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GREETINGS

From the Editor

Rod Bolitho, Norwich Institute for Language Education

This is the first issue of *Folio* for which I have taken responsibility, and I am still on a steep learning curve, so let me start with apologies for the delay in publication. I hope to get the journal back on track during the course of this year. It would also be remiss of me to start writing about the content of this issue without paying tribute to Jo Appleton, my predecessor. She made many improvements to the journal and it definitely grew in quality reputation under her stewardship. I'm also very grateful to her for all the help and advice she has passed on to me. I only hope that I can keep up the standards she set.

The articles in this issue are mixed in orientation but they do reflect some of the current trends in language materials writing, especially in the field of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). I have chosen to lead with an article from Paola Fogar in Italy on materials for CLIL drawn from the example of German-medium History and Biology classes in an Italian school. Paola has made some interesting principle-practice connections in her rationale for the materials and it would be interesting to hear readers' views on the angle she takes. The next article, by Leticia Goodchild, outlines a principled framework for CLIL materials design, and I have asked her to follow this up in the next issue with some samples of materials based on her framework. Sandra Lucietto, again from an Italian base, raises some very pertinent questions about approaches to materials preparation in CLIL, and here again, reader responses from other contexts would be of interest. The fourth article also has a strong cross-curricular dimension. Sara Walker's perspective is rooted in the very interesting Critical Literacy movement which was kick-started at the Hornby Summer School in Brazil in 2006. The materials she offers on the History of Slavery are innovative and potentially generative and they also tackle the vexed issue of developing critical thinking skills in language learners, an area which seems to be everybody's responsibility and nobody's when it comes to delivery of the curriculum. If I can get all the copyrights cleared I will be including a further contribution on Critical Literacy materials from Sara's colleague Chris Lima in the next issue.

The three remaining articles each come from different directions. In a welcome contribution from Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi makes a persuasive case, backed up by practical examples, for a stronger semiotic component in language learning materials. Nodira Isamukhamedova and Elena Volkova, much valued colleagues from my own involvement in projects in Uzbekistan, reflect on their development through the process of writing training materials for university English teachers. Finally, Michael Berman offers a sample of materials, with a commentary, which may look familiar but which have an added twist aimed at getting learners to think.

Our author in focus in this edition is Sue Mohamed, a good friend and colleague, whose perspectives on her career as an author in response to my interview questions make fascinating reading.

I am grateful to all the contributors for their patience and responsiveness. I would now like to throw open four invitations and one request to Folio readers:

1. Please let me know if you would like to write for the journal on any aspect of materials development, or if you know of anyone doing interesting work in materials who I could contact about a possible article.

2. I would like to include more book reviews in the journal. Please contact me if there is a book you would like to review, either about materials or actual materials.

3. It would also be good to have some dialogue in Folio so please write in with opinions about any of the articles in this issue.

4. Please also write to me if you have any feedback or suggestions about future directions for Folio.

5. Please tell your friends and colleagues about MATSDA and Folio. Both the association and the journal will gain strength from new people and new ideas.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you and to working on future editions of Folio. My next deadline for submissions is 31st May 2009.

Rod Bolitho

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GREETINGS

Greetings from the President

Dr Brian Tomlinson

Greetings from Langkawi and welcome to the sixteenth year of MATSDA and the twenty fourth issue of *Folio*. As you can see, we have a new Editor of *Folio*, Rod Bolitho. I'd like to welcome Rod to the post and to thank our outgoing Editor, Jo Appleton, for all the work she's put in to develop the high standard and good reputation which Folio now enjoys.

On January 24th and 25th we held a joint MATSDA/ ACELS Conference at the Teachers' Club in Dublin. The theme of the conference was Using Narrative in ELT and the plenary speakers were Annie Hughes, Michael Hoey, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Philip Prowse, Ivor Timmis and Brian Tomlinson. As always with MATSDA conferences the mode was interactive and the mood was convivial. The Irish audience, as ever, contributed positively and seemed to enjoy all the plenaries, as well as the thirteen parallel sessions offered by presenters from British and Irish universities. Ireland is becoming the second home for MATSDA and our last three main Conferences have been held there. However, we have been happy to accept an invitation from the University of York to host a MATSDA conference and our January 2010 Conference will probably be held in York.

Hitomi Masuhara and I will be returning to live in UK in July and we are hoping to run a MATSDA Materials Writing Workshop one weekend later in the year. As always the Workshop will be held in a country inn and will follow the magic formula of good eating, drinking, walking and materials production.

In recent years we've held MATSDA conferences in Japan and Spain and there are possibilities of MATSDA conferences in Brazil and Malaysia this year. If you would like to co-host a MATSDA Conference or Workshop or if you would like to suggest a theme for a Conference or Workshop, please contact me at brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com

Enjoy this issue of *Folio* and have a great year.

Brian Tomlinson

President of MATSDA

FOLIO 13/1

Tailor-made CLIL Materials for Beginners

Paola Fogar, Istituo Statale d'Istruzione Superiore "Malignani 2000", 33052 Cervignano Del Friuli - Italy

A lack of adequate communicative and academic competence in the target language may be considered an obstacle to the implementation of CLIL for beginners in a foreign language. According to Cummins (2001), second language learners acquire *basic interpersonal communication skills* (BICS) after two or three years of language learning and adequate *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) after at least 7 years. From the time spans Cummins mentions, we can conclude that beginners will not have sufficient academic language competence to learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language and this could lead to frustrating experiences for them as language users. However, this paper argues that CLIL learners, when given adequate language support through language-driven tasks, can tackle content-oriented tasks at an early stage of L2 learning. As Coonan (1999; 2002) points out, if we want to give our students a chance to succeed in CLIL we have to give them the tools for building up academic talk, which has to be developed from the beginning to the end of the learning experience.

In this paper examples will be given that show how to move beginners forward linguistically by letting them work (through different sensory channels) on tasks that promote students' communication skills and academic talk. The activities presented were tried out in the lower level of a secondary school (Scuola Media) in Italy and they refer to two CLIL projects in History and Biology in German which was the pupils' third language. The activities are based on teaching approaches particularly relevant to the development of both students' BICS and CALP. The materials are based on the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1997), on Task-based Learning (Nunan, 2004) and on resource-based learning (Dam 1993). These approaches allow the teacher to provide stimulating learning experiences which may be helpful to increase the 'exploratory' dimension in the CLIL class on the one hand and to increase the students' communicative skills on the other hand.

The above mentioned approaches are particularly suitable for CLIL with L2 beginners because they support learners in the comprehension of input, in intake processing and in output production by

a) giving students prompts for oral and written production (i.e. Lexical Approach),

b) guiding students to written and oral comprehension and production through task work (i.e. Task-based Learning),

c) giving each student the time he/she needs to process input according to his/her own learning style (Resource-based Learning).

Activities based on the Lexical Approach

In CLIL the lexical approach is a simple way to help learners produce oral and written output without anxiety. If the learners are given chunks in a structured frame, or if they can find out themselves the chunks they need for describing, analysing etc., they will produce meaningful messages earlier and with less effort. Using chunks and following the 'observe-hypothesise-experiment' sequence recommended by Lewis, students are potentially engaged in a conscious learning process which will lead them towards a certain degree of autonomy. Learners first observe chunks and collocations in a text, next they construct a certain general rule through inductive techniques (hypothesising), then they understand the structure of the chunks and eventually they use them actively, producing meaningful linguistic output. Like acrobats, CLIL learners begin to use the language with more courage because they feel guided and 'protected' by the 'net' of chunks or sentence frames. So they take the risk and speak (or write)!

Figures 1 and 2. show two examples of CLIL teaching activities in German which aim at stimulating the learner's oral and written production, providing help in vocabulary, morphology and syntax.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of how a subject-related task (i.e. identifying and describing animals) can be tackled with limited academic language competence: the use of chunks avoids the difficulty in the use of the prepositions *zu/in/auf/an* + dative case and, at the same time, allows the students to express themselves using subject-specific terminology. In Figure 2 the sentence frames support students when describing the nutrition chain of a particular biotope.

Figure 1: Frame for the description of an animal

Das ist ein/eine/ein .....

Der/Die/Das ..... gehört zu den
_ Säugetieren
_ Vögeln
_ Amphibien
_ Insekten
_ Fischen
_ Wirbellosen

Er/Sie/Es ist ..... cm/m/ groß - lang.

Sein/Ihr/Sein Fell ist kurz/lang (braun, schwarz...)

Seine/Ihre/Seine Haut ist feucht/trocken und (braun, grün ...)

Sein/Seine/Sein Gefieder ist braun / schwarz / bunt .....

Er/Sie/Es hat
einen langen / kurzen Hals – Schwanz - Schnabel

lange / kurze / dicke / dünne Beine

Er/Sie/Es lebt
in Asien / Europa / Amerika / Afrika / Asien

in der ganzen Welt

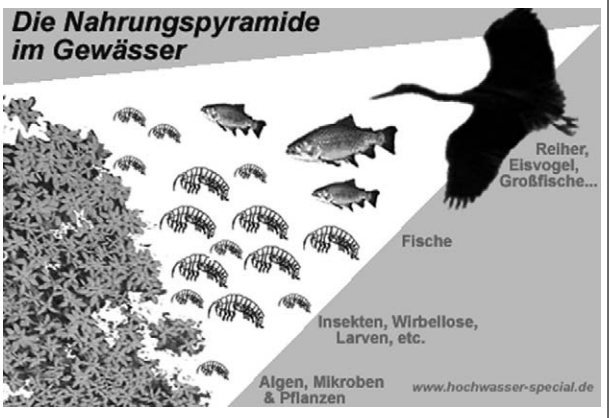
Er/Sie/Es lebt
_ allein
_ in Kolonien
_ auf dem Land, im Wald

Er/Sie/Es lebt / nistet
_ im Fluss, im Wasser
_ am Fluss, im Schilf
_ auf dem Land, im Wald

Er/Sie/Es ernährt sich von
_ Kleintieren
_ Fischen
_ Wasserpflanzen
_ Insekten
_ Plankton

Figure 2: Describing a nutrition chain/ completing a diagram

Arbeitsblatt 5



Beobachte das Bild und ergänze die graphische Darstellung der Nahrungspyramide:

▼

sind Sekundärkonsumenten,

und sie ernähren sich von

▼

▼

Diese sind Primärkonsumenten und

sie ernähren sich von

▼

▼

..... sind Produzenten.

Task-based Learning

If we want our students to experience success in CLIL lessons we should consider a wide use of task work. My experience as a CLIL practitioner leads me to support the hypothesis that working on tasks helps students master step by step both the content and the skills required by the specific subject. Well-designed tasks enable students to cope with the topic, making use of appropriate vocabulary, and to develop subject-related knowledge and competences at the same time. Cognitively demanding tasks require a practical approach, abundant context (both verbal and visual) and simple (but not simplistic) language. For beginners, language-driven tasks may be a possible solution: learners will communicate in the target language in the first phase and the vocabulary, the chunks and the language frames used by performing the task will be a good base for further learning activities. If task-work is used extensively children develop autonomy in the production of meaningful output and develop a 'can do' attitude which is crucial both for language acquisition and for content acquisition.

Figure 3 illustrates a way of making use of historical sources to get students to talk. The teacher shows a slide with a picture of the Gemma augustea and hands out a task-sheet in which the students find the

vocabulary and the structures for the description of what they see. It is a sort of frame in which the learners have to choose the right answer and by doing so create their own description of what they see on the slide. If students were only asked questions such as "Was sehen wir in diesem Bild?" (What do you see in this picture?) they would probably answer in Italian or they wouldn't speak at all. However, if given a task-sheet to work on, students answer the teacher's questions in the carrier language and produce meaningful oral and written output.

Figure 3: Making use of historical sources

Arbeitsblatt 1

Osserva l'immagine della Gemma Augustea e descrivila scegliendo l'opzione corretta.

Was ist die Gemma Augustea?

Die Gemma Augustea ist
ein Fresko /eine Kamee / ein Mosaik.

Die Szene besteht aus
zwei Teilen / drei Teilen /vier Teilen.

Oben sind *Augustus und Rom / Tacitus mit Freunden/ Wothan mit Freya.*

Unten sind *römische Soldaten/Hunnen/Römer und Barbaren.*

Die Gefangenen haben
kurze Haare / eine Glatze / lange Haare

und tragen *Hosen / eine Tunika / eine Jacke*

Sie sehen *fröhlich / traurig und müde/ gut gelaunt aus.*

Resource-based Learning

CLIL classes for beginners and young learners in general should address the learner holistically in all his/her capacities and abilities. Subject-related objectives can be reached more easily if teachers plan hands-on-activities which include task-work and which address different intelligences (Gardner 1993). In Resource-based Learning students can choose among a set of activities which involve various kinds of intelligences and suit different learning styles. The teacher hands out a worksheet on which all the activities are listed, along with the social form required by the task (individual work, pair work or group work) and the difficulty of the task. Resource-based learning is a good 'gym' for students because it requires and develops cognitve and procedural skills on the one hand and and social skills on the other hand. It presupposes a sufficient level of autonomy (Dam, 1995) as pupils must plan their learning experience by choosing and managing:

- the skill they want to develop;
- the social form of work (individual, in pairs, group work etc.);
- the number of exercises or activities they want to do in addition to the compulsory activities.

Moreover, students must be able to manage their time and to organise their work. The assumption of responsibility on the part of the learners has an immediate positive effect, since it arouses their self-esteem which is decisive for motivation. Students who are weak in second language learning and who are scared by exercises based on language knowledge/competence can profit from activities which address kinaesthetic or spatial intelligence.

Students can explore the new and challenging learning environment and construct their knowledge step by step if they work on tasks and come into contact with subject content and language through different codes (visual, verbal, etc.). CLIL classes should be a workshop, a place where children learn to use their learning material (realia, books, worksheets, copybook, dictionary, CD-ROMs and many other things) and where they can try out their personal skills by 'manipulating' language input through different sensorial channels in different social forms (individually, in pairs, in groups, etc.). If 11 year-old students who are studying History are asked to colour a historical / thematic map and then to place countries or peoples on it they will use more intelligences at the same time: spatial intelligence, kinaesthetic intelligence, linguistic intelligence. If they are asked to create a physical representation of the concepts of migration/invasion/integration in pair work or group work, they will use linguistic, kinaesthetic, spatial and interpersonal intelligence in an integrated way.

I now go on to list some concrete activities that were used in a History module for 11-year-old students. The concepts 'migration of the peoples' and 'the fall of the Roman Empire' were approached through:

a) slides showing geographical and historical maps, monuments, objects, jewels, landscapes, pictures or reconstructed scenes of old Germanic tribes etc.;

b) songs for vocabulary acquisition, e.g. the "Germanen Rap" put together by the teacher and performed by the children; this activity aimed at introducing new subject specific vocabulary like "kämpfen, eindringen, drängen, schützen, Reich, Länder" by singing a rap song. At the end of the activity the students completed a gapped exercise and a crossword puzzle to consolidate the vocabulary.

c) collective dramatizations, e.g. location of the historical events in space by means of a dramatization in which the students performed with their bodies the expansion of the Roman

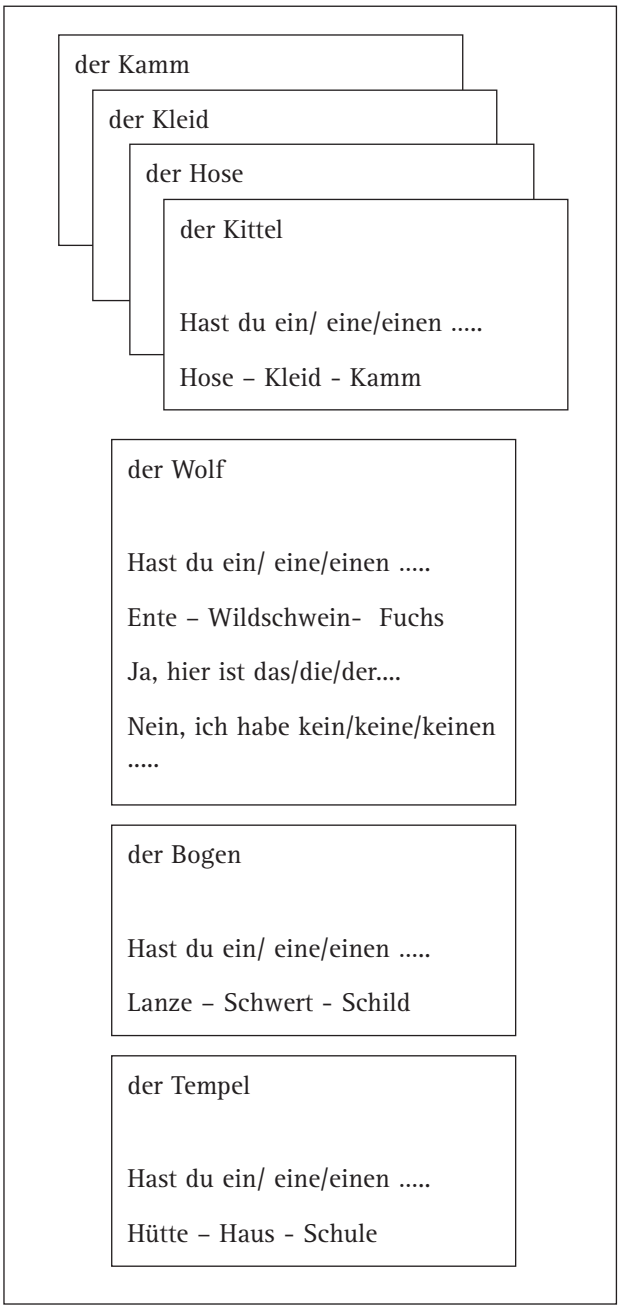
empire, the movements, i.e. migrations of Germanic peoples, the contacts between Germanic peoples and Roman soldiers, the Limes etc.;

d) colouring or completing maps, after having performed the historical events, by placing specific definitions, i.e. Römisches Reich, Limes, Westgoten, Hunnen, in the appropriate space;

e) colouring or completing thematic or historical maps on the base of a written text or of a web-site.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 below show further examples of practical activities, with brief comments, taken from History and Biology.

Figure 4: Happy families: Germanen-Quartett (Interpersonal, social, linguistic, kinaesthetic and visual intelligence)



This activity promotes oral production / interaction, because students have to ask for information and give affirmative or negative answers by using the following structures:

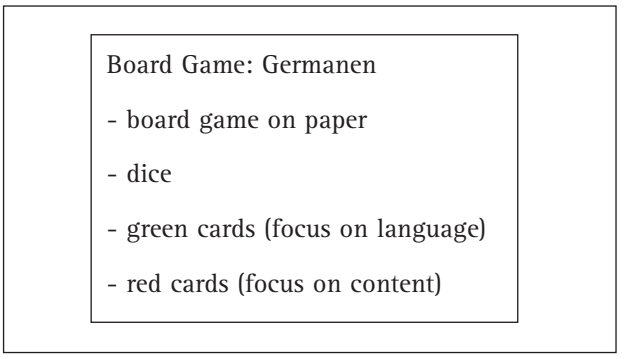
Hast du den Fuchs?

Ja, hier ist der Fuchs!

Nein, tut mir Leid, ich habe keinen Fuchs

Students revise vocabulary and practise the accusative case at the same time.

Figure 5: Germanen Board Game
(Interpersonal, social, linguistic, kinaesthetic and visual intelligence)



This board game was used to revise the subject content in a relaxed way. All the students wanted to try this game and they seemed to appreciate the fact that they could work in small groups, chosing the friends they wanted to work/play with. The competition between them was a guarantee for the accuracy in their answers. If they were not sure they would ask for the teacher's advice.

Figure 6: Ein Interview mit Sprechkarten
(An Interview with Cue Cards)

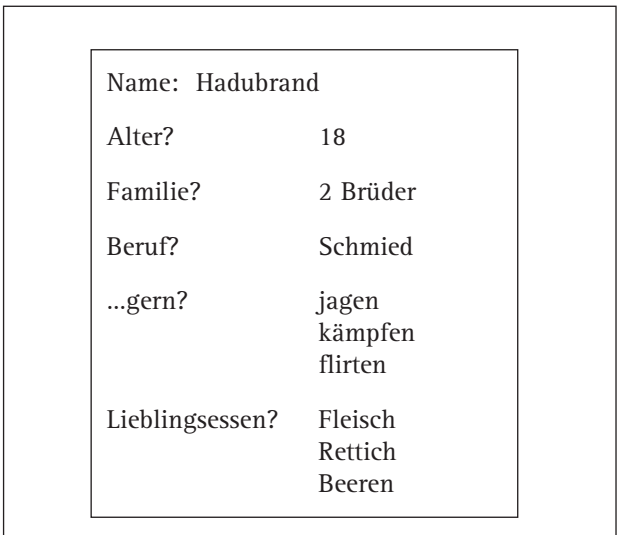


Figure 6 continued overleaf

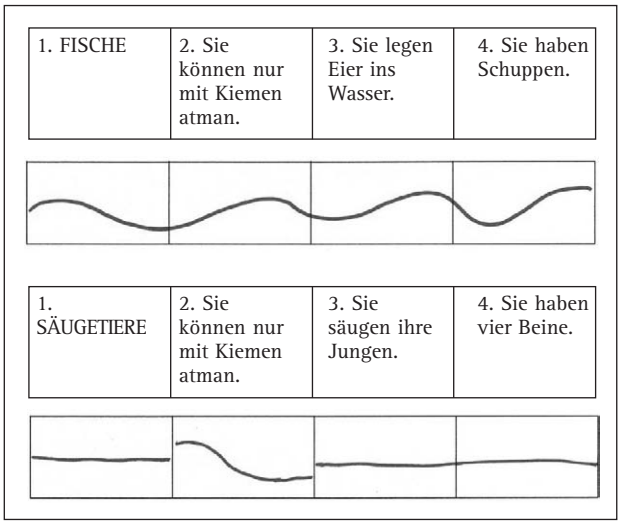
Figure 6 continued...

Name: Brunhild	
Alter?	16
Familie?	1 Sohn
Beruf?	Hausfrau
...gern?	kochen weben schwimmen
Lieblingsessen?	Eier Fisch Beeren

Per questo esercizio hai a disposizione una audio-cassetta, dove troverai il testo dell'intervista (solo le domande, molto distanziate l'una dall'altra per darti il tempo di rispondere), e alcune „Sprechkarten" in una busta. Leggi attentamente le informazioni e scegli il personaggio che ti piace di più, mettiti nei suoi panni e rispondi alle domande.

Activity for oral interaction between two students or between the student and the interviewer (cassette). The students had to answer some questions (recorded on cassette) by using the information given in the cue cards. They had time to write complete answers and to think about the possible questions before doing the exercise.

Figure 7: Describing animals (logical, spatial, visual, linguistic intelligence)



Students have to find four sentences for each kind of animal and put them side by side (the cards have numbers 1,2,3,4). Then they have to turn the cards: if the line is complete the exercise is correct, if the line is interrupted they have to look for the correct solution.

Conclusion

CLIL for young learners and beginners in L2/3 is feasible and effective if the teaching/learning activities are *cognitively challenging and language-driven, that is if students have to cope with cognitively demanding tasks which are context embedded and language-supported.* In this way students can profit from the best of both worlds: acquiring the content and the competences required by the subject (e.g. history, biology, etc.) while improving their communicative competence in the carrier language (in this case. German).

The positive effects of the conscious use of these teaching approaches by CLIL teachers are manifold:

1. Thanks to hands-on activities students learn both the language and the subject at their pace and according to their individual learning style;
2. Students seem to grasp the essence of language, i.e. its communicative/pragmatic function because CLIL classes based on task work increase the urge to communicate in the target language;
3. Through the use of chunks and sentence frames, together with mind maps and discourse organizers, students acquire a certain degree of autonomy and self-esteem as language users.

All these aspects contribute to developing a positive attitude that encourages an active role in their own learning process, one of the prerequisites for lifelong learning.

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Paola Fogar has been teaching German and English as foreign languages in the lower and upper level of an Italian secondary school since 2000. She has been trying out CLIL modules in German and English with 11-year-old learners and has developed CLIL materials to meet the needs of her students. She has a Ph. D. in 'Anglistik und Amerikanistik' and ‚Pädagogik' at the Alpen-Adria Universität in Klagenfurt (Austria). Thesis: *CLIL for near-beginners: a way towards plurilingual education.*

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A Pedagogic Framework for an Intercultural Approach to Literature

Leticia Goodchild, University of East Anglia

An intercultural approach to language teaching is the forward-looking paradigm of the twenty-first century in second/foreign language pedagogy. As a language teacher, I have ventured into challenging territories to explore the relationship between cultures through the use of literature with the aim of making visible the similarities and differences between members of diverse communities in our increasingly pluricultural and plurilingual world. This redefinition of language education in terms of cross-cultural and intercultural communicative competence (Buttjes & Byram 1990; Byram 1997, 2008; Crozet & Liddicoat 2000; Kramsch 1993) has led language educators to reassess the role of language teaching to integrate culture in more explicit ways. New learning goals and pedagogic approaches are now being conceptualised and framed for the integrated teaching and learning of this 'new (inter)cultural content' in the target language from the initial stages of language study. Accordingly, language teachers are now compelled to revise their methodologies for the introduction of non-language content in L2 using a more CLIL focused approach. There is currently a dearth of teaching materials, methods and approaches available for classroom implementation; thus this is an educational challenge that may be hard to translate into practicalities in the language classroom.

For the purposes of this article, I shall draw my understanding of 'culture' from linguistic anthropology which views culture as a process or a conversation transmitted or mediated by language. Culture is not static, but a dynamic process. As such, it cannot be taught as something 'out there' to be learnt as a set of facts in parrot-like manner. This type of teaching would only provide learners with an incomplete, decontextualised, stereotyped and misleading picture of the culture under study (Crozet & Liddicoat 2000). In my endeavour to move away from this narrow traditional view of language and culture teaching, I integrated Argentinian literary texts with intercultural awareness in my Spanish language classes in the British university sector, determined to establish dialogical encounters for the construction of new meanings. Street (1993) points out that 'culture is a verb', and as such, it is enacted every time we speak or write, in interaction between people who are separated culturally, historically, geographically and socially. In my teaching context, I contend that these intercultural conversations take place in an in-between third space (Kramsch 1993) where students cross borders to perceive otherness and explore their inner self.

Pulverness (1996) advocates a process-based approach to the development of interculturality through literature as opposed to a product-oriented teaching, whereby culture cannot be quantified and transmitted as a body of knowledge, but negotiated and constructed in every speech act. Accounting for this, I have adopted an approach which:

> *[...] is more interested in fault lines than in smooth landscapes, in the recognition of complexity and in the tolerance of ambiguity, not in the search for clear yardsticks of competence or insurances against pedagogical malpractice ... understanding and shared meaning, when it occurs, is a small miracle, brought about by the leap of faith that we call 'communication across cultures'. Language teachers are well aware of the difficulties of their task. But they often view these difficulties in dichotomous terms that unduly simplify the issues and prevent them from understanding the larger context. (Kramsch 1993: 2)*

Accordingly, I have striven to focus my teaching on creating a space for the construction of new meanings arising from the encounter between the native culture and the stimulus culture, rather than arriving at the interpretations made by native readers. I prefer to use the term *stimulus culture* (Lavery 1995) rather than *target culture*. It reflects more accurately this dynamic dialogical process implicit in the intercultural conversations language learners engage in, empowered by the privilege of their own very cultural outsideness (Kern 2000). In my multicultural teaching context, it is relatively easy to see the dialectal meaning-making power that foreign language students from diverse countries possess, as they participate in the co-construction of new ideas and insights dialogically about aspects of the stimulus culture.

A Suggested Framework for Materials Design

Fundamentally, this framework has been inspired by

Byram's work, and it presupposes the acceptance that culture can be accessed through a literary text. In every reading, the reader's culture acts as a filter through which situations, contexts, values, behaviours and notions are understood and interpreted. In other words, the reader's culture acts as the 'cultural glasses' through which learners construct new multifaceted meanings resulting from the negotiation of different perspectives. The principle underpinning the framework lies in the fact that foreign language educators are ideally placed to promote intercultural learning. Furthermore, I have conceptualised the framework to work with a task-based approach to materials design, whereby language and non-language content are integrated.

Through the use of the framework during materials development, lesson planning and delivery, I have become increasingly aware that the stages are not as clear-cut as I initially thought, and that they may overlap. For example, it is possible that whilst the students are completing a task for interpreting cultural values, they are comparing those with their own; or at times cultural information acquired for the preparation stage is used to comprehend the text. Nevertheless, the framework provides me with a series of steps that I believe scaffold learning from lower to higher order thinking skills, and progressively move learners from meeting to interacting with the other.

Preparation

In this *Preparation* stage the teacher identifies the intercultural learning potential of the literary text and leads students into the main cultural themes. Prior knowledge is activated in relation to the themes presented in the text. Where appropriate the teacher introduces new information and establishes a dialogue about key cultural content with the class. Students speculate about the themes in the text, research the socio-political context in which the text is set and relate themes to their own experiences and lives. The class engages in intercultural conversations in order to discover new viewpoints given by other class participants.

Comprehension

In the *Comprehension* stage, the teacher may provide a glossary of key terms and/or divide the reading task into manageable chunks to help students comprehend the text. It should be remembered that foreign language students are not the intended readers of literary texts, so there is a need for more scaffolding to ensure they are understood. The students demonstrate comprehension through a variety of tasks, e.g. questions, summaries, use of graphic/visual organisers, mindmaps, key information about content, poster production, etc.

Noticing

In the *Noticing* stage, the teacher designs tasks to raise awareness of selected (inter)cultural issues. This consciousness-raising exercise aims to identify cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, notions and behaviours that might otherwise remain unnoticed by the language learner. In unpublished data, Pulverness (personal communication) describes this process as 'virtual ethnography', whereby language learners engage in participant observation through textual fiction to understand 'otherness' mediated by one's own cultural practices and those of others. These 'noticing' tasks can also serve as a springboard for critical reflection or further insights into the cultural issues students have noticed.

Interpretation

In the *Interpretation* stage the teacher challenges taken-for-granted assumptions and notes down key ideas discussed and language used for later feedback. The students describe their own situation, life and experiences and provide thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) of their virtual and lived observations. They may share their autobiographical stories with others and compare them with those of their peers and characters or lyrical voices in the literary texts.

Comparison

In the *Comparison* stage the teacher sets tasks for students to relate, compare and contrast cultural beliefs, attitudes and values with their own or other cultures they have experienced. New voices are brought into the classroom through reading and/or listening texts of stimulus and foreign cultural groups exploring same themes. Cultural insights are explored in more depth through tasks designed to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar. Learners are encouraged to decentre and think like the other by juxtaposing their own cultural beliefs, values and attitudes with those of class members and new voices brought into the classroom. They find similarities and differences between cultures, reflect upon their own cultural practices, critically question their own assumptions and imagine the world of the other.

Action

In the *Action* stage the teacher provides students with the opportunity to undertake project work and to bring contemporary texts related to the themes and issues discussed. These texts can be, for example, of a journalistic nature, songs, poems, stories, posters or advertisements that the learners know about, search or write themselves. Students are encouraged to engage

in team work to develop their citizenship skills by building on the skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action. They may complete research-based learning tasks to explore a topic of current concern with the aim of acting locally, nationally or globally to make a difference in the lives of others. A portfolio of evidence can be built to show achievement.

Conclusion

It is generally claimed that literature contributes to cultural and intercultural learning, but this claim needs to be researched so that more defined conclusions can be made (Hall 2005). The framework outlined in this article evolved from my own teaching practice in my attempts to understand what, beyond the text, my students learnt in the widest educational sense. I sought to identify the pedagogic strategies that promoted more intercultural exploration through a process of reflection and action research. Crucially, I was concerned with the practicalities of my teaching, which necessitated the translation of theoretical concepts into a manageable pedagogic framework which I could use to create new materials and deliver my lessons.

Early in 2008, I was awarded funding from the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre LLAS (Language, Linguistics and Area Studies) to carry out pedagogic research to investigate the integration of literature for intercultural development. The study has provided me with unparalleled opportunities to develop my own theories of practice within which I now position my teaching. This article is a preliminary report on a suggested pedagogic framework, currently in progress and being applied to another cohort of Spanish language learners in the same British university. Far from being a prescriptive must-do framework, it provides guidelines in clearly defined stages for the progression of thinking and citizenship skills, and integrates current notions and concepts of cultural and intercultural learning. I welcome comments or observations from other language educators to assist me in the development and improvement of the framework in the second stage of the LLAS funded action research project.

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Writing Materials for CLIL: A lost cause?

Sandra Lucietto, University of Bolzano, Italy

Context

CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) is a relatively recent phenomenon, its acronym having been coined in 1994. The 'need' for CLIL was triggered by the European Union's insistence on achieving language competence in three languages (Mother Tongue + 2) for all citizens. CLIL was seen as a possible solution to the challenge of reaching a high level of competence in two modern foreign languages at school (Maljers & Marsh, 1999; Marsh, 2003). From the beginning, CLIL was meant to be a kind of 'bilingual education for all' in mainstream education, rather than a sophisticated choice for an élite or for 'A' students only. It was offered in order to develop plurilingual competence through increasing the exposure to a foreign language (one component of language learning) without modifying the internal organisation of the school curriculum.

Fifteen years have passed, and CLIL has developed differently in different EU countries: in some of them (e.g. Finland) it existed well before the acronym was coined and has undergone various phases; in others it is still in its infancy (e.g. Italy). From the outset, one of CLIL's major and most widely recognised challenges was finding suitable and appropriate materials. As time passes, and CLIL spreads in education systems all over Europe, this challenge is becoming more and more prominent, as more subjects are involved in CLIL in different grades in different countries. In spite of CLIL's rapid expansion, however, the issue of materials writing for CLIL does not seem to be widely explored in the literature yet, and when this happens, different authors have different views. Whilst Civegna, (2006) insists on the "authentic approach", i.e. using only authentic materials of all kinds as the basis for CLIL lessons, others (Lucietto, 2006; Lorenzo, 2008) put forward a more flexible perspective, allowing some adaptation/adjustment of authentic written texts to make them more accessible to students.

Against this scenario, developing one's own materials from authentic texts of different types for individual CLIL modules is still common practice. Unfortunately, off-the-shelf materials are still few and far between, and for teachers who want to introduce CLIL in their classes the only option is very often to create or adapt materials themselves (Lucietto, 2006, 2008; Mehisto et al., 2008). However, this does not seem to be sustainable in the future, as materials writing is at the same time a very time consuming and highly complex task, often too much for busy classroom teachers. If CLIL is to really take off, keeping its MT+2 promise, the need is there for published materials as well, which may be used in or adapted for different contexts, or alternatively to provide a basis which could be complemented by teachers' own materials if and when the need arises.

Quality CLIL materials: a largely unresolved issue

Here I want to pose (and answer) two questions that are in my view at the heart of the materials issue, and will continue to be for some time in the future, unless some unforeseeable, radical changes in the political agendas of many EU countries transform the situation in entire education systems, making CLIL part of the "compulsory" curriculum in one or more subjects.

Question 1: Who are the materials writers?

At the moment, materials for CLIL are developed by different people in different contexts. In many EU countries CLIL is still mainly a very localised phenomenon which has spread (and continues to do so) by means of an organic, grass-root process (Eurydice, 2006a). This is certainly true of Italy (Eurydice, 2006b), but not only. This means that there may be clusters of schools in one context that offer CLIL, whilst other schools in the neighbourhood are still waiting and watching, or tentatively trying to create the conditions for implementing it. In cases like these, materials are typically developed by voluntary teams of classroom teachers for their own classes, and sometimes exchanged with colleagues when personal relationships are good.

Only in very few countries is there a centrally-led CLIL programme, where a public institution has made the decision to help the implementation of a political decision by organising stable teams of materials writers formed by practitioners, trainers/consultants and CLIL 'experts', to develop a coherent set or materials specially thought for the national (or local) curriculum. One example of good practice in this (there may be others that do not immediately come to mind) is the work done by the Immersion Centre in Tallinn, Estonia, which has produced and made available on line more than 6,000 different worksheets/other materials for the whole primary and lower secondary Estonian curriculum (*www.kke.ee*) (Mehisto, 2007).

Publishing houses, national as well as international, have begun to show interest in CLIL, but as CLIL is not yet an established approach within one country, let alone within the EU, their attitude seems at the moment to be characterized by great caution. Most of them are probably quietly considering how to answer some of the following questions: For what sector of education should they publish materials? For what school subjects? For what age range? For what level of language competence as a starting point? It is not surprising that even the most daring publishing houses are tackling the issue with very good care: producing textbooks is extremely expensive and very time-consuming, and no one probably wants to engage in projects that may be proved wrong by political choices in only one or two years' time. One case for all: in Italy, the Moratti Reform introduced (September 2005) compulsory CLIL in one subject (in English) in the last year of upper secondary education (age 18-19). The subject was to be chosen by individual schools according to their own internal human resources, and CLIL was to last for the whole school year. Some months later, the government changed, and the next Minister of Education 'froze' his colleague's decision (May 2006). Now that we have yet another government (since April 2008) the decision has been 'defrosted', and teachers and educators are waiting for the next move. I imagine publishers may be doing the same.

Question 2: What principles do materials writers apply?

This is the one-million dollar question, as CLIL is not always understood as a complex approach where learners are doing two things at the same time - learning a school subject as well as the language of instruction - so the criteria that writers apply often belong to foreign language learning, rather than to CLIL's epistemology. Very good methodological guidelines are available from very significant and reliable sources (among others: Clegg, 2001, 2002, 2007; Marsh, 2001; Mehisto et al, 2008), and some are also freely accessible on line. All these authors recommend that materials should engage pupils in *tasks* that require *problem-solving* in *groups*, and applying *higher order* (as well as lower order) *thinking skills*. This stresses the concept that CLIL is not focussed on learning *the* foreign language but *through* the foreign language: the materials should focus on content, but should be accompanied by a set of language-sensitive activities, whose aim is to make the content tasks accessible to pupils who are still learning the language of instruction.

These principles, however, are proving easy to hear but difficult to process and digest by experienced teachers new to CLIL. When writing their own materials, they often tend to go for extremes: they either focus on the language *per se* (thus forgetting that CLIL is about learning *content*, as well as language), or they completely overlook the language problem, and resort to their traditional mode of teaching a subject, e.g. in many cases lecturing children, this time in a foreign language, and asking them to take notes from listening.

Nor are the examples that come from publishers often any more convincing. Some recently published 'CLIL' books for teachers, available in the international market, seem to pay little attention to the academic debate on CLIL, and propose language-driven, one-off activities disjointed from the curriculum and aiming at practising the language in 'quasi-real' communicative situations, which seem to belong to the field of language teaching rather than to CLIL.

Quality CLIL materials: some enabling questions

I have been involved in working with teachers to produce materials for their own CLIL modules for some time in the region where I live, at times working hands on with teams, other times reviewing what they have already prepared. To help the reflective process involved in producing tasks that are consistent with the overarching approach we *declare* we want to follow (i.e. the guidelines mentioned in response to the second question above), I have developed over the years a set of questions that have proved to be quite useful as *enabling tools* for materials writing, i.e. questions that invite writers to explore issues such as how to design tasks that 'mean something' and are clear, and how to assemble them in a sequence that is coherent and cohesive. Most of the questions are similar to the ones I would probably use in other materials writing contexts, but some are slightly different and are, so to speak, 'coloured' by the *interplay* of *content* and *language* that is specific to CLIL. Here are some of the ones I have used more often (Lucietto, 2008b):

- Is this content task clearly structured? (are phases clearly and correctly sequenced, for example)
- Is every step in the task necessary?
- Is every step in the task useful to understanding the *content concept* that learners are supposed to understand?
- Is the link between the stated objectives of the lesson/learning unit and this task clear?
- How many words do the learners already know in this text?
- What form of language support is best suited to the learners' needs, if this text is to become accessible?
- What is the best task sequence in this lesson?
- Is the language of these instructions clear? *(instructions do indeed seem very clear when the team is concentrated on developing their train of thoughts, but often look contorted and cryptic the*

following week)

- Does decoding the instructions take more time and effort than carrying out the task itself?
- If so, how can we rewrite the instructions avoiding unnecessary language?
- Are these assessment activities / tasks coherent with the stated objectives?

Questions specifically about testing and assessment tasks:

- Does this task test content or language?
- Do learners have enough language to carry out this task in the class test?
- How do we make sure we can understand whether a learner makes a content mistake in the test because s/he has not understood a concept, rather than because s/he doe not have the language to express it?
- If we can't, what else can we ask the learners to do, other than to produce written language?

These (and other) questions are answered together in a writing team, and more importantly, they do not produce simple "yes" or "no" answers. Every question focusses on the reasons why a task or a rubric can be considered well structured, useful, clear (or not, as the case may be). This process is not without pain at times, as happens when teachers have prepared tasks they consider OK which do not 'pass' later scrutiny by colleagues. Sometimes some materials are initially discarded and then used at a later stage. Sequencing and re-sequencing tasks again and again until the team is absolutely happy with the solution is a hard but rewarding process. Working in a team in this way has proved to be quite effective in avoiding at least the very basic mistakes that a person on her/his own is more likely to make.

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Critical Literacy: Looking at Slavery and Abolition

Sara Walker, Brazil (based on a workshop planned and conducted together with Chris Lima)

The context

From 1964-1985, Brazil was under military rule and freedom of expression was severely limited. After 1985, the return to democracy brought excitement and confusion. In an attempt to break away from the repressive centralizing tendencies of the military regime, there was a brusque swing of the pendulum towards what was perceived as democracy in education, sometimes with only a moderate degree of success. But at this time one of the main apologists of critical literacy, Paulo Freire, returned to Brazil. After years in exile, when he was then better known in Europe and the USA than he was in Brazil, he was sufficiently recognized to be made Secretary of Education of Sao Paulo from 1989-1991, in a Workers' Party (PT) government of Brazil's most powerful State.

During the years of repression in Brazil, education was a product. Today, the Ministry of Education has social inclusion as one of its main aims. Education is thus an instrument of social change. It is – or should be- a process rather than a product.

Critical Literacy in ELT: the Brazilian experience

The 2006 Hornby Summer School in Brazil, on the topic of "English as a Global Language and its implications for teaching and learning" brought Critical Literacy in ELT to the fore. One of the outcomes of the event was the '*Critical Literacy and ELT Project: Global Issues and Citizenship Education*', which was supported by ELTeCS, British Council Brazil, and the Centre for Studies of Social and Global Justice at the University of Nottingham. It generated seminars in Brazil and Peru, a booklet entitled '*A Brief Introduction to Critical Literacy in English Language Education*', published in October 2006, and a companion forum and website. The Critical Literacy & ELT Project was one of the winners of the 2007 British Council Innovation Awards.

What is Critical Literacy?

Critical Literacy (CL) is an educational perspective that focuses on the relationship between languages and social, historical, economic and political contexts. It is an approach that has its roots in social sciences, philosophy, linguistics and literary criticism. It sees language as a cultural construct and proposes the analysis of the relationships among texts, language, knowledge and society. It leads us to question texts - written, visual or oral - to assess the assumptions, values and beliefs that underlie the way texts are written, and also to question our readings of the texts and the world.

The Critical Literacy in ELT Special Interest Group was launched in BRAZ-TESOL in 2007. Its opening event coincided, by chance, with the celebrations in Britain of the Bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in March 2007. Here, surely, was a fascinating subject for a critical literacy workshop.

In my own mind, there was a wonderful link-up with slavery and exploitation in literature, with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which brilliantly tells the story of Mr Rochester's mad Caribbean wife in Jane Eyre in the context of a Caribbean way of life destroyed by the emancipation of slaves. Add in *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Gone with the Wind* and Tony Morrison's *Beloved*, for a rich variety of views on the enslaved and their enslavers. At the level of literary criticism Edward Said brought a concern for cultural imperialism in literature I had previously loved, and taught, without ever questioning the socio-economic foundations of 18th and 19th century Britain based to a considerable extent on the colonies, with their exploitation of the slave trade and slavery. This in turn led to some soul-searching over how far ELT cultural products may be culturally weighted in favour of the colonisers in Europe rather than the colonized in Brazil.

The theme of slavery, thus, links up with language, literature and current affairs and fits in nicely with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). There are also several ready made pedagogical sites dealing with slavery, in the context of school history teaching, which adapt well to intermediate or advanced ELT lessons. For university students, a literature workshop could easily be worked out on similar lines to the language workshop presented below.

Creating a workshop

The workshop first created for BRAZ-TESOL in 2007 has gone through several revisions and has been substantially edited by Chris Lima for future publication on the Learn English website. The general aim is to

provide upper intermediate/ advanced students of English with a lively discussion of the slave trade, slavery, abolition and the persistence of slavery in modern society. The critical literacy perspective comes from an attempt to create empathy by looking at many different possible perspectives on the topic. The aim here is not to present a pre-packed workshop which will be used as it stands, but to offer sources and ideas that teachers will adapt for themselves. The topic can be squeezed into a single class or developed over a series of lessons, projects and presentations.

Let us begin with some wise advice from Understanding Slavery, the educational website of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, UK:

'Use of Language: why language matters

Knowing how best to use the language associated with the history and legacies of the transatlantic slave trade can be complex. Many words are considered offensive and dismissive because they served to objectify the people who were enslaved and disregard the African perspectives on the history. Terms used when teaching slavery are very important, but, when used with careful consideration, historical and contemporary words within the subject can be discussed and analysed as part of the learning experience.'

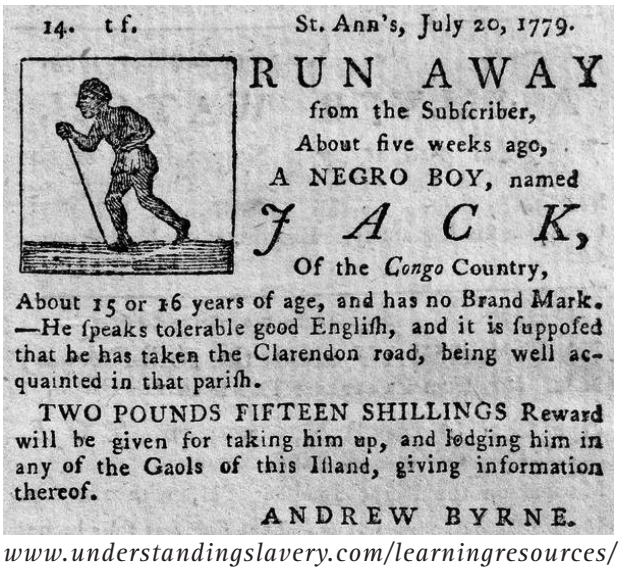
Our workshop outline

1. Setting the Scene

Discuss the following questions in pairs and then share your views with the whole group.

- What is your surname? Where are you from?
- Do you think your ancestors were slaves, or slave-owners, or slave-traders or none of these or all of them?

2. Activity 1 Setting the scene: getting a feel of things



14. t f. St. Ann's, July 20, 1779.

RUN AWAY

from the Subſcriber,
About five weeks ago,
A NEGRO BOY, named

JACK,

Of the *Congo* Country,

About 15 or 16 years of age, and has no Brand Mark. —He ſpeaks tolerable good Engliſh, and it is ſuppoſed that he has taken the Clarendon road, being well acquainted in that pariſh.

TWO POUNDS FIFTEEN SHILLINGS Reward will be given for taking him up, and lodging him in any of the Gaols of this Iſland, giving information thereof.

ANDREW BYRNE.

www.understandingslavery.com/learningresources/results/?id=1720

Role Play (in pairs)

A is Mr Byrne the slave-owner who placed this advertisement.

B is Jack, who has been found and brought back to his owner.

Mr Byrne (with a whip in his hand) starts the dialogue like this:

Mr B: Well, Jack, why did you run away?

Jack:

Act out the scene in pairs, then change roles and repeat.

After your role play, analyse:

1. What is the context in which the text was written?
2. To whom is the text addressed?
3. What image of a slave does it show in the picture? And in the text?
4. What is the intention of the author?
5. What is the position of the author in his community and society?
6. Could the role play situation actually have happened in real life, or would Jack have been condemned without a hearing?
7. What's in a name? Who called this boy 'Jack'? Why?

Activity 3

In small groups, read one of the texts below and then discuss the following questions. Remember that you are discussing your impressions and comparing opinions based on your specific ways of reading. As you discuss them in groups, try to think of what is it that makes possible different interpretations in your group.

- What is the concept of slavery/enslavement in the texts analysed?
- What is the context that generated this text? Who wrote it in what situation, and why?
- Who are the target readers? What kinds of persuasion are being used?
- What are the key words in the language? What do they show us of the writer's feelings and intentions?
- To what extent do you share the writer's views? Why?
- How would you define slavery today?
- Be prepared to report your findings briefly to the whole class in 15-20 minutes' time.

Possible texts:

1. The image of the slave ship 'Brookes' and an account of the Transatlantic slave trade *http://www.understandingslavery.com/teachingslavetrade/introduction/*

2. A letter from George Washington as a teenager, asking the captain of a ship to sell one of his slaves (with or without three other texts on Washington and slavery on this website) *http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/kids/activity8.html*

3. Stop apologizing! (Simon Jenkins on the exaggerated sense of guilt displayed over the slave trade) *http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/mar/25/therecanbetoomuch*

4. Quick guide: UK Human Trafficking *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/5343036.stm*

5. Kevin Rudd's Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples (select an extract, as the whole speech is long) *http://www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/Rudd_Speech.pdf*

Feedback

After 15-20 minutes, representatives of each group give feedback on

- The content of their text
- Their answers to the questions they found most interesting in connection with their text (their best discussions).

Perspectives

Take some minutes in silence to think about these questions. If you want, share your thoughts with a partner or the group.

1. Do you have contact with actions or attitudes that you could call 'slavery' in your daily life (family, work, school)?

2. Do you think there are socially accepted forms of slavery in your community? If so, think of which they are and why it is so; if not, think of whether they ever existed and when they were abolished. How are/were these conditions and realities perceived by different social groups in your society?

3. How do you see your own position related to this?

4. Where do your own ideas about the value of human life and freedom come from? Which ideas have influenced your own principles?

5. Do you ever feel subjected to slavery conditions? If so, describe the situations in which it has it happened.

DEBATE

Sample topic: *Apologies are not enough: compensation should be paid to the families of formerly enslaved peoples.*

Assign participants to two random groups to prepare arguments for and against.

Motivate participants to really try to defend the positions they are taking during the debate, whether or not they naturally sympathise with that point of view.

- choose a chairperson to ensure fair turn-taking.
- ask each group to select a main spokesperson to put forward their case without interruptions before the debate is opened to the floor.
- run the debate.

If time and level of interest allow, the debate can be re-run with reversed roles and with participants defending the other side of the argument.

After the debate

Participants reflect for a few minutes and share some of their feelings about the process and the arguments with the group.

Follow up: Written work

Participants choose some aspect of the topic to exploit in a written text. Here are a few possibilities:

1. Tell the story of Jack, the slave (Activity 1) from his own point of view or from the point of view of the slave owner.

2. Describe what happened to George Washington's slave Tom, sent to be sold (in workshop Text 2).

3. Write a letter to the young George Washington telling him that slavery is wrong and giving reasons.

4. The account of a victim of people trafficking.

5. What can be done to stop people trafficking?

6. Examples of present-day slavery

7. The arguments for and against compensation to the victims of slavery.

(No doubt teachers and their students will come up with many more follow-up suggestions.)

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Rob

FOLIO 13/1

Semiotics and ELT Materials Development

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The interdisciplinary nature of the wide-ranging field of semiotics has broadened its scope and connected it to a good number of fields such as communication, media studies, cultural studies, linguistics, philosophy, etc. (see van Leeuwen 2005). In particular, much significance has been attached to semiotics within linguistics (Tobin 1990), education (Cunningham 1992, 2005), and language education (Danesi 2000). In ELT, too, semiotic features were used in different methods and approaches as non-verbal communicative devices (e.g. gestures and body language in Total Physical Response, signs in the Silent Way, music in Suggestopedia, importance of nonverbal communication in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, etc.). However, little has been said to specify the psychological and pedagogical relevance of using semiotic devices in ELT sub-disciplines such as ELT methodology, materials development, assessment, etc.

Among the ELT sub-disciplines, materials development seems to have the potential for borrowing from semiotics features which will contribute to the quality of the materials designed and developed. Although recently published ELT materials and textbooks have made extensive use of visual input and signs, there does not exist a practical framework for realization of what semiotics has to offer to ELT materials development. In this article, practical suggestions will be presented on how to utilize semiotic resources as pedagogically functioning elements in ELT materials.

Defining semiotics

Classical definitions of the term semiotics link it to the study of signs. Some definitions, however, reflect a communicative quality as well. For example, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines semiotics as: 'the way in which people communicate through signs, or the study of this'. This is simple, yet very insightful, taking the classical view a step further by assigning communicative value to signs. Signs, in this view, are means of communication. A sign, as a means of communication, then, can be referred to as 'anything (a word, a gesture, a wink, a smile, etc.) that stands for something other than itself' (Danesi 2000: 24). Being different from all other signs (Saussure 1916/1959), each sign thus would be unique with regard to its communicative value. The communicative quality of signs has also been reflected in the two major traditions of semiotic theory (i.e. the Saussurean School and the Peircean School). In the Saussurean tradition, sign interpretation is shaped through connecting the 'signifier' with the 'signified' (See Saussure ibid). In the Peircean tradition, Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of 'semiosis' as a process involving 'multiple inferences' would value the communicative nature of the encounter with the sign (Peirce, 1898).

Further, it should be clear that signs are not limited to visual images only. Van Leeuwen (2004: 4) argues that 'semiotic resources are not restricted to speech and writing and picture making. Almost everything we do or make can be done or made in different ways and therefore allows the articulation of different social and cultural meanings'.

With the above-mentioned characteristics in mind, one would construe that signs can be realized within language systems; and, therefore, the study of signs would be highly related to examining the meanings and uses of signs. It is this aspect of studying signs that can connect semiotics with language education and its sub-disciplines.

Signs and ELT materials

Modern ELT materials are full of visual elements. Most of the materials are also accompanied by audio-programmes and videos. Such resources comprise a large portion of the non-verbal input used in ELT textbooks. However, analyses of how these resources are used in textbooks would show that they are not being used to their full potential. In an analysis of the role of visual elements in a number of recently published textbooks, for example, Hill (2003: 181) has concluded that a majority of visual elements used in the textbooks 'are used only for decorative purposes' and that 'those used for language purposes tend to concentrate on low-level language skills related to basic language manipulation'. Nevertheless, semiotic input, if used appropriately and systematically, could prove to be a highly motivating resource for activating higher order language processing, leading to communicatively rich output.

The role of semiotic input in developing ELT materials

Semiotics has a great deal to offer to modern ELT materials development; and it is to be hoped that future ELT materials will accommodate semiotic features more systematically and methodically than before. In order to be able to rationalise how semiotic resources would be used in modern ELT materials, we first need to know more about the main features of modern ELT materials.

Tomlinson (2003: 9) made predictions about the future of materials development by referring to a number of key features that would characterize future ELT materials:

- greater personalisation and localisation of materials
- greater flexibility and creativity of use
- more respect for the learners
- more affectively engaging content
- a greater emphasis on multi-cultural perspectives and awareness
- more opportunities for learners with experiential (and especially kinaesthetic) learning style preferences
- more attempts made to engage the learner in the language learning process as an experienced, intelligent and interesting individual
- more attempts made to use multi-dimensional approaches to language learning

Incorporating the above features into the design of ELT materials, however, would demand a complete rethink of how input, processes and output are realised through use of verbal or non-verbal elements. One way, among others, for deconstructing and re-juxtaposing the existing design elements and redefining their roles is to make effective use of semiotic resources - in this case photos, drawings, posters, graphs, charts, logos, audio-visual input, etc.

However, it is not just the presence of such resources in ELT textbooks that may contribute to the quality of the materials, as these resources have been frequently used in existing ELT materials. What makes a difference here is how these resources are put into use for pedagogical purposes.

Generally, semiotic resources can be of great communicative value, if they are aimed at encouraging learners' active, reflective and affective engagement with the relevant tasks, helping them get more successfully involved in the process of meaning negotiation and discourse creation. From a practical point of view then we need to think of workable design techniques for better utilising semiotic resources in the process of developing ELT materials. In order to come up with a number of practical suggestions for using such resources in developing materials, I have tried to selectively adapt Tomlinson's (ibid) features to justify the use of semiotic resources in modern ELT materials in terms of their pedagogical and psychological value.

Personalisation of the materials

In comparison with verbal input, semiotic input would allow more personalisation on the part of the learners. Texts seem to be more explicit in expressing ideas and viewpoints, thus resulting in more convergent reader response. More restriction is also caused by adding tasks and activities which mainly aim at eliciting controlled, comprehension-based responses. This makes the experience more bottom-up than top-down. Signs, on the other hand, are open to freer interpretations. Signs and visual elements which are supplemented by appropriately designed tasks can facilitate individualized reactions as well as personalized response. As a matter of fact, the more unpredictable the input, the more it is likely that it will tap learners' imagination, leading to more creative discourse creation.

This kind of creativity, however, will not be genuinely achieved unless the learner feels secure enough to engage in it. The kind of input that is liable to impose certain biases would threaten the learner's sense of security. So care should be taken when using semiotic devices which may lend themselves to biased interpretation(s).

Affective engagement

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 267) have drawn attention to the 'omnipresence of affect' and the affective relation between the image and the viewer. In fact, any encounter with semiotic phenomena may engage affect as 'the production and communication of meaning cannot be other than always affective and constitutive of subjectivity' (Kress and van Leeuwen: ibid).

Therefore using semiotic resources in developing ELT materials can contribute to enriching the affective aspect of input, processes and output. In situations where highly creative tasks are developed, the semiotic potential of the elements used can take the experience far beyond pondering over surface meaning.

Multi-cultural perspectives and awareness

As Ryder (2004) asserted, semiotic resources are used by humans as representational devices for communicating

cultures, ideologies, thoughts and feelings. In fact, communication through signs seems to be international in nature. Although misinterpretation will always remain a threat to sign-based communication, there are signs which address the international audience (e.g. traffic signs, posters, logos). Aside from signs which explicitly convey the intended meaning and are globally understood, culture-specific, context-relevant signs would require the addressee's intercultural awareness to be activated. When it comes to choosing signs for ELT materials, however, signs from both groups can function quite perfectly if they are selected on the basis of the pedagogical and psychological demands of the lesson, the nature of the input required and the desired quality of output. A task which is intended to elicit class discussion about different countries, for example, would prove more engrossing and effective if presented with some complementary semiotic input like the flags of the countries, the national anthems, the maps, etc. Students, then, by looking at the icons, colours or words on the flags or listening to the national anthems could interact more genuinely with the input. Also, in multi-cultural settings, students can bring to class samples of signs from their own cultures and discuss what such culture-specific signs could imply.

Experiential learning style preferences and multi-dimensional approaches to learning

Signs may reveal different modes of existence, as different individuals have different modes of understanding. The encounter with a sign, thus, may engage different people in different ways, resulting in multiple experiences and different levels of interpretations. In educational settings, this type of interaction is actually influenced by learners' individual differences and learning style preferences. In other words learners' learning style preferences may lead them to interact with semiotic resources with varying degrees of efficacy.

As far as use of semiotic devices in ELT materials is concerned, different types of resources may result in different levels of involvement with different students. Auditory resources, for instance, may result in optimum interaction for one student, whereas for another student visual input would prove to be most engaging. This highlights the importance of developing multi-dimensional materials for language learners. As diverse as they are, semiotic devices can be considered as the main source in this respect. In using semiotic resources for developing multi-dimensional materials, materials designers can make very creative choices among the wide range of available resources, e.g. music, logos, paintings, graphs, diagrams, gestures.

More important than *what* to use is *how* to use the resources. As a matter of fact, many such semiotic resources have already been used in ELT textbooks. What meaningfully links ELT materials to semiotics, however, is whether the resources are utilised to contribute to freer communication and more creative discourse and whether they are selected according to the pedagogical and cognitive demands of a lesson. In a number of textbooks published to date, for example, songs have been used to reinforce the focus of the lesson (mostly involving low-level language skills), adding to the fun aspect of it. Music in such cases has rarely been used as an free-standing element in the process of teaching and learning. The use of songs has been limited to students listening to them, singing them, and in some cases, memorizing them thereby reinforcing or internalizing the language used in the song. In the next generation of materials, however, music may be used as a semiotic resource to activate higher order thinking skills. Provided that it is not limited to repetition and recitation, music may be used to elicit personal interpretation, to generate and negotiate meanings. Similarly, the use of other types of semiotic resources should not be limited to low-level language processing and immediate language practice; rather, these devices can be used to foster creative use of language, encouraging meaning negotiation and genuine communication. In the following section, through examples, I will make some practical suggestions on how to use semiotic resources in ELT materials.

Implications for ELT materials development

Practically, linking semiotics and materials development may not seem to be an easy task. However, creative and imaginative materials designers may find it more interesting than challenging. What follows is a list of implications together with sample activities in which semiotic resources are used as the main design feature. As the first two sample activities were used with a group of advanced English students in the Department of Foreign Languages at Tehran Tarbiat Moallem University, their reactions to the tasks are also reported selectively. It is not my aim in this paper to study students' reactions and the discourse created through exposure to semiotic input, but their reactions do clearly show how semiotic input helped them in creative discourse production. The rest of the sample activities are just practical suggestions based on the stated implications.

1. The use of semiotic resources should no longer be restricted to language reinforcement only. Rather, they can be used to develop higher order thinking skills, leading to multiple interpretations and varied

output.

Sample activity:

Look at the following picture [the following pictures have been designed by Ensieh R. Sani to be exclusively used for the present study]. What is the impression you get of the picture? Write a few lines. Then discuss your views with class.

Reactions:

Student A:

'The picture reminds me of these words, each from a different point of view: cheating, cooperation, perfectionism, idealism, competition'.

Student B:

'It shows the loneliness of people. These people are doing the same job, but each of them in one side of the square and none of them cares for the other. They are engaged in their own life and feel so lonely'.

Student C:

'My impression of the above picture is that the dice is a symbol of life and different people are concerned with one aspect of it. Every person is obsessed with one point in one dimension of life and somehow trying to improve it in some ways. That is they try to complete the irregular and asymmetric shapes'.

Student D:

'In the world around us, most or if just we want to generalize it, all people go through the same procedure in their life time but are not really aware of it'.

Student E:

'Blow it! Don't breathe. Whisper some holy effective words for it. You will win fate.'

Student F:

In my opinion the picture is sad and demonstrates the weakness and misery of human. The picture says that the life is like a game. The dice is the only thing we have to win...we just want to follow what others do without thinking fully about the real life. We want to win but we choose the wrong direction...'.

2. Signs can be used as tools for facilitating learning through establishing mental links.

Sample activity:

Read the following idioms and look at the pictures. Can you relate the pictures with the idioms? Is the picture conveying the actual meaning of the idiom? Select three other idioms and try to create an image for each of them. Then talk about the image with your classmates.

1. He is in deep water.

2. I have butterflies in my stomach.

Reactions:

Student A:

'Yes. Their facial expressions and the way they move

their hands are demonstrative of their feelings'.

Student B:

'I think the pictures show the face meaning of the idioms, not the metaphoric meaning'.

Student C:

'Yes, I can relate the picture to its idiom. It [the first picture] shows someone is struggling in the water. He is really in trouble. So it conveys the meaning of the idiom. This picture [the second picture] cannot convey the meaning because having butterflies in stomach means someone is nervouse [nervous]. But in this picture, the person is so in ease and relaxed. It seems that he is doing some yoga or meditation...'.

3. It is possible to use semiotic devices when presenting cultural issues in ELT classes.

Sample activity:

You will hear two excerpts of music: Iranian traditional music and European classical music. Can you think of how different these are? Look at the following signs. Which one would you associate with Iranian music and which one with European music? Why?

4. Use of semiotic resources will help develop multi-dimensional materials with respect to our students' learning style preferences. Further, they have the potential to engage students more affectively.

Sample activity:

You will watch an episode on peace. At the same time you will here a song about peace. While watching and listening you are free to write about your impressions, draw pictures, think of gestures and movements or even choreograph a dance routine for the song, write a short story, etc. Then you can share what you have done with the class.

5. Student-generated semiotic resources can also be utilized as motivating ELT materials for use in class.

Sample activity:

There are many international organizations, companies, factories, colleges, museums, publication houses, etc., each having a logo with highly representative qualities. Choose your favorite company, organization, etc. If you could have the chance to create a logo for it, how would your logo differ from its present logo? Design your logo and bring it to class. Then compare your logo with the one used currently: talk about in what ways and why your logo is different from the logo currently being used by that company, organization, museum, etc.

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Learning through Writing Materials for an INSETT Course

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In Uzbekistan, a former Republic of the Soviet Union in the Central Asia, University teachers of English are required every 3 years to 'upgrade' their professional qualification by participating in the University-based courses offered by the 3 biggest institutions in the country located in different cities. These institutions offer one-month off-work intensive INSETT courses. The Baseline Study carried out by the British Council in 2003 showed that the existing programme did not meet the contemporary needs of the teachers. Thus in 2004 British Council in Uzbekistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education initiated the Open Learning for Teachers (OLT) project that aimed to develop a new in-service teacher training programme for teachers of English. Rod Bolitho (from the College of Saint Mark and Saint John at that time) was identified as consultant to the project. This article presents our reflections as team members on our experience of the project as a useful model for teachers' professional development through designing materials.

To reach the stated aim two teams of professionals were identified: a materials writers' team whose job was to develop the INSETT course materials, and a trainers' team who were expected to deliver the course to teachers. This arrangement might seem strange as usually teacher trainers themselves develop the materials and deliver the sessions but in our case the decision to separate the roles of material writers and trainers was deliberate. One of the main reasons for doing so was the lack of qualified people committed to developing and conducting the programme on a regular basis in the three Centres across the country and to ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond the project period.

Thus, the group of teachers selected through open application was divided into two teams and from that point onwards each team embarked on their own development path. The trainers' team took part in in-country training workshops and met on a regular basis to read and discuss professional articles on ELT methodology, teacher education, principles of INSETT, adult learning and so on. They also undertook micro-training sessions and were responsible for piloting training materials. These activities, along with regular opportunities for peer observation contributed significantly to their professional development but that would be a topic for another article. While this article focuses on the development process of the material writers' team, it is important to note that the two teams could not have developed independently of each other. The teams were in constant dialogue to ensure that we were all 'speaking the same language' and sharing the same beliefs about teacher education. The dialogue was strengthened through many channels: through people who were playing double roles in the project - both as the trainers and as materials writers; through regular team meetings to make big decisions about the course, its contents, its philosophy and to update the trainers about the progress with the training materials; and also through some training and orientation sessions conducted by the materials writers.

The core team of materials writers consisted of 5 practising ELT professionals with 8 to 15 years of teaching experience and some teacher training experience. Four of us hold Masters' degrees in ELT from UK or US institutions. Some of us had previous experience of writing textbooks for secondary schools, but very few people had extensive experience of writing materials for teacher training workshops where they themselves acted as trainers. The lack of experience in designing INSETT training materials did not frighten us as everybody was keen to face the challenge and to take it as an opportunity for learning.

INSETT course materials – what to start with?

As the project aimed at renewing the existing INSETT programme, we had to stick to the time and venue for the programme specified by the Ministry: 144 hours of training for teachers from HE Universities, colleges and lyceums in the 3 Centres around the country. Teachers are released from their workplaces for this period of time.

The only change we suggested was to break one month of intensive training into two face-to-face modules (2 weeks each) and one distance module in between when teachers are expected to return to their workplaces and carry out some tasks. We thought otherwise teachers would be overloaded with new experience and start losing track of the link between theory and practice.

The main question at that point was about the contents of the course. In the first workshop we brainstormed what a teacher of English should know, understand and be able to do. Based on the discussions and negotiations

we came up with the following main strands: Language Learning, Methodology for ELT, Classroom Management, Materials Design and Evaluation, Testing and Assessment and Continuous Professional Development.

How to work on the training materials?

Based on the specified categories we created the first draft of the map of the programme and each materials writer was allocated a certain number of topics on which to prepare training materials (notes for trainers) for the face-to-face sessions. The team agreed to meet and discuss initial drafts on a weekly basis. During weekly meetings writers presented their drafts and got oral feedback from each team member. There were two ways of producing first drafts: either we brainstormed the skeleton for sessions (objectives, outcomes, activities, handouts, etc) together as a team and then one of us took the responsibility to develop it further; or one of us drafted a session and produced the first draft for a group discussion. Second and subsequent drafts of the sessions were circulated electronically and everyone had to provide written feedback to the author. When the author finished revision taking into consideration all received comments the session was considered to be ready for sending to Rod for feedback and then for trial.

The procedure seems logical and simple but that did not mean that the sessions were finalised easily. Even after the sessions went through the trial, there was still room for hot discussions, revisions or even questions like 'Do we need this session at all?' or exclamations 'The first draft was better, let's go back to that'. The process of materials development seemed to be never-ending: drafting, reviewing, revising, re-drafting, piloting, revising, formatting, revising, rejecting, adding... Along with the materials that were developing, we ourselves were developing as writers, teachers, teacher trainers, researchers, learners and just as human beings.

The programme strands remained unchanged, but most of the topics for the sessions within the strands underwent numerous changes. The map of the programme was the most 'popular' document which we played with (not only metaphorically but literally as well – like a game of Patience where we were trying to distribute the cards with the topics over the 2 Modules – 4 weeks (from Monday to Saturday) sitting on a table (or sometimes crawling on the floor) again and again during the 3 years of the project. Each time we were trying to justify why we thought we needed a particular topic on a particular day, at a particular time, after or before a particular session. Now we realize that numerous revisions were the sign of our development as individuals and as a team.

How to develop as materials writers?

Now reflecting on our experience we realise that the philosophy underlying our development as materials writers, both as individuals and as a group, was closely related to the ideas in the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1988).

Stage 1: Experience

At the initial stage of the project (after Rod's first visit) we almost rushed to develop materials and were thinking we needed to develop more and more sessions, thereby focusing mainly on quantity. We thought that in half a year we would write all the materials and were even wondering what we are going to do during the next 3 years (the duration of the project). Rod kept sending feedback with some language corrections ('English Articles are a complete mystery for Uzbek learners', he kept saying as he corrected our language mistakes), and some questions that did not seem fundamental. We thought Rod was happy with our materials and we were doing the right job. That gave us confidence as material writers.

Stage 2: Reflection

Six months later, Rod visited us again. By then the finished sessions had been piloted with potential INSETT participants and with the trainers' team. It was time for reflection: reflection on the feedback received, on our experience, on our strengths, on our weaknesses... We asked ourselves many questions like 'Are the materials clear to the trainers and teachers?', How detailed should the notes be?', 'Are the topics relevant to the teachers' needs?' and so on. Not all our questions were easy to answer. It was a moment in the project where we all seemed to get 'stuck' in our work. This resulted in arguing more and more with each other, very often discussing the same session for 4 or 5 hours and not being able to come to a consensus.

Stage 3: Making sense

When Rod came on his next visit we were trying to formulate the principles underlying our beliefs on teacher education such as the importance of reflection, the social dimension of adult learning, opening up choices, principled practice, and continuous professional development and so on. We started making sense of our own beliefs about teacher education and were more aware of the rationale behind them.

Stage 4: Action Planning

After the first year of the project period we started to look at our previous drafts from a different perspective. Most of the drafts that were developed during stage 1 seemed to be in paper bins but none of us felt sorry about that. The insight gained from the experience was much more important. This time we started to check our materials against the principles that we now owned fully and had developed a style sheet for the trainer's notes that we had worked out for the INSET course. We also started working with artists, camera people to work on pictures, illustrations, audio and video materials for the course.

But of course the cycle has never ended. We again and again thought of new sessions, revisited the existing ones, reviewed, piloted, formatted, cut, added...

What we gained from the experience personally and professionally

All of us learnt a lot as we had a unique opportunity to think at different levels from the perspectives of learners, teachers, teacher trainers and materials writers. We were reading, recollecting and making more sense of our previous learning, teaching and training experience, thinking of our consultant and making sense of the beliefs underlying his practice. Each of his visits was a milestone in our development and more or less indicated a new stage of our development. His role in the project development and in our development is immense; it is difficult to overestimate this. He has always been an inspirer and supporter. Having experienced being a learner in his classroom we now appreciate and understand what it means to be a facilitator – someone who knows but never imposes; someone who feels when it is the time to take a lead or stand back; someone who is amazingly patient in watching people developing and growing, someone so loving and caring. As well as learning from him, learning from each other we could see the issues from different perspectives and crystallise our personal knowledge and skills; each of us contributed a piece that helped to create a big picture as in a jigsaw puzzle. We can say proudly that we managed to form a shared, principled vision on teaching and learning that will guide us in our further professional activities.

What is next?

In 2007 we piloted the whole programme in Tashkent. 24 teachers from different regions of Uzbekistan participated in the course. Everybody was involved in the pilot: most of the trainers and material writers conducted the sessions, other trainers and material writers as well as project managers acted as observers. At the end of each day we all sat and discussed the outcomes, made recommendations to the authors of the sessions. And the first success came! We were so happy to receive very positive feedback on the programme. After the pilot we have revised almost all the sessions, even re-shot some of the video materials.

The revision work has never stopped since then. The materials became like our babies and it was difficult for us to leave them alone and stop revising. Only recently after editing and discussing the final design did we sent the materials to the publisher in final draft form.

We named the programme DUET which stands for Development for Uzbekistan Teachers of English. It symbolises the partnership between the UK and Uzbekistan, partnership between the British Council and the Ministry, partnership between materials writers and trainers, trainers and teachers, teachers and learners.

Now the programme is conducted in the three Centres twice or three times per academic year. Up to now almost 200 teachers across the country have undergone the DUET programme. The most rewarding feedback that we hear very often from the participants after the programme is that 'I feel in love with my teaching profession once more'.

So where is the material writers' team now? All of them are involved in other national and regional ELT projects such as developing new curriculum for PRESETT, Encouraging Learner Autonomy (ELA), English for Teachers and Teaching for English (ETTE) sharing their valuable expertise gained and fostered through the project with other specialists in the country and beyond. Thus the Open Learning for Teachers Project brought real learning not only for teachers but for all people involved: trainers, project managers, as well as materials writers.

Appendix: List of the Project Members

Project Manager
Jamilya Gulyamova (British Council Uzbekistan)

Material Writers' Team Coordinator
Anna Gorevanova (British Council Uzbekistan)

Consultant
Rod Bolitho (Norwich Institute for Language Education)

Material Writers' Team
Alex Ulko (freelance teacher trainer)
Elena Volkova (Westminster International University in Tashkent)
Natalia Tsarikova (British Council Uzbekistan
Nilufar Mukhamedova (Uzbek State World Languages University)
Nodira Isamukhamedova (Uzbek State World Languages University)
Rosaliya Ziryanova, Oybek Kurbanov and Gulsara Mamarajabova have also made important contributions to the work of the materials team.

Nodira Isamukhamedova has a PhD in Translation Studies, an MA in TESOL from the University of Leeds and is a lecturer in the Uzbek State World Languages University, Tashkent. She is also a teacher trainer and project manager has been actively involved in different British Council supported projects in Uzbekistan, developing INSETT courses for Teachers of English, reforming the curriculum for the Pre-Service Training of English Teachers and materials writing for the Encouraging Learner Autonomy project.

Elena Volkova has an MEd in Trainer Development from Exeter University and is currently Head of Professional Development, Subject Area Leader in English and Course Leader for Post Graduate Certificate of Special study in Teaching and Learning at Westminster International University in Tashkent. Her main professional interests are in teacher motivation, adult education and materials development.

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Words Confused & Words Misused

Michael Berman, Oxford House College, London

Following The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages guideline, the sample *Words Confused & Words Misused* texts presented below are suitable for use at levels B2, C1, and C2. They are geared towards Business English students, but texts of this kind could of course be created for other categories of learners too.

Asking students to choose the best answer from a pair of alternatives is an activity that most have no doubt encountered many times before. However, by adding the wording "In most cases, only one of the answers is correct, but sometimes they both might be suitable. So be careful!" the exercise at once becomes a great deal more challenging. The incorrect answers are based on typical mistakes students of English as a Foreign Language make. These include, for example, problems with what are known as "false friends" – words that reminds the learners of similar word in their own language, and mislead them into assuming that they thus have the same meaning in English (e.g. *sensible* in Spanish mean *sensitive* in English).

The learners can work on the texts individually, and then pair up to compare their answers. This way of working appeals to those students who are highly intrapersonal and prefer to work on their own initially before getting together with others. Alternatively, the learners could work in pairs from the outset, and then get together in groups of four to see if they can reach a consensus. This method of working not only appeals to those members of the group who have strong interpersonal skills, but also reduces the likelihood of errors.

Instead of merely asking the students to find the correct answers, you could also ask them to consider why the alternatives are inappropriate. However, it is important not to focus too exclusively on the reasons, and to remember that the only thing that really matters is whether they can use the language effectively, not whether they know the grammatical explanations. And for homework or follow-up work in class, you could ask them to make sentences of their own with the words they had problems with, to show they now know how to use them. They can then exchange these with another member of the class, and try to correct each other's work before you look through the sentences and check them.

You will find that texts like these work particularly well with the kind of students who think they know everything already, for once they realize how much they do not in fact know they have a reason for applying themselves to their studies once more. And if you have a really strong advanced group, you could present them with sets of twenty pairs, and invite them to construct texts incorporating them to test each other with. However, if they manage to do something like this, then they probably do not even need your classes any more!

Sample 1
Stress at Work

Choose the best answer from each pair of alternatives. In most cases, only one of the answers is correct, but sometimes they both might be suitable. So be careful!

They (1) *say / tell* that all work and no (2) *game / play* makes Jack a dull boy and I have no (3) *doubt / uncertainty* that (4) *it / there* is a great deal of (5) *true / truth* in this. For if all you (6) *do / make* is work, it is more or less inevitable that your health will eventually suffer as a result and that (7) *it / there* is a (8) *cost / price* to be paid for (9) *such / such a* behaviour. (10) *All in all / After all*, no boss wants any member of their staff to drop dead with a heart attack. That is why it is so important for employers to (11) *assure / ensure* that their employees are getting enough (12) *exercise / exercises* by ideally providing them (13) *for / with* a gym or at least free membership to a local Health Club. And they will soon find such an investment, though (14) *somehow / somewhat* costly, pays (15) *dividends / profits* as a healthy (16) *body / figure* means a healthy (17) *brain / mind* and will result in (18) *fewer / less* working days being lost due to sickness. (19) *Furthermore / Nonetheless*, the staff will undoubtedly appreciate such (20) *anxiety / concern* for their well-being and will respond positively to it.

ANSWERS: 1. say 2. play 3. doubt 4. there 5. truth 6. do 7. there 8. price 9. such 10. After all 11. ensure 12. exercise 13. with 14. somewhat 15. dividends 16. body 17. mind 18. fewer 19. Furthermore 20. concern

Sample 2
Fair Trade

Choose the best answer from each pair of alternatives. In most cases, only one of the answers is correct, but sometimes they both might be suitable. So be careful!

When you (1) *do / make* your weekly shopping, do you ever stop (2) *considering / to consider* (3) *weather / whether* the people (4) *that / who* produced the goods were paid a (5) *fair / fair* wage for the (6) *work / works* they (7) *did / made*? And are you willing to pay a bit extra to (8) *assure / ensure* that this is the case or is your only concern to pay as little as you possibly can regardless of how this might (9) *affect / effect* (10) *the others / others* less fortunate (11) *as / than* yourself? I suppose (12) *a / the* question that's really being asked here is (13) *if / whether* you can live with your (14) *conscience / conscious* or (15) *no / not*. That's why I've decided to (16) *do / make* a (17) *conscious / conscientious* effort to stop (18) *buying / to buy* goods in certain shops (19) *that / which* I know stock such products even (20) *if / though* they are invariably cheaper. And if (21) *another / other* people (22) *do / make* the same, perhaps we can bring (23) *about / off* a real change to consumer (24) *customs / habits* that will be of benefit (25) *for / to* all of us.

ANSWERS: 1. do 2. to consider 3. whether 4. that / who 5. fair 6. work 7. did 8. ensure 9. affect 10. others 11. than 12. the 13. if / whether 14. conscience 15. not 16. make 17. conscious 18. buying 19. that / which 20. though 21. other 22. do 23. about 24. habits 25. to

Sample 3
Food Miles

Choose the best answer from each pair of alternatives. In most cases, only one of the answers is correct, but sometimes they both might be suitable. So be careful!

When did you last (1) *look / watch* to see where your food has come from? Our supermarkets stock apples from New Zealand, asparagus from Peru and beans from Kenya, and hundreds of other (2) *lines / makes* that have been brought from all over the world. It is estimated that (3) *food / the food* in an average shopping trolley has travelled 100,000 miles. Only a small but significant (4) *proportion / share* is imported by air, the (5) *remains / rest* coming by boat and lorry. Many products can be (6) *grown / grown up* in (7) *U.K. / the UK*, but only in (8) *season / the season*. Now we have (9) *become / been* used (10) *to have / to having* these products all year round, and this increases our (11) *reliance / reliability* on bringing in goods from abroad. But as (12) *awareness / consciousness* of the environmental impact of flying in goods grows, so it has become a priority for the supermarkets to try (13) *reducing / to reduce* it. (14) *However / Moreover*, is it that simple? If supermarkets stop (15) *importing / to import* from (16) *developed / developing* countries then it could have a detrimental impact in those countries by putting local workers, (17) *that / who* have whole families (18) *dependant / dependent* on them, out of work. This is why the solution to the problem is less clear cut (19) *as / than* it (20) *firstly / at first* it (21) *may / might* (22) *appear / seem* to be. We also need to (23) *bare / bear* in mind that (24) *British / the British* grown (25) *produce is / products are* not necessarily more energy efficient. There are approximately 900 horticultural producers in this country using glasshouses that are artificially heated. And producers use enough extra energy in their greenhouses to supply 55,000 homes for a year.

ANSWERS: 1. look 2. lines 3. the food 4.proportion 5. rest 6. grown 7. the U.K. 8. season 9. become 10. to having 11. reliance 12. awareness 13. to reduce 14. However 15. importing 16. developing 17. who 18. dependent 19. than 20. at first 21. may or might 22. appear or seem 23. bear 24. British 25. produce is

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SPOTLIGHT ON A MATERIALS WRITER

Featured Writer:

Sue Mohamed

1. What got you started in materials writing?

When Jeff Mohamed and I went to Libya for International House in 1973, a third of our students could not read or write Roman script and there were no EFL published materials to help them. So we worked with our teachers to produce a beginner's script course. The resulting book was published internally. We were later approached to adapt this for a UK publisher but we were too busy teaching and running the Libyan school to get this together! Much later, in 1988, while I was teaching/ teacher training in Paris, a UK publisher asked Richard Acklam and me to come up with a proposal for an adult beginner's course and the time was right. And so it all began ...

2. Which of your materials are you most and least proud of, and why?

This is a really tough question. I'm pleased with bits of all of them and less pleased with other bits! In general, I can say that I'm most proud of materials that were innovative in some way but also reflected what the experience of other teachers and students had taught me thus far. So the early unsophisticated Libyan course is a high contender, as are materials resulting from textbook writing projects with Romanian and Mongolian teachers. What I'm less proud of are the compromises I've made, based on feedback from small samples of the market, which went against the better judgement of myself and valued colleagues ... but hey... it's easy to become precious about this, and all in all I think the standard of published materials is high, and helpful to practising teachers.

3. Who or what has influenced you most in your approach to materials writing?

Other teachers. One of the big perks of teacher training and writing is the chance to sit in on teachers around the world. I think you inevitably learn more than you teach in these situations. The great thing about so much market specific publishing nowadays, is that what you see in the classroom can really influence you with regard to level and content. I've long since abandoned the idea that there is one successful way of teaching; but I do think it's important to motivate teachers by providing a step forward and what that step can be, is often best discovered in the classroom.

4. What do you see as your Achilles heel as a materials writer?

Tunnel vision. I can spend hours complicating ideas and worrying about little points which seem very important and probably aren't. A close friend once remarked that, at a certain point, 98% more effort has been shown to result in only 2% more perfection! Life is too short ... but I still have to remind myself that the simpler idea is usually better and more achievable in the classroom.

5. What is your main strength?

Definitely, my luckiest strength is an ability to write for all ages and levels. Although I was trained as a secondary school teacher, I began work as a teacher of French at primary school. Itchy feet led me to teach English to adults (and younger learners) abroad for many years. The ability to write across educational sectors is definitely a strength for a writer because once you've written a course book, it's difficult to write another immediately for the same age group/level. And ... it means I've been able to write primary, secondary or adult materials for different publishers without treading on too many toes ... that's lucky too!

6. Can you tell readers a bit about your experience as a consultant to textbook projects in Romania and Mongolia? What demands did that role make on you and what did you learn from it?

The work in both countries was similar; the aim was to help teachers from Romania (with Rod Bolitho) and Mongolia to produce an English language course book series for state secondary schools. Each project took approximately eight years, and by the end, the teachers were considered to be autonomous textbook writers. In Mongolia, in particular, the writers were also expected to use their materials for teacher training and textbook writing development within Mongolia. It was the most rewarding work I have ever done, since it brought together my teaching, teacher-training and writing

skills. But what I learned (personally, culturally and professionally) far outweighed these skills. The most important lesson professionally was to do with ownership; in order to maintain group motivation and dedication for such a long-term project, it was important that ownership of the material remain fairly and squarely with the writing team.

7. Over your time as a writer you have seen various trends come and go. Which have you felt most comfortable with and which have you found most difficult to live with?

Not just as a writer, but also as a teacher, I've used a wide variety of approaches at different times, with equal conviction. However, I can't honestly say my students speak better English thanks to one or other of them! So, I've come to believe that many students probably learn best from teachers who teach with conviction, regardless of the trend. However, that said, I've never felt comfortable with a grammar–translation approach, probably because I didn't enjoy learning that way ... or was it because my teachers didn't teach with enough conviction?!

8. What advice would you give to someone starting out in materials writing today?

Join the Society of Authors and speak to other writers and each other! When you become a writer, you suddenly find yourself in a situation where conditions of work and pay may seem better than those in teaching, but they are being eroded all the time, and opportunities for work are erratic. The only way, in my opinion, for writers to protect their rights is to be open with one another, know what is currently acceptable and find ways of supporting one another. Over to you, comrades!

9. What would you most like publishers in ELT to pay attention to?

The role of the writer within the writing team. At the moment, many writers feel side-lined, constantly told to change or even (ghost) write materials in line with the opinions of editorial and marketing teams. While all materials benefit from good editing, and information on markets is crucial, the expertise and creativity of the writer should not be undervalued. If it is, then the important sense of ownership I've mentioned before will be lacking, and we will get more and more 'me–too' publishing, stopping the life-blood of good ELT materials–writing.

Biodata

Sue Mohamed has taught English and trained teachers in many parts of the world. She has lived and worked in Britain, Libya, Lebanon, Egypt and France. She has acted as a consultant on Ministry of Education projects in Romania and Mongolia. In France, she worked as an English Teaching Adviser at the British Council in Paris. She was Head of Teacher Training at International House, London. She has taught primary and secondary school children and adults and now writes English Language Teaching materials. Her course books, as co-author or author, include :

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