We tried to map the linguistic profile of the child and her caregivers at a certain point of time and to understand the family language policy. It is apparent, nevertheless, that the child’s profile is transitory and might not be true anymore (the research took place in 2021) as it is closely connected to age and the cognitive characteristics of particular phases of development and to the environment and people surrounding the child at a given time. This is one of the key aspects of understanding multiple language acquisition and maintenance – it is not static, it is fragile and highly individual depending on each individual trajectory (Piccardo, 2022, p. 2). On one hand all the languages seem to profit from the uniqueness of the preschool age and grow into the child effortlessly and as far as the parents can judge in a natural and undisturbed way. On the other hand, the child creates a unique system building on all the resources or languages available when she needs to do so. As a result, we can observe an amazing interplay between five languages which however never leads to miscommunication. Examples of code-switching might be considered as indicators of multi-competence and “can have positive and long-term effects on the multilingual language users’ well-being” (Wei, 2016, p. 175)⁴.

One of the key questions that bothers parents and caretakers is how to keep all the languages and prevent them from decay and attrition that is so quick and easy in children as opposed to adults (Schmid, 2011). Kopeliovich (2013, pp. 250–251) suggests that we should have “...unbiased attitude to diverse languages that enter the household and respect to the language preferences of the children”. The author introduces a “Happylingual” approach (2013, p. 273) which is described as a delicate balance between caregivers’ efforts to protect and cultivate vulnerable languages and avoiding futile fights against natural sociolinguistic forces that drive the children towards the stronger language. To gain more insight it would be great to analyze the language development from the longitudinal perspective and to observe the sibling interaction and acquisition of literacy too.

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4. Mertins (2020) also points out the benefits of using more languages in everyday communication and in particular code-switching.

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