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In this issue:

Robert Godwin-Jones

Designing an intermediate level language textbook for mobile access and learner autonomy

Paul Benjamin

Is There a Place for Youth Culture in Middle Eastern ELT Materials?

Jennifer Wagner

Regional Variation in the Vocabulary of French Textbooks

Tony Waterman

English Language Learners Describing Graphs Successfully

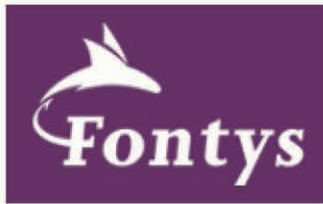
Saw Thanda Swe

Assessing Teaching and Learning Culture through Language Coursebooks: Experienced EFL teachers' perspectives

Aileen Bowe

Book Review: Reconceptualising Authenticity for English as a Global Language

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MATSDA/Fontys University of Applied Sciences Conference

Saturday June 10th and Sunday June 11th 2017

Meaning-Focused Materials for Language Learning

Plenary Speakers

Marina Bouckaert Anne Burns Daniela Fasoglio Alan Maley

Hitomi Masuhara Brian Tomlinson Marjolijn Verspoor

Venue

Fontys School of Fine and Performing Arts (FHK)

Zwijnsenplein 1, Tilburg, the Netherlands

Registration: 08.30 on June 10th and 11th

Conference: 09.00-18.00 on June 10th; 09.00-17.00 on June 11th

Fees (to include coffees each day and lunch on the Sunday)

- Students: €100 (€60 for one day)
- MATSDA members and Fontys University Staff: €140 (€85 for one day)
- Non-members: €180 (€100 for one day)

MATSDA Membership Contact Susie Pearson matsdamembershipsec@nile-elt.com

Conference Booking, Accommodation Enquiries and Payment:

<https://fontys.nl/Over-Fontys/Fontys-Lerarenopleiding-Tilburg/FLOT-Academie/Studiedagen/MATSDA-Conference-2017-10-11-June.htm>

For any queries not answered by the website please contact **Marina Bouckaert** at m.bouckaert@fontys.nl

Offers of Papers

To offer a paper for a forty minute presentation or to offer a poster presentation please contact: Brian Tomlinson brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com

Contents

Editorial, Freda Mishan	2
Greetings from the President	3
<i>Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President</i>	
Designing an intermediate level language textbook for mobile access and learner autonomy	4
<i>Robert Godwin-Jones</i>	
Is There a Place for Youth Culture in Middle Eastern ELT Materials?	12
<i>Paul Benjamin</i>	
Regional Variation in the Vocabulary of French Textbooks	21
<i>Jennifer Wagner</i>	
English Language Learners Describing Graphs Successfully	26
<i>Tony Waterman</i>	
Assessing Teaching and Learning Culture through Language Coursebooks: Experienced EFL teachers' perspectives	33
<i>Saw Thanda Swe</i>	
Book Review: Reconceptualising Authenticity for English as a Global Language	39
<i>Reviewed by Aileen Bowe</i>	
<i>Freelance Register</i>	43

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www.matsda.org

From the Editor

Freda Mishan, University of Limerick

Welcome to the Spring 2017 issue of *Folio*! A perennial theme in the journal is the portrayal of culture in language teaching coursebooks and this is one that links many of the articles in this issue. Whether this is how to convey culture through language teaching materials (Swe), tailoring materials for middle eastern youth (Benjamin) or critically evaluating regional variation in French coursebooks (Wagner), this theme is explored from the perspectives of practitioners in various parts of the globe stretching from Europe (Swe, Wagner) to the Middle East (Benjamin). Uniting communities internationally is online culture, and we are delighted that this issue includes a contribution from Robert Godwin-Jones (Virginia Commonwealth University) on another concern preoccupying the materials development community, the move to digital learning materials. Waterman's article, finally, homes in learners interpreting that most universal of genres, visual data. The ethos of MATSDA and *Folio* is to encourage new and early stage researchers, and in this issue, we are pleased to welcome, along with seasoned

Folio contributors, a number of submissions from newcomers. These include our book reviewer for this issue (Bowe), reviewing Pinner (2016) *Reconceptualising Authenticity for English as a Global Language*. *Folio* relies on the generosity of contributors willing to share their research and ideas with its international readership, and as always, I would like to thank the authors of *Folio 17.2* for doing so with such good cheer. Finally, as the MATSDA president announces in his 'greeting', *Folio* plans in the near future to enter the peer-review process. We intend this to strengthen its quality further while always maintaining the originality and edge that readers and contributors value in the MATSDA journal.

*Freda Mishan, Editor
University of Limerick
March 2017*

Greetings from the President

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President

Welcome to another issue of Folio and the promise of another positive year for MATSDA.

Our 2016 Conference was considered to be a big success by both MATSDA newcomers and MATSDA returners. Altogether we had presenters from twenty eight countries around the world. The plenary speakers were Gail Ellis, Rod Ellis, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Freda Mishan, Julie Moore, Ivor Timmis and Brian Tomlinson. The theme was Authenticity in Materials Development for Language Learning and the Conference was held at the University of Liverpool from June 18th-19th. For our 2017 Conference we're venturing to the Netherlands and we'll be co-hosting a Conference on Meaning-Focused Materials with Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Tilburg. The plenary speakers will be Marina Bouckaert, Anne Burns, Daniela Fasoglio, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Brian Tomlinson and Marjolijn Verspoor and the Conference will held from June 10th-11th. For details of the Conference see www.matsda.com

In 2018 we are likely to be travelling even further with plans at the moment being made to hold a MATSDA Conference at the Shanghai International Studies University (SISU). I've just accepted a post as Chair Professor at SISU where I'll be working (mainly at a distance from Southport) on materials development consultancies and materials development research with SCRELE (The Shanghai Center for Research in English Language Education). It just shows how far materials development has come since the Cinderella days when MATSDA was founded in 1993.

I'm happy to announce a number of recent and forthcoming MATSDA related publications which demonstrate how much MATSDA has contributed to the field:

1. Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2016). *SLA Theory and Materials Development for Language Learning*. New York: Routledge.

This is a collection of papers featuring plenary and parallel speakers from the 2014 MATSDA/University of Liverpool Conference on SLA and Materials Development.

2. Masuhara, H., Mishan, F. & Tomlinson, B. (Eds.). (2017). *Practice and Theory for Materials Development in L2 Learning*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.

This is a collection of papers featuring the parallel presenters from the MATSDA/University of Limerick 2012 Conference.

3. Maley, A. & Tomlinson, B. (Eds.) (2017 forthcoming). *Authenticity and Materials Development for Language Learning*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.

This is a collection of papers featuring the parallel presenters from the MATSDA/University of Liverpool 2015 Conference on Authenticity and Materials Development.

4. Tomlinson, B. & Masuhara, H. (2017 forthcoming). *The complete Guide to the Theory and Practice of Materials Development for Language Learning*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

This is a book co-authored by the MATSDA President, Brian Tomlinson, and the MATSDA Secretary, Hitomi Masuhara, which reviews the history, discusses the issues and recommends principled procedures for all aspects of materials development.

Other current publications with MATSDA connections include:

1. Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development for Language Learning*. London: Bloomsbury.

This is a collection of papers featuring the plenary speakers at the MATSDA/University of Limerick 2012 Conference on Applied linguistics and Materials Development.

2. Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). London: Bloomsbury.

This is an updated second edition of the 2003 volume of papers covering most aspects of materials development and featuring presenters at MATSDA conferences since 1993.

3. Mishan, F. & Timmis, I. (2015). *Materials Development for TESOL*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

This is a coursebook for students on materials development courses and modules co-authored by the Editor of *Folio*, Freda Mishan, and a former MATSDA Committee member, Ivor Timmis.

We have plans for *Folio* to become an internationally peer reviewed journal. We've already formed an Advisory Board and we'll be moving towards the peer reviewing of submissions in the near future. Don't forget to send your articles to Freda: freda.mishan@ul.ie

The *Folio* Advisory Board consists of:

Rod Bolitho, Gail Ellis, Jeremy Harmer, Maria Heron, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Freda Mishan, Ian McGrath, Susie Pearson, Alan Pulverness, Joanna Sterling and Brian Tomlinson.

Hope to see you at the MATSDA Conference in Tilburg.

Brian Tomlinson
President of MATSDA

Designing an intermediate level language textbook for mobile access and learner autonomy

Robert Godwin-Jones

Introduction

This paper presents a case study involving creation and use of an online, open access textbook for intermediate level language instruction. The OER (open educational resource) e-textbook features a modular, mix and match design with a mobile-friendly interface. The content is chosen to accommodate a range of student personal and professional interests. It also features modules intended to develop learner autonomy and digital literacy through annotated examples of online language learning tools and services. The e-text was used in a blended learning context in which students maintained learner diaries which documented their learning experiences and perceptions of the e-text.

The context: Inadequacy and expense of language textbooks

Beginning students are a relatively homogenous group, as they share the same starting place. Intermediate-level students may come directly from first year classes at the same institution, but a good number follow different language learning experiences, such as advanced high school study, classes abroad, or, increasingly in recent years, self-study through electronic tools or services, as well as through MOOCs and mobile apps. Given that diversity, intermediate-level can hardly account for the wide range of language backgrounds and abilities. Textbooks group students together, not only in their language abilities, but also in terms of their learning goals. As is the case with first-year textbooks, intermediate textbooks use a four-skills approach, with a balanced emphasis on reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as introducing more advanced language structures, additional vocabulary, and new cultural topics. While this time-honored structure works for most students, it does not allow for individual learning goals. The approach is designed to fit 'the needs of the idealized target learner' (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2011, p. 251) but may miss the mark for individual student needs and preferences. Not all students study a language for the same reason.

Additionally, students may have a particular subject area of personal or professional interest, such as the ability to read engineering texts in German, to work with Spanish texts on pre-Columbian art, or to study French films. Intermediate texts necessarily use a generic approach that sometimes supplies a sampling of texts in different areas but not enough in any one particular area to permit students to follow their interest in a substantive way. It is crucial for students' decision on whether to continue their language study that they have a sense they are acquiring a tool of real personal or professional use. Enabling intermediate-level students to work with materials of their own choosing can help tremendously in that effort.

The project: Adopt a modular approach

In an effort to accommodate the broad range of student language backgrounds and interests typically seen in our intermediate level classes, as well as to guide students to becoming autonomous and digitally literate language learners, the author created, as an active research project, a series of online modules to serve as a textbook complement or replacement. The modules were piloted in a 4th semester German course at a public university in the USA, taught in a hybrid (blended) format with two face-to-face meetings and one online session per week during a 15 week semester. For the first few units, the commercial textbook was supplemented by the online materials. In the course of the semester, the online modules became the principal supplier of learning materials, with occasional use of the textbook.

The e-text combines a basic grammar reference and a reader, both of which are often used in second-year language courses. Creating such a text as an OER allows for sharing of the resources created as well as the opportunity to incorporate additional resources from open sources. For this e-text, there is no absolute fixed structure to the resources; they can be combined in a variety of ways. This kind of modularity is important in the design of OER, in that it allows customization of the content, enabling users (students or instructors) to

use only those modules which fit personal or curricular needs (see Dixon & Hondo, 2014). While the readings and media are often linked to particular language structures, there is a recommended but no required sequencing order, allowing learners to review, preview, and advance as needed or desired.

Sample materials: Grammar tutorials

The e-textbook combines grammar tutorials with readings from a variety of sources, as well as multimedia (short video and audio clips). The grammar tutorials cover not only the structures typically introduced in second-year language study of German (passive voice and indirect discourse subjunctive, for example), but also include the full range of topics covered in first-year courses, as well as some introduced in the third-year sequence. This provides the opportunity for students to review as needed, or to move on to more advanced topics. A diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester helps students with an initial starting point; feedback (instructor-based as well as programmatic) continues throughout the course to recommend work on topics as needed. The content for the tutorials comes from inhouse development and from open-access, copyright-free resources such as those from COERLL at the University of Texas (coerll.utexas.edu), and materials from the Goethe Institut (goethe.de), which are made available through a Creative Commons share-alike, non-commercial license (creativecommons.org).

An example of the grammar tutorials is a module introducing subjunctive verb forms in German (see *Figure 1*).

The grammar resources use English, the students' L1, so as to be available for students at all proficiency levels. As is the case in this example, each page of the module provides a general explanation of the structural element introduced, with comparisons to English along with a number of examples of its use in German. This is followed by 'quick check' formative assessments, for students to monitor their understanding of the concepts and forms presented.

Sample materials: Readings and multimedia

The readings and multimedia are likewise based on open resources, including entries from the German Wikipedia (wikipedia.de) and from the Deutsche Welle radio and television service (dw.de). Texts, video clips, and audio passages have been annotated and glossed. Comprehension questions and learning activities have been added, as well as links for resources for further study. Texts have also been taken from copyright-

free stories such as the Grimm Brothers fairy tales. An advantage for students in working with readings electronically (a major course goal) is the ability to link both online dictionaries and the instructor's own custom annotations to texts. The pedagogically-enhanced Web modules are also available through Merlot (merlot.org), an OER repository. The texts deal with a variety of topics and are at different levels of difficulty, with the targeted proficiency level indicated in the resource.

An example of the content module as shown in *Figure 2*, a lesson on *Döner Kebab*, a Turkish fast food popular in Germany.

The module is part of a series on fast food in Germany, which integrates language and culture. The initial page introduces the topic, with previews of new vocabulary, language structures, and cultural topics given in the sidebar. Also shown are the CEFR learning level (A2) and anticipated completion time (50 minutes). The main window asks students to think about the question in the title of the module, namely if this Turkish dish can be considered 'German' fast food. Terms unlikely to be familiar are glossed, as are likely unfamiliar language structures and selected cultural items. Subsequent pages discuss ingredients of the dish, recount its history in Germany, and finally present a text on *Döner Kebab* and German multiculturalism. The latter discusses Chancellor Merkel's ambiguous relationship to multiculturalism in Germany. Each page incorporates comprehension exercises with feedback.

Along with inhouse developed modules, also included in the e-text are lessons based on content from open access repositories. These include grammar notes based on COERLL *Grimm Grammar* (Abrams, n.d.), and texts from the University of Cambridge *Learning Objects for German*. *Figure 3* shows the integration of such a text featuring an excerpt from a scientific text, in this case, taken from a physics textbook by Albert Einstein (Bellamy, 2013).

The module uses the same format as inhouse developed content, with, however, reduced language and navigation assistance, as those are supplied in the original content. The ability to incorporate such texts allows content to be included which extends the range of topics and disciplines.

In addition to annotated reading content, also included in the e-text are modules which center around short videos or audio clips. Multimedia is also frequently embedded in the reading modules, often using LibriVox recordings of short works in German literature (librivox.org). This is the case, for example, for the Grimm fairy tales included in the text, as there are multiple free access audio recordings, providing a variety of native speaker voices and accents. To accommodate further student personal or professional interest, students currently enrolled in the course using the e-text are asked to find and curate additional reading or multimedia content which can

be subsequently incorporated into modules, part of a wider student curation project in the author's academic unit (see Student-Generated Multimedia, 2016).

Sample content: Language self-study

Also incorporated into the textbook are modules on language self-study, which include an annotated guide to online language resources, such as dual language dictionaries, idiom finders, translating tools, and target language media sources. Today's language learners have a wide array of technology options available to help in all aspects of language learning. There are a great variety of free and commercial Web sites/services

and mobile apps, from basic flashcards for drilling vocabulary to comprehensive services which feature a rich array of features including online access to native speakers. The variety of resources can be empowering to students, but in many cases it is simply overwhelming, given the number of resources and the lack of readily available information about which might actually be useful for them, given their proficiency level and reason for studying a second language (Godwin-Jones, 2015). The goal of these modules is to encourage students to gather information and tools that will serve them in lifelong language study, both with the language they are currently learning, along with the ability to leverage the skills they have acquired for

Subjunctive Forms and Usage
VCU German Tutorial Series

Contents | ◀ Prev Next ▶ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | score print all

Subjunctive Use in German

In German, subjunctive verb forms are commonly used in several ways:

1) For POLITE REQUESTS -

Ich möchte ein Bier. <i>I would like a beer.</i>	Ich hätte gern eine Tasse Kaffee. <i>I would like a cup of coffee.</i>	Könnten Sie mir 10 Euro leihen? <i>Could you lend me 10 Euros?</i>
--	--	--

2) For WISHES or DESIRES -

Wenn ich nur mehr Geld hätte! <i>If only I had more money!</i>	Fritz wünschte, er hätte eine Freundin. <i>Fritz wished he had a girl friend.</i>
--	---

3) For HYPOTHETICAL or CONTRARY-TO-FACT statements -

An deiner Stelle, würde ich nicht nach Alaska fahren. <i>If I were you [literally, in your position], I wouldn't to to Alaska.</i>	Er tut, als ob er reich wäre <i>He acts as if he were rich.</i>
Wenn ich mehr Geld hätte, würde ich ein neues Auto kaufen. <i>If I had more money, I would buy a new car.</i>	

QUICK CHECK: Subjunctive uses

In the exercise below, indicate in the sentences why the subjunctive is being used...

Fragen

Value: 1

Könnten Sie mir sagen, wie ich zum Bahnhof komme?

a. Polite request

b. Wish/desire

c. Hypothetical

1 / 4

Next >

Figure 1: Sample grammar tutorial

Typisch Deutsch: Döner Kebab

Kurztexte zum Deutschlernen

Seite: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Punkte [alles drucken](#)

Hier zu lernen?

Neue Vokabeln

die Beilage, -n
side dish

Sprache & Kultur

Passive voice

Foretaste given in this lesson of the passive, which consists of the verb 'werden' as helping verb, plus the main verb in the past participle [Das Haus wird gemalt - The house is being painted.]

In dieser Einheit

- 3 Texte
- 5 Fragen

Einstieg: Ein deutsches Gericht?

Der Döner Kebab typisch deutsch? Ist er nicht türkisch? Ja, **ursprünglich** kommt das **Gericht** aus der Türkei, aber heute kann man überall in Deutschland Döner finden. Neben Hamburger und Currywurst ist Döner eines der beliebtesten Fast Food Gerichte in Deutschland.



Haben Sie eine **Ahnung**, was Döner Kebab ist und wie er **vorbereitet** wird?

Aus welchen **Zutaten** wird er **vorbereitet**?

Zutaten: vorbereitet

Kennen Sie die **Zutaten** des Döner Kebab?

Lesen Sie **vorbereitet** wird

Note that this is werden used as a helping verb (**wird**) together with the past participle (**vorbereitet**) to construct the passive voice. You will be seeing other passive constructions in this lesson with this same pattern.


Mistakes were made. = Fehler **wurden gemacht**.

In English we use the verb to be as the helping verb for the passive, but in German **werden** is used.

Figure 2: Sample reading lesson

Albert Einstein
Die Evolution der Physik

Text | Fragen score print all



Learning Object: Reading scientific texts - Albert Einstein

Introduction | Background | 'Lichtspektren' | 'Philosophischer Rahmen'

This unit contains an extract from the popular science book **Die Evolution der Physik**. The book was originally written in English in 1938 following a suggestion by the physicist **Leopold Infeld** to write a book on physics aimed at the general public. **Albert Einstein** reacted favourably to the idea and the book was published soon after.

Focusing on four areas, the book begins with a discussion of the rise (*der Aufstieg*) and then the fall of the mechanistic view in physics (*der Niedergang des mechanistischen Denkens*), followed by a section on field and relativity (*Kraftfeld und Relativitätstheorie*), before finishing with a final section on quanta (*die Quantentheorie*).

In 1973 the book was translated into German by Werner Preusser.

The passages selected for this learning objective are concerned with 'light spectra', an analysis of light when passed through a prism (*Prisma*) or a spectroscope (*Spektroskop*), and the philosophical framework of physics.

The texts contain only a limited amount of technical vocabulary since Einstein and Infeld were writing for the general reader; the explanations are quite straightforward and devoid of much abstract jargon.




Figure 3: Science reading incorporating OER

learning additional languages in the future. Such metalinguistic knowledge is essential for students to be able to be intelligent consumers of online language tools and services so as to be able to guide and customize their language learning.

An example of such a module is shown in *Figure 4*, a tutorial on the use of Google Translate, which includes inhouse developed content, along with incorporation of material from LORO (*Languages Open Resources Online*; Kerneis, 2008).

Students often use *Google Translate* and other online language tools naïvely, without an awareness of what the tool does well – in this case short phrases – and where it may fall short – in idiomatic phrases or connected discourse. The tutorial from LORO walks students through a series of hands on translating tasks, showing and discussing the issues which may occur in carrying out those tasks. Additional modules explore topics such as the use of concordances for vocabulary learning and the use of open, online proofing tools.

Designing for mobile access

In order for learning content to be shared, it needs to be in a format which is open and standardized.

Creating content within a VLE, by contrast, results in that content being trapped within a proprietary system (see Godwin-Jones, 2012). Blackboard, for example, features a content creation tool called ‘learning modules’, which could be used to create sequential learning materials. However, once created, content is viewable only within the Blackboard course and is not exportable. Creating content outside of the VLE enables the material to be used in a variety of ways (including within a VLE) and allows the content to still be accessible after the course is completed, or even after the student has left the university. The e-text is coded using standard HTML 5, with interactivity created through JavaScript, rather than using proprietary formats such as Flash or Java, as they do not run on most mobile devices. The modules can be used as standalone resources, integrated into a system such as Moodle, or combined into an e-course or an e-textbook. If incorporated into a VLE, access and assessment data can be sent to the VLE gradebook through the use of LTI, an open standard for integrating 3rd party tools and services into a VLE (Learning Tools Interoperability, 2010).

Whenever possible, the content modules in the e-text incorporate or link to online language tools or services. In addition to instructor-provided annotations in the readings, links are provided to online dual-language

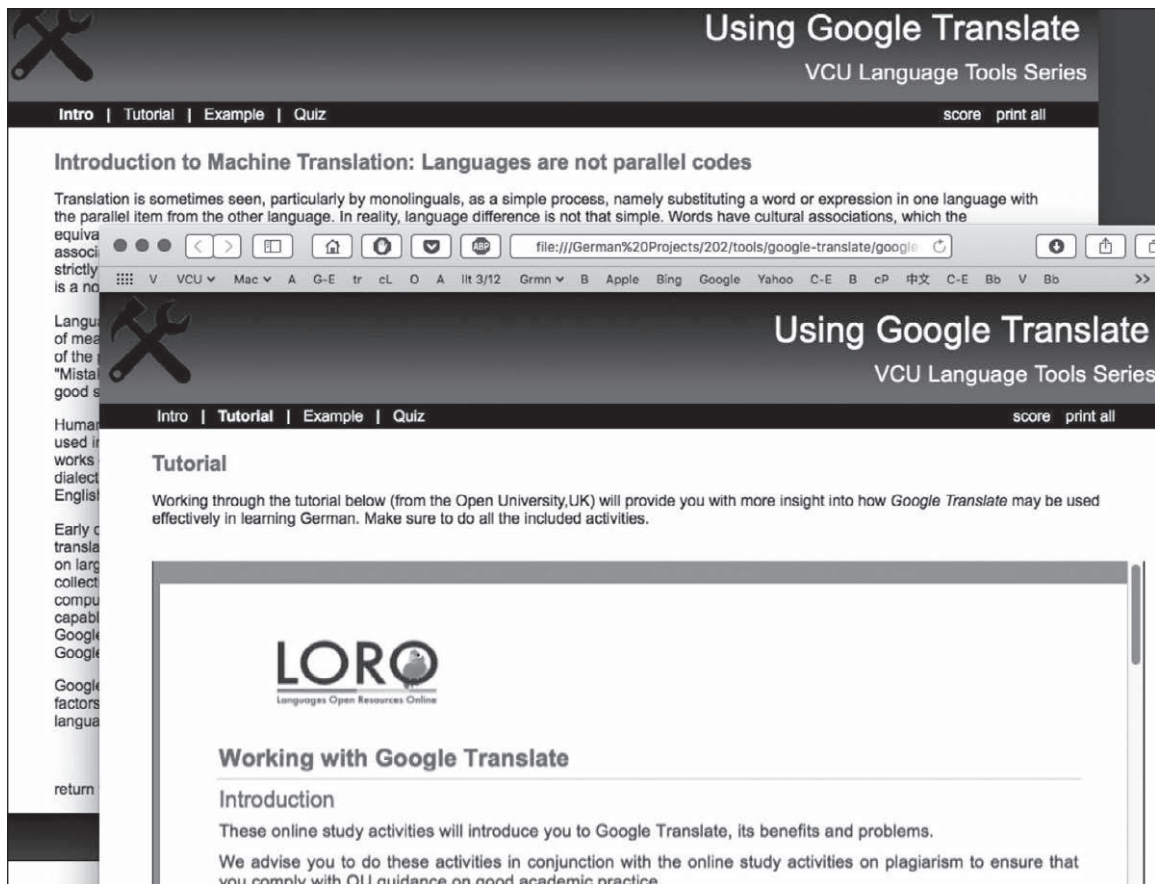


Figure 4: Module on using Google Translate

dictionaries as well as to the option of embedding the text in on-the-fly look-up tools such as *Globefish Instant Translator*. Figure 5 shows a flashcard web app developed inhouse, which encourages use of online concordances in vocabulary learning.

The app provides the basic functionality normally available in electronic flashcards, such as randomizing the order, flipping the language shown, and deleting from the stack items already learned. In addition, the app provides direct links to viewing the item to be learned in an online concordancing tool, Linguee (*linguee.com*), so that students can see the word used in context and also be introduced to the practical use of accessing language corpora. The app includes an editor, which allows students to edit or add items, as well as to export the list to a third party flashcard app such as Anki (*ankisrs.net*). In fact, a student used that feature to create vocabulary stacks in another online flashcard app, Memrise (*memrise.com*), which he shared with the class.

The flashcard app is accessible to students in several

different ways. The primary course website was built within a VLE, and the app is available as a link within the site's content pages. Additionally, students have access to a 'mobile companion' webpage, available outside the VLE, which incorporates the app, as seen in Figure 5. The mobile companion provides quick, no sign-in access to the tools and content most likely for students to use on the go, such as vocabulary drills, short videos, and daily current schedule/assignments. Students were encouraged to save the page as an icon on the home screen of their mobile devices for easy access.

All e-text modules were built using responsive design, allowing for optimized viewing on smaller devices. Page layout automatically adjusts to screen size, while the navigation is changed to a mobile friendly format when viewed on a phone. In addition, content is also available as e-books in the ePub format. This allows content to be stored on mobile devices, thus making it available without Internet access. Viewing the content modules in an e-reader (such as Apple's iBooks app) allows users to take advantage of the built-in features and tools available. These include bookmarking, note

The screenshot displays the 'Course Companion GRMN 202' mobile interface. At the top, it lists course topics: 'WIEDERHOLUNG: 1-Hamburg | 2-Froschkönig | 3-Fast-Food/Döner Kebab | 4-Subjunctive'. The main section is titled 'German 202 Der Froschkönig' and features a flashcard for the verb 'sich erbarmen'. The flashcard includes navigation buttons (<=, =>, Flip, Remove), options for randomizing the order (No/Yes) and display direction (Original/Reverse), and is identified as 'Flashcard # 5 of 21'. Below the flashcard, there are links for 'Reset | Keys | Open/close editor'. On the left, a 'Schedule' section lists 'Week 1' and 'Week 2', and a 'Readings' section lists 'Fast-Food Deutschland' with 'Web' and 'E-book' options, and 'Der Froschkönig' with 'Web' and 'E-book' options. On the right, a Linguee search result for 'sich erbarmen' is shown, providing the English translation 'take pity v (on sb.)', synonyms like 'mercy', 'pity', and 'compassion', and external sources.

Figure 5: Mobile companion with flashcard app

taking, and access to electronic dictionaries and other reference tools. Users can also easily adjust the display including font size, page layout, and background color.

Student reactions

The e-text modules were piloted in a class of 15 students, who were asked to maintain learner diaries, shared with both the class and the professor. Student comments in the learner diaries on the e-text highlighted the ease of use and access on mobile devices. Students pointed to the advantages of having an electronic textbook which links to online language learning tools and services. Students found that having an e-text made finding and organizing information easier. The following come from student learning logs from Spring, 2014.

"[The e-text] makes it a lot easier and faster to keep things organized which makes it easier to keep track of the homework." [Student E]

"Everything [on the e-text] is easily accessible." [Student B]

"I no longer have to print out anything." [Student D]

The students commented favorably on the availability of course resources on mobile devices and on the mobile companion as a convenient method for accessing course modules. Students commented that it helped increase interest in German and led them to explore other online language learning resources.

"[The mobile interface] helps raise my motivation when doing work making me more eager to go above and beyond what I need to do in German." [Student E]

"[Using the mobile companion] makes practicing German more accessible since there are so many apps that you can try; I find myself playing with the German apps more than watching TV or surfing the internet." [Student C]

"I find myself practicing German in my spare time rather than surfing the internet." [Student B]

"There are so many awesome apps that improve your German and strengthen your skills." [Student D]

"Apps like Duolingo seem like they will be extremely helpful in solidifying German grammar and vocabulary." [Student E]

Although the comments from students were overwhelming positive, there were some students who were not as enthusiastic about the digital format.

"Paper and pen will always be my top choice as far as notes/studying." [Student G]

Students more comfortable with print materials are able to print out the modules, as they are also available in PDF format. However, the modules incorporate interactive features (pop-up annotations, drills, formative assessments) which do not work in print format.

Conclusion

It is likely that as time goes on, students will be using digital learning materials more in all disciplines, so that the majority of learners are likely to become more comfortable with a digital only learning environment. The vast majority of students in this case study reacted favorably to the use of the on-line modules, citing their ease of use and ubiquitous availability. They also indicated that the mobile friendly online resources increased their motivation to spend time learning German. The increased use of those online resources is likely to lead to their continued use beyond the course, thereby contributing to learner autonomy.

The growing comfort level of students in the use of digital only learning materials will certainly apply to language learning, as CALL (computer-assisted language learning) increasingly becomes normalized in instructed language learning (Bax, 2003). As Chapelle (2010) comments, that development will have a major impact on materials creation for language learners:

The historically-constructed line between applied linguists who work in CALL and those who produce other forms of language learning materials is difficult to maintain and not very useful. In a sense, today almost anyone who is working on materials for classroom language learning is working in CALL. This vertical spread of CALL and the considerable activity surrounding its development and evaluation prompts reconsideration of all language learning materials. (p. 67)

The e-textbook discussed here provides one example of the merger of CALL and materials development Chapelle (2010) describes. Increasingly, materials developers are well advised to make content not only digital, but mobile-friendly as well, given the worldwide trend towards greater use of mobile devices in education. Enabling mobile access also holds the potential of the materials being integrated into students' everyday lives, making it more likely that they will continue to use the content, and the associated language learning knowledge, beyond the academic setting.

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Rob

Is There a Place for Youth Culture in Middle Eastern ELT Materials?

Paul Benjamin

Introduction

In a recent article I challenged the notion that for coursebooks and materials used in the Middle East to be culturally appropriate the only important consideration is that their content contained is appropriate for Muslim learners (Benjamin, 2015). It should be reiterated that while this consideration is essential, my contention is that the processes of selecting and designing materials for Arab learners should be more holistic than this. This paper aims to develop this idea by presenting the results of a questionnaire completed by 52 male secondary age learners from the United Arab Emirates. The questionnaire aimed in the first instance to ascertain whether these learners' English coursebook, *Unlock 2* (published by Cambridge University Press), achieved 'learner authenticity' (see below) by isolating the opinions of the learners in three key areas: firstly, their views of general classroom practice, secondly their views of iPad use in class, and finally their views of the material.

What emerges from the data is that within this group of learners, who engage with this book on a day-to-day basis through their iPads, there exists a clearly identifiable youth culture that the area of materials development could, and as this paper will argue, should tap into. This is an important area of development for materials writers in the Middle East as, particularly in the hydrocarbon exporting countries of the Arabian Peninsula (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE), there is an almost never-ending demand for innovative English teachers and materials that are targeted to the culture of the region. Given that these countries are undergoing rapid population growth and now, for the first time, the majority of their populations are under the age of 21 the idea of youth, namely people aged 15-24 (Gidley, 2004, p. 9), who come preloaded with their own identifiable culture is a market that is very important and exploitable in the years to come.

Learner Authenticity

This research is based on the idea of 'learner authenticity'. This is the process whereby learners give classroom materials authenticity and is achieved by

them responding 'appropriately' to a text (McDonald, Badger & Dasli, 2006, p. 252). Throughout this article the word 'text' will refer to any piece of language used for study which means that pictures, videos or recordings, just as much as a piece of writing, are considered as texts (Lewis, 2002, p. 219). In order for authentication of materials to take place the learners have to recognize them as having a legitimate place in the classroom, which should ideally work hand in hand with materials themselves engaging the interests and background knowledge of the learners in order to stimulate genuine communication (Seedhouse, 1995, pp. 62-63, Nunan, 1988, p. 102). In terms of the learners responding 'appropriately' to a text we are not necessarily talking about there being a linear marriage between the indigenous meaning of the text or the author's intentions and what the learners get from the text. Instead what we are looking for is for the learners to appropriate the text and 'bring their own cultural frames of reference to the process of understanding' (MacDonald et al, 2006, p. 255).

Recently, Rod Bolitho questioned who exactly was best placed to write textbooks to meet the requirements of 21st century learners. His conclusions suggested that local authors with knowledge of the culture and the context in which the materials are to be deployed in are best suited for the task (2015, p. 7). There is clear sense in this conclusion, as increasingly materials published by large and international publishing houses aim to employ native-speaking materials developers and draw their text types from the cultures of 'inner circle' countries (i.e. native English-speaking countries such as the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) lending credibility to the belief that authentic texts originate from 'hegemonic cultures' (Bolitho, 2015, p. 5, MacDonald et al, 2006, p. 254). I believe that large publishers justify such practices to their customers on the basis that including such texts provides a broader educational experience of the culture(s) from which the English language originates; although this could be viewed as glossing over the lack of ideas or knowledge in their creative teams of certain regions - in particular the Middle East. Teachers know that the reality is that English lessons are, by design, supposed to provide learners the chance to learn a language and are not an opportunity to plug gaps in other areas of the curriculum as a whole.

I contest that it is not enough to produce materials for the Middle East by selecting texts that are derived from the culture of inner circle countries and deign them as culturally appropriate because they do not mention Islam or run contrary to Islamic teachings. The reality will be that by simply applying this criterion, the materials produced are, ironically enough, likely to be anything but culturally appropriate and far less likely to allow Arab learners themselves to appropriate texts and give them learner authenticity. This is simply because the presence of Islam in these learners' lives is so ubiquitous that the absence of it from their classroom texts and lessons will always cause a fundamental disconnect between the learners' reality and how reality is presented in the classroom. This is not to suggest that coursebooks should start to head down this path, but more effort can be made to tap into other areas of Arabic culture when developing materials.

What is Culture?

In the introduction I specified that the results of the questionnaire with male UAE teenagers indicated the clear emergence of a youth culture. This may seem obvious given the age of the learners, but the reality is that in the west it is often the case that assumptions are made about a people and learners based on the wider culture of the society they come from, rather than the culture of their social groups or how they see themselves within their society. Materials development is no different from this: publishers aim to make their materials as appealing as possible to as wide a market as possible. However for the teacher this often means that we have culturally remote inner circle-derived texts that our learners struggle to identify with, meaning that our materials themselves, without relevant adaptations, often fail to achieve learner authenticity. In such cases the best thing we can do is realign the materials to make them more relevant to our learners' culture.

To do this effectively we need to clearly distinguish between high culture and sub culture. High culture is that which can be identified or applied on a country or regional level such as the social prevalence of Islam in the Middle East. Sub culture is that which we are likely to find at the classroom level, such as youth culture in a class group of teenagers for example, and is what our materials and our adaptations should target to help materials achieve learner authenticity. Targeting the learners' interests in this way would involve expanding into text types that are actually indigenous to the learner's youth culture rather than that of inner circle countries.

At the international publisher level a reason why this may not happen is that, as McGrath (2013, p. 149) points out, too often the process of evaluating classroom materials focuses on the views and responses

of teachers and researchers with far too little attention paid to the opinions of the learners. This is an institutional failing too as it is commonplace for learners to have no say in the coursebooks they use, so publishers are nearly always writing books for students to use but teachers to choose, and thus routinely try to appease two very distinct markets in one. Sadly this is unlikely to change, especially with regards to 'youths' aged 15-24, whose educational experiences take place almost exclusively in government-run schools and universities where decisions are made very remotely from the learners. Therefore the aim of this paper is to attempt to take a step towards addressing this issue by providing, firstly, an opportunity for learners to give their opinions about a widely used coursebook, and secondly turn this into data that all teachers using this book in the Middle East can use as a reference point for adapting this material for their learners. These responses are presented below to offer analysis and guidance as to how both teachers and publishers can start to produce materials and texts that are more likely to achieve learner authenticity.

The Material

The Unlock series is produced by Cambridge University Press and is a four level series running from CEFR A1 (beginner) to B2 (upper intermediate). It is an EAP course aimed at improving academic skills and language and is written using the Cambridge Academic and Learner corpora as guidance. Each level is divided into a speaking and listening book as well as a separate reading and writing book. All are available as standard print books or iPad books, and the content is the same in both formats. This questionnaire was completed based on the iPad version of the pre-intermediate or A2 level *Unlock 2* books. The introduction of the iPad into the classroom is an ever more popular approach but it is important that as they, or indeed any technology, become more commonplace they become 'invisible' to the teacher and the learner in order to be fully integrated into the learning process (Bax, 2009, p. 148-149). In this context, I believe we still have a long way to go until iPads themselves are, as Bax puts it, 'normalised' and a worthwhile educational tool rather than a distraction. Furthermore, I believe that further consideration should be given to the value and effect of such technology in classrooms as growing evidence suggests that prolonged use of smart devices is bad for children's sleep patterns and general health (Hysing, Pallesen and Stormark, 2015)

Nonetheless, in 2007 Dudeney and Hockly (pp. 7-8) wrote that the pedagogical use of technology was becoming increasingly important due to wider internet access and the fact that younger learners in particular were integrating technology into their lives more. Although technology has moved on in the years since this was written, the pertinent point here is that

technology such as iPads is part of youth culture so its place in the class in the eyes of the learners is an important consideration. The mode of delivery, whether through a paper book or electronically, should logically be linked to the suggestion above that learners play a greater role in selecting materials rather than teachers (or worse - bureaucrats!). Although *Unlock 2* is not perfect as it is very formulaic and predictable, making the learning experiences based around it quite routine and dull, it is a step in the right direction. As the results below show, by using an iPad as the mode of delivery, *Unlock 2* does move in the right direction in terms of gaining learner authenticity and engaging the youth culture of the learners.

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire was completed by 52 respondents who all used *Unlock 2* on a daily basis as their English language coursebook. All of the respondents were male, aged 14-15, from the United Arab Emirates and native speakers of Arabic. As Arabic was the L1, it was decided that it would be appropriate to present the survey in both Arabic and English. The questionnaires were also anonymous in order to help the respondents feel comfortable enough to be as honest as possible. The respondents were asked to answer 21 questions on a five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The Findings

The findings below are divided up based on whether the questions asked the respondents for their views on classroom practice, iPad use in class or on the material itself. Throughout, any numbers labeled with a star (*) indicate that the number of responses to this question or set of questions is lower than the possible total often because a respondent did not answer the question. The full questionnaire with collated results can be found in Appendix 1 and it is recommended that the reader read this first to help make the analysis below clearer.

Views on Classroom Practice

The first set of results show the respondents' feedback on the overall direction of their learning and classroom behaviour when using *Unlock 2*. The total number of responses to these questions is presented in *Figure 1* and shows that in general the respondents had a positive view of classroom practice. Out of the maximum of 207* responses, 172, or 83 per cent, of the respondents had positive opinions of classroom practice and the direction their language learning was taking. Specifically, 48 out of 52, or 92 per cent, of the respondents felt their teacher had helped them to improve their English, whilst 44 out of 52, or 85

percent, felt their English had improved over the course of the academic year.

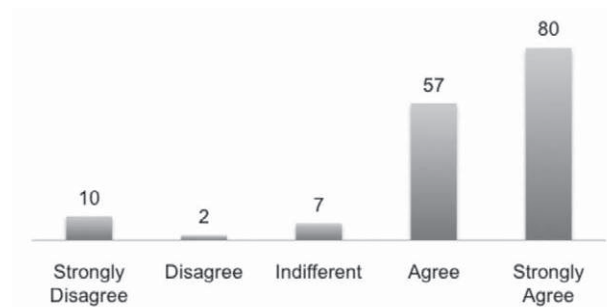


Figure 1: Respondents' satisfaction with classroom practice (Questions 1, 2 & 3)

Views on iPad Use

The respondents' opinions of iPad use in class are presented in *Figure 2*. The results may look mixed but this is because during analysis of the results it was clear that the wording of the questions was inconsistent so for some disagreeing with the statement was actually a positive thing. For example, question 20 asked respondents whether their iPad distracts them from their work and 43 out of 52 (83 per cent) either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Moreover, question 21 asked respondents if they would do more work in class if their iPad was not connected to the Internet and 40 out of 52 (77 per cent) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Essentially these results, though disagreeing with the statement in the questions, are positive and display that the respondents generally view the iPads as belonging in the classroom.

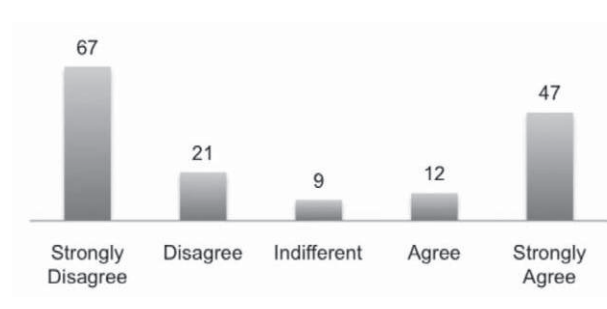


Figure 2: Respondents' level of agreement of iPad use in Class (Questions 5, 20 & 21)

As a teacher, I find it hard to accept that iPads are anything other than a distraction in the classroom. However, these figures suggest that using iPads in class is actually beneficial to the development of learner authentication of materials maybe because they are part of the youth culture of these learners, which suggests a need for teachers and learners to find ways to minimize the distracting impact of such devices in class. One simple way to do this would be to give the teacher control over the Internet availability in the classroom to help keep learners focused on tasks.

Overall, these results also suggest that the views of teachers and learners on the presentation of materials and classroom methodology can be divergent, which goes some way to underpinning the earlier point that learners' views should be sought, not least because they can be very different to those of teachers.

Views on the Material

In total fourteen questions asked for the respondents' opinions of *Unlock 2* as a coursebook. *Figure 3* illustrates the results for these questions and shows that the respondents had a favourable opinion of *Unlock 2* overall. Specifically, with 722* responses in total, 479 of these (66 per cent) indicated a favourable opinion of *Unlock 2* whilst only 16.7 percent of responses indicated an unfavourable opinion overall.

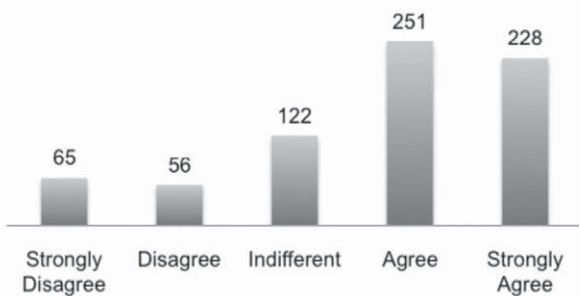


Figure 3: Respondents' Disposition Towards *Unlock 2* (Questions 4, 6-15 & 17-19)

Videos

For greater clarity as to whether *Unlock 2* had achieved learner authenticity certain questions needed to be analysed separately to identify specific themes. For example, questions 11 and 12 asked the respondents if they enjoyed watching the videos in *Unlock 2*, and whether doing so felt like 'real work', the intention behind which was to assess whether the respondents saw the videos as promoting their language learning. Of the responses, 67 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked watching the videos and 54 percent agreed or strongly agreed that doing so did not feel like real work. Of course, the inclusion and use of videos in class to accompany or complement material is not a new idea, so it logically follows that the inclusion of videos within the pages of an eBook is a worthy idea.

However, considering the idea of technology in the classroom becoming invisible, these responses suggest that the videos themselves have not achieved learner authenticity. Given that these results suggest that just over half the respondents did not see the use of videos as promoting their language learning it is clear that their inclusion and usefulness in class is debatable. This could be due to classroom management as much

as the presence of the videos themselves, but the results certainly present questions as to whether these videos can gain learner authenticity if they are not seen to have a place in the learning process.

Language Level

Figure 4 shows the respondents' views on the language level of the texts in *Unlock 2* and demonstrates that they mostly felt that the language level used in the written texts and videos was at an appropriate level for them. In total, 198 responses out of 258*, or 77 per cent, either agreed or strongly agreed that the language used in *Unlock 2* was either appropriate for their level or easy to understand. 73 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that the language in the reading texts was easy to understand, whilst 77 percent agreed or strongly agreed that these same texts were right for their level of English. Similarly, 75 per cent felt that the language used in the videos in *Unlock 2* was easy to understand, with 78 per cent agreeing that the language in the videos was right for their level of English. Question 17 also showed that 79 per cent of respondents felt that the instructions accompanying questions and tasks in *Unlock 2* were easy to understand.

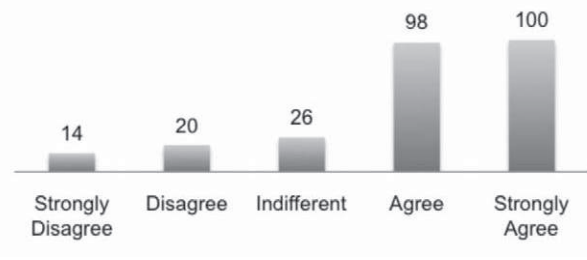


Figure 4: The Language Level in the Texts and Videos in *Unlock 2* is Appropriate to my Proficiency Level (Questions 9, 10, 13 & 14)

Overall these results show that the English level in this book is at the right level for these learners. This will help the materials gain learner authenticity because they are seen as comprehensible and will be perceived to belong in this classroom. It is also important that the respondents indicated that the instructions accompanying questions are easy to understand as classroom materials should not test the learners' ability to understand how to do a task ahead of their ability to complete the task itself, which will again aid learner authenticity as learners are likely to be, whether consciously or not, aware of this distinction.

Topics, Tasks and Texts

The learners' opinions of the content of *Unlock 2* and how interesting they found it were evaluated based on the questions represented in *Figure 5*. Overall the results suggest that in terms of content, *Unlock 2* does

largely achieve learner authenticity with 60 percent of responses from these questions indicating agreement that said content was interesting.

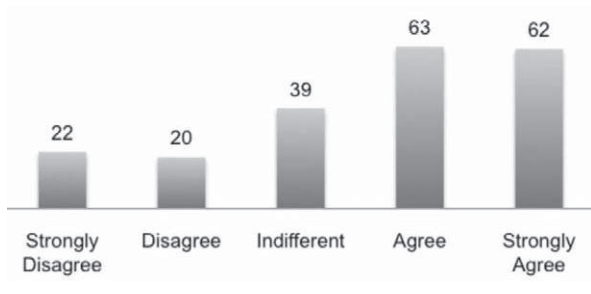


Figure 5: The Topics Texts and Tasks in *Unlock 2* are Interesting (Questions 7, 8, 11 & 15)

The results in *Figure 5* are given greater context when considered alongside the results to question 22 where the respondents had to choose five of their favourite topics. The available topics were those contained in *Unlock 2* plus additional topics that were selected on the basis that they would be likely or possible components of youth culture and that they could be integrated into *Unlock 2* with little difficulty. *Figure 6* presents the full set of topics and the number of choices each gained from the respondents.

Figure 6 is divided so that the topics from *Unlock 2* are displayed in a lighter shade to the right of the chart, whilst the additional topics are displayed in a darker shade to the left. With five choices selected by each of the 52 respondents, 260 choices were made in total. Of these 135 responses (52 percent) were cast for the additional topics and 125 (48 per cent) for those already in *Unlock 2*, suggesting a generally even spread across the two groups of topics. The top ten most popular choices are presented in order below with those from *Unlock 2* italicised:

1. *Sports and competition* (28)
2. Movies and TV (23)
3. *The Internet and technology* (22)
4. World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) (20)
5. Superheroes (18)
6. Cars and motorsports (17)
7. *Language and communication* (15)
8. *Places* (15)
9. *Space and the Universe* (14)
10. Manga (13)

What seems immediately noteworthy from these top ten topics is that they can be broadly generalized to belong to youth culture. What is clear is that it would be difficult to write an entire coursebook chapter on WWE, however this topic, which proved quite popular, could easily be integrated into a sports chapter. By the same token, another popular topic, superheroes, could be used in *Unlock 2* to make the chapter on people more aligned to youth culture and Manga could be a worthy contribution to a movies and TV chapter. One point that may seem surprising is that Arab culture and history did not register much interest as individual topics. However, if their results are combined, as it could be argued that this would form one larger topic, this would give a total of 19 votes which would make this a top ten topic. This suggests that there is scope to integrate topics and texts that come from the indigenous high culture of these learners as this may form a part of their youth culture in the form of national pride and identity.

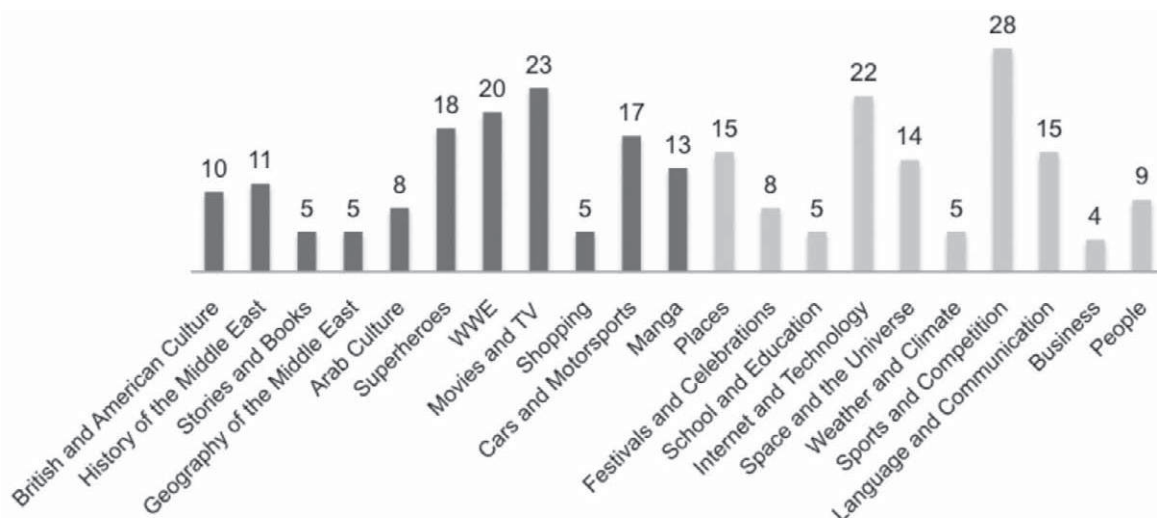


Figure 6: Respondents' Favourite Topics (Question 22)

Conclusions and Future Directions

This study has aimed to use the Middle East as a contextual example to highlight the importance of considering the interests of learners in the selection of coursebook topics and classroom materials. It is always going to be the case that licensing and image rights will hamper globally produced and marketed coursebooks in terms of what they are allowed to contain, and this is why it should be part of the role of the teacher to take this final step and make adaptations as needed for their class, especially in a sensitive region like the Middle East where publishers are especially cautious. However, teachers could be helped in this regard if coursebooks moved towards a wider variety of activities and also try to become more than the latest rehashing of Headway. This could be achieved by producing coursebooks that are less inward-looking and that encourage study outside of their pages. Culturally this article has also focused on the Middle East and tried to draw a distinction between high and sub cultures, and argue for the primacy of sub cultures in classroom materials. To help make this more commonplace we need to focus on using local writers with up-to-date knowledge of the learners and context (Bolitho, 2015, p. 7) which, in this region in particular, will allow us to break inner circle perceptions of Middle Eastern culture and move away from culturally remote texts produced within hegemonic cultures. It is key that in doing this we understand that with the majority of the population of the Gulf Monarchies now under the age of 21, youth and youth culture is a crucial market, and our materials, both mass produced and teacher produced, need to start moving towards this group of learners. If we take these steps, then we have a much greater chance of creating materials for the Middle Eastern EFL classroom that our learners perceive as belonging in their classroom and that will also be more likely to achieve learner authenticity.

Author's note:

It is acknowledged that this study was conducted with a small group of male only subjects and about one book. For greater relevance and development it is important for the scope to be widened to include female respondents and more coursebooks. I would be interested in collaborating with other researchers in this area.

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Appendix 1

Collated Questionnaire Results by Question

This questionnaire should let you give your opinions about the English book, *Unlock 2*, which you have used in your English classes this year. The questionnaire is anonymous so please **do not write your name on this paper**.

هذا الاستبيان سيسمح لكم بعرض آرائكم عن كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية، *Unlock 2*، الذي استخدمتموه في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية هذا العام. هذا الاستبيان بدون اسم، فمن فضلكم لا تكتبوا أسمائكم على هذه الورقة.

For each question you should tick (✓) one answer from the five-point scale. The answers will be:

1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Indifferent, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly Agree

لكل سؤال يجب أن تضعوا علامة (✓) أمام أحد الإجابات على المقياس المكون من خمس نقاط. ستكون الإجابات:

1. أرفض بشدة، 2. أرفض، 3. لا أبالي، 4. أوافق، 5. أوافق بشدة

	Question	السؤال	1. Strongly Disagree أرفض بشدة	2. Disagree أرفض	3. Indifferent لا أبالي	4. Agree أوافق	5. Strongly Agree أوافق بشدة
1.	I enjoy my English classes.	أنا أستمتع بحصص اللغة الإنجليزية.	4		3	14	31
2.	My English has improved this school year.	لقد تحسنت لغتي الإنجليزية في هذا العام الدراسي.	4	1	3	24	20
3.	My teacher has helped me improve my English.	لقد ساعدني مدرسي على تحسين لغتي الإنجليزية.	2	1	1	19	29
4.	<i>Unlock 2</i> is a good book.	كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> كتاب جيد.	3	2	12	28	7
5.	Using an English book on my iPad is better than a real book.	استخدام كتاب لغة الإنجليزية على iPad أفضل من استخدام كتاب عادي.	3	2	3	5	39
6.	<i>Unlock 2</i> has helped me improve my English.	لقد ساعدني كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> على تطوير لغتي الإنجليزية.	3	3	5	25	14
7.	<i>Unlock 2</i> contains interesting topics.	يحتوي كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> على مواضيع شيقة.	5	2	12	18	15
8.	The reading texts in <i>Unlock 2</i> are interesting.	نصوص القراءة في كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> شيقة.	6	9	7	16	13
9.	The English language in the reading texts in <i>Unlock 2</i> is easy to understand.	اللغة الإنجليزية في نصوص القراءة في كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> سهلة الفهم.	3	5	5	20	18
10.	The English language in the reading texts in <i>Unlock 2</i> is right for my level of English.		3	5	4	23	17

	اللغة الإنجليزية في نصوص القراءة في كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> مناسبة لمستواي في اللغة الإنجليزية.					
11.	I enjoy watching the videos in <i>Unlock 2</i> . أنا استمتع بمشاهدة مقاطع الفيديو في كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> .	4	2	10	12	23
12.	I enjoy watching the videos because it does not feel like real work. أنا استمتع بمشاهدة مقاطع الفيديو لأنها لا تبدو عملاً حقيقياً.	4	5	15	17	11
13.	I find the English language in the videos easy to understand. أنا أجد اللغة الإنجليزية في مقاطع الفيديو سهلة الفهم.	3	2	8	15	24
14.	I think the English language in the videos is right for my level of English. أنا أعتقد أن اللغة الإنجليزية في مقاطع الفيديو مناسبة لمستواي في اللغة الإنجليزية.	3	2	6	21	19
15.	The questions and tasks in <i>Unlock 2</i> are interesting. الأسئلة والتكليف في كتاب <i>Unlock 2</i> شيق.	7	7	10	17	11
16.	I always read the instructions before I attempt a question. أنا أقرأ التعليمات دائماً قبل أن أحاول حل السؤال.	6	2	8	17	18
17.	I find the instructions for questions easy to understand. أنا أجد تعليمات الأسئلة سهلة الفهم.	2	6	3	19	22
18.	I would like to read and write about Arab culture and history in my English lessons. أود أن أقرأ وأكتب عن الثقافة العربية والتاريخ العربي في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية.	11	4	11	8	18
19.	I would like to read about Britain and America in my English lessons. أود أن أقرأ عن بريطانيا وأمريكا في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية.	8	2	14	12	16
20.	My iPad distracts me from my work. الـ iPad يشغلني عن عملي.	31	12	2	4	3
21.	I would do more work in class if my iPad was not connected to the internet. سوف أنجز أعمالاً أكثر إذا لم يكن الـ iPad متصلاً بالإنترنت.	33	7	4	3	5

22. Choose 5 topics you would most like to study in your English book. Number them 1-5 with 1 being your favourite.

اختر 5 موضوعات تحب أن تدرسها في كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية. أعطها أرقاماً من 1 إلى 5 بحيث تكون رقم 1 هي المفضلة لديك.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Places
الأمكان | <input type="checkbox"/> British and American Culture
الثقافة الأمريكية والبريطانية | <input type="checkbox"/> Language and communication
اللغة والتواصل |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Festivals and celebrations
الأعياد والاحتفالات | <input type="checkbox"/> History of the Middle East
تاريخ الشرق الأوسط | <input type="checkbox"/> Movies and TV
الأفلام والمسلسلات |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School and education
المدرسة والتعليم | <input type="checkbox"/> Stories and books
القصص والكتب | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping
التسوق |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The internet and technology
تكنولوجيا الإنترنت | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography of the Middle East
جغرافيا الشرق الأوسط | <input type="checkbox"/> Cars and motorsports
السيارات وسباقات السيارات |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Space and the universe
الفضاء والكون | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab Culture
الثقافة العربية | <input type="checkbox"/> Manga
المانجا |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weather and climate
الجو والمناخ | <input type="checkbox"/> Superheroes (e.g. Iron Man)
الأبطال الخارقين (مثل الرجل الحديدي) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business
إدارة الأعمال |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports and competition
الرياضة والتنافس | <input type="checkbox"/> World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)
المصارعة الحرة العالمية الترفيهية (WWE) | <input type="checkbox"/> People
الناس |

-Thank you for your time-

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Regional Variation in the Vocabulary of French Textbooks

Jennifer Wagner

Introduction

Many French textbooks designed for university studies in the United States claim to offer students the opportunity to learn natural and authentic language as it is actually used in French-speaking or Francophone regions of the world. Based on these claims, one would expect the textbooks to include characteristics of regional varieties of French in addition to the standardised variety of France. This study assesses whether the aims and objectives as stated in the introductions of twelve first year and six second year university textbooks of French are consistent with the reality of what is offered in the textbooks.

Previous research on the Francophone aspects of French textbooks has mostly investigated the cultural content rather than the lexical content (Walz, 1991; Wiczorek, 1994). Some studies mentioned the inclusion of Quebec French variants in the lexicon (Chapelle, 2009; Etienne and Sax, 2009), but to the author's knowledge, no studies of regional variation have been carried out on the entirety of the vocabulary items included in French textbooks. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: to what extent do French textbooks include regional variant lexical items of standardised vocabulary and how are these items presented in the chapters?

Methodology

This study is a quantitative analysis of regional variant lexical items included within the chapters of eighteen French textbooks. Twelve first year textbooks and six second year textbooks of French designed for introductory and intermediate courses at American universities were chosen for analysis. All textbooks were published between the years of 2009 and 2013 by five American publishing companies. The first year textbooks are labelled 1A-1L and the second year textbooks are labelled 2A-2F. The list of textbooks analyzed is included in the Appendix; however, the specific textbook to which each data point corresponds is not identified in the body of the text. Following Walz's (1991) and Etienne and Sax's (2009) approach, the study aims to illustrate trends among contemporary French textbooks on the market rather than to critique

individual textbooks or textbook authors.

To examine variation in the lexicon of textbooks, a page by page reading of every chapter in all eighteen textbooks was done. The regional variant lexical items and the accompanying labels used to denote regional variation were recorded in an electronic database as well as whether the items were presented as active or passive vocabulary. Active lexical items were found in the end of chapter vocabulary lists, whereas passive lexical items included those found in boxes or sidebars, glossed in the margins of reading passages or in footnotes under dialogs and drawings. An example is the lexical item *souper* (dinner) labelled as Quebec, which is expressed as *dîner* in the standard variety of French.

Regional variation labels included the names of countries or regions where French is used as an official or administrative language, or as the language of education. This was done because all of the textbooks take a national approach to where the French language is used in the world based on political boundaries. This includes countries and regions where French is the official language and where French is used as a main language in the education system.

Once the database was completed, the number of regional variant lexical items found in each textbook could be determined in addition to how many of these items were introduced as active vocabulary. The most frequent regional variant lexical items found among all eighteen textbooks were also determined.

Findings

The number of regional variant lexical items found in each textbook is shown in Table 1 overleaf. The eight textbooks marked by an asterisk are those that include *Francophone* or *Global French* in their titles.

The number of regional variant lexical items ranges from 0 to 81 for first year textbooks and 0 to 28 for second year textbooks. Overall, there were 11 active, 198 passive, and 209 total regional variant lexical items found in the eighteen textbooks. Among the textbooks which include *Francophone* in the title, the range is from 1 to 15 for first year textbooks and from 5 to 28 regional variant lexical items for

second year textbooks. The textbook with the most regional variation overall, 1B with 81, does not include *Francophone* in the title. All of the variants in textbook 1B are found at the end of each of the twenty chapters, after the vocabulary list, and not within the main content of the chapter. No other textbook provides regional variant lexical items in every chapter.

TEXTBOOK	ACTIVE	PASSIVE	TOTAL
1A	0	6	6
1B	0	8	81
*1C	0	2	2
1D	0	21	21
*1E	3	12	15
1F	0	20	20
1G	0	2	2
1H	0	0	0
*1I	0	3	3
1J	0	10	10
*1K	0	1	1
*1L	0	1	1
<hr/>			
Total 1st year	3	159	162
<hr/>			
*2A	3	2	5
2B	0	0	0
*2C	5	23	28
2D	0	0	0
2E	0	0	0
*2F	0	14	14
<hr/>			
Total 2nd year	8	39	47
<hr/>			
Total 1st + 2nd	11	198	209

Table 1: Number of regional variant lexical items found in all textbooks

Such a small number of regional variant lexical items in the textbooks indicates that the majority of the vocabulary content belongs to metropolitan French. It is striking that textbooks with *Francophone* in the title include such little regional variation, especially for the first year textbooks 1K and 1L which only include one regional variant lexical item each. Other first year textbooks which do not have *Francophone* in their titles (1B, 1D and 1F) include more regional variation than the textbooks which do include *Francophone* in the title. This suggests that the inclusion of *Francophone* in the title does not refer to the lexical content of the textbooks.

More support for this notion can be seen in the most common regional variant lexical items that were found in at least three of the textbooks. As shown in Table 2, the most common variants all belong to Quebec French, with the exceptions of *septante* (seventy) and *nonante* (ninety) which belong to Belgian and Swiss varieties, and *huitante* (eighty) which belongs to Swiss varieties. There is a strong focus on North America and

Europe instead of a range of variants from the entire French-speaking world. This can be explained by the North American context in which these textbooks were produced, as they are intended to be used by students at American universities which tend to encourage study abroad in Canada and Europe. Nevertheless, this focus is at odds with the textbook introductions and titles that refer to the French-speaking or Francophone world that encompasses more than North America and Europe.

# of textbooks	regional item	standard item	English
7	dîner	déjeuner	lunch
7	souper	dîner	dinner
6	déjeuner	petit déjeuner	breakfast
6	fun	amusement	fun
5	bonjour	au revoir	goodbye
5	char	voiture	car
4	bleuet	myrtille	blueberry
3	blonde	petite amie	girlfriend
3	chien chaud	hot dog	hot dog
3	chum	petit ami	boyfriend
3	huitante	quatre-vingts	eighty
3	melon d'eau	pastèque	watermelon
3	nonante	quatre-vingt-dix	ninety
3	septante	soixante-dix	seventy
3	fin de semaine	week-end	weekend

Table 2: Most frequent regional variant lexical items found among all eighteen textbooks

The information on regional variation provided by the textbooks for the lexical items is often inconsistent or incomplete. One topic in which this occurs is meals, the three meals of breakfast, lunch, and dinner: *le petit déjeuner*, *le déjeuner*, and *le dîner* in France and *le déjeuner*, *le dîner*, and *le souper* in Quebec, Belgium, and Switzerland. Of the eight textbooks which point out differences in the names of meals among the varieties of French, six textbooks offer incomplete information. Textbook 1C offers the sentence 'au Québec, le repas du soir s'appelle le souper' (in Quebec, the evening meal is called *souper*) at the end of a cultural section on meals in France, but the variants for the other two meals are not provided. Similarly, textbook 1E states that Quebec French *dîner* is equal to metropolitan French *déjeuner* (lunch) in a cultural section at the end of the chapter, but does not include the other two variants either. Textbooks 1A, 1F, 1J and 2C do include all three variants, but similar to textbooks 1C and 1E, indicate that these variants are only used in Quebec rather than in Quebec, Belgium, and Switzerland. Textbooks 1B and 1D, however, do state that all three variants are used in Quebec, Belgium, and Switzerland.

Another example of incomplete information can be found with the presentation of numbers. Although seventy, eighty and ninety in the standardised variety of French are *soixante-dix*, *quatre-vingts*, and *quatre-*

vingt-dix, Belgium and Switzerland use *septante* and *nonante* for seventy and ninety, respectively, while parts of Switzerland use *huitante* for eighty. Only three textbooks (1B, 1F, 2C) include the number variants, although 2C incorrectly states that *huitante* is used in Belgium in addition to Switzerland. Textbook 1B includes the number variants in the same chapter as the standard numbers, though the variants are included at the end of the chapter. Textbook 1F offers these variants in a small box in chapter 10 even though the standard numbers were taught in the preliminary chapter. Finally, textbook 2C offers an explanation of these variants in a sidebar in a chapter focused on Switzerland.

In addition to incomplete information about where certain regional variant lexical items are used, the textbooks also neglect to include register information about the regional variant lexical items. A few of the words in Table 2 are informal in Quebec French. *Char* (car) is not labelled as informal even though *auto* is the standard form for car in Canadian French. Textbook 2F even equates *char* with *voiture*, when in fact, *auto* is considered the formal variant and *voiture* is hyperformal in Canadian contexts (Nadasdi, Mougeon, and Rehner, 2005). Similarly, the variants *blonde* (girlfriend) and *chum* (boyfriend) are not labelled as informal, though textbook 1D does indicate that they are used in spoken French in Quebec as variants of *petite amie* and *petit ami*. Both textbooks 1B and 1E, however, list *blonde* and *chum* as equivalents of *petite amie* and *petit ami* rather than *copine* and *copain*, the informal variants used in France. These omissions of information pertaining to register imply to students that the Quebec French informal variants can be used in the same contexts as the standard forms of France, when in fact their use would be considered inappropriate in those situations.

Moreover, many of the words in Table 2 were chosen to show the influence of English on Quebec French, such as *fun*. For example, textbook 2C states that '[p]lusieurs expressions québécoises, ou québecismes, sont marquées par l'influence de l'anglais' (many Quebec expressions, or Quebecisms, are marked by the influence of English) and a list of Quebec French variants follows, including *char* (car), *toune* (song), *c'est le fun* (it's fun), *face* (face), *rusher* (to be rushed or stressed), *change* (change), *toffe* (difficult), and *cute* (cute). A few other distinctions between Quebec and metropolitan French, such as lexical differences (blueberry is *un bleuet* in Quebec but *une myrtille* in France) or semantic differences (*dîner* means lunch in Quebec but dinner in France), are included in this textbook. However, these latter differences receive minimal emphasis, and the influence of English remains the focal point of this textbook's treatment of Quebec French.

Although a few textbooks treat the topic of English words used in metropolitan French and the French Academy's attempt at regulating their use, two textbooks

which describe Quebec French as being influenced by English tend to minimise this same influence on metropolitan French. Textbook 2C explains to students that Quebec French exhibits an influence of English because of the use of direct translations from English terms. 'D'autres traduisent des expressions anglaises en français même si les Français du métropole n'ont pas l'habitude de le traduire, comme : le chien chaud (un hot-dog), le melon d'eau (le pastèque, watermelon), et les patins à roues alignées (les rollers, inline skates)' (Others translate English expressions in French even if the metropolitan French tend not to, such as hot dog, watermelon and inline skates). However, the authors do not emphasize that English terms are used (such as *hot-dog* or *rollers*) in France instead of a direct translation into French. Textbook 2F, on the other hand, acknowledges the influence of English for both varieties: 'Les Québécois disent melon d'eau et chien chaud là où les Français disent pastèque et hot dog. Remarquez l'influence de l'anglais dans les deux cas' (The Québécois say *melon d'eau* [for watermelon] and *chien chaud* [for hot dog] where the French say *pastèque* [for watermelon] and *hot dog* [for hot dog]. Notice the influence of English in both cases).

Although every variety of French most likely borrows from English, textbooks 2C and 2F chose to highlight this as a feature of Quebec French, which suggests to students that it is a peculiar trait unique to Quebec French rather than a normal aspect of language evolution. By focusing solely on the influence of English in Quebec French, the textbooks treat regional variation as a simplistic rather than a complex system. Quebec French is largely characterized by its borrowings from English, while other differences between Quebec and metropolitan French that are not due to the influence of English, such as the influence of indigenous languages of Canada or the Catholic church, are rarely addressed in the textbooks. This treatment of Quebec French suggests to students that borrowing words from English is perhaps the only reason why variation occurs, when it is in fact one of many reasons.

Further to this misinformation on the characteristics of regional variation, the textbooks pay minimal attention to other varieties of French as evidenced by the most common regional variant lexical items belonging to Quebec French. The top 15 regional variant lexical items found in at least three of the textbooks were all from Quebec French. A focus on Quebec presupposes that this is the only variety besides metropolitan French that the students will be interested in or will need to learn about. Students are not made aware that several varieties exist, within and outside of France. This rather narrow definition of *Francophone* offered by the textbooks minimalizes the various forms of French and suggests to students that the French language is relatively homogenous wherever it is used in the world. Furthermore, the overall lack of regional variant lexical items in the textbooks reveals that

the authors do not meet the goals of including the language of the French-speaking world as stated in the introductions.

Discussion

The results of this analysis show that regional variation is presented in limited amounts in both the first year and second year university textbooks. The overall number of regional variant lexical items ranged from 0 to 81 for first year textbooks and from 0 to 28 for second year textbooks. An overwhelming majority of these variants were only included as passive vocabulary in reading passages or marginalized throughout the chapters. Even textbook 1B, which includes the most regional variant lexical items of all the textbooks, presents the variants in supplementary vocabulary lists at the end of the chapters, which can be easily overlooked by teachers and students. The relatively low number of variants and their depictions within the chapters as extra or optional vocabulary suggest that textbook authors may not assign much importance to students' acquisition of lexical variation.

Although Valdman (2000) indicates that the use of authentic materials is the best way to introduce students to variation, most of the variants found in the textbooks were simply lists of regional variant lexical items and their standard French counterparts. For example, when regional variation were included in authentic materials, such as excerpts of books or articles, the variants were glossed in English and left in footnotes, but the metropolitan counterparts were often not included. The lack of context prevents students from understanding how the word is used appropriately as well as the cultural significance of the word, especially in cases where there is no exact correspondence among the variants.

Regardless of whether the variants are presented in authentic contexts, the information pertaining to their use is frequently inconsistent or incomplete in the textbooks. Regional variant lexical items were introduced with limited information that did not reveal the full extent of their use. Furthermore, register variation within regional variation was entirely absent from the textbooks, leading to a mismatch of styles among varieties of French such as informal *char* used in Quebec being equated with neutral *voiture* used in France.

Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of regional variation in the French textbooks reveals a minimalist and unsystematic approach to teaching it. The focus is very much on prescriptive notions of formal metropolitan French rather than descriptive information and samples of authentic language use. This oversimplified view of language offered by the

textbooks may lead students to believe that French is rather homogeneous regardless of how, where or by whom it is used.

Although the textbook authors claim that students will learn the French language as it is actually used in the Francophone world, the textbooks rarely include words that are used in the French-speaking world outside of the standardised variety of France. Thus, the textbooks may not prepare students to communicate in the real world beyond the classroom. The findings of this study have significant implications for students and teachers as they will need to supplement current textbooks with authentic uses of French in order to include regional variation. Future materials designers will also need to strive to meet the expressed goals of their textbooks as the aims of current textbooks do not match the reality of what they offer.

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Dr. Jennifer Wagner earned her PhD in Applied Linguistics at the University of South Australia, where she taught undergraduate French and linguistics courses. She has also taught English as a Second Language at Oakland University in the United States and at the University of Savoie Mont Blanc in France. She is the author of *Say it in French: New Edition (2011)* and the translator of *Great French Short Stories of the Twentieth Century: A Dual-Language Book (2012)*.

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Appendix: Textbooks used in the study

First year textbooks

Amon, E., Muyskens, J. A., & Omaggio-Hadley, A. C. (2011). *Vis-à-vis: Beginning French* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Anderson, B., Golato, P., & Blatty, S. A. (2012). *En avant: Beginning French* (1st ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Anover, V., & Antes, T. A. (2012). *À Vous!: The Global French Experience* (2nd ed.). Boston: Cengage-Heinle.

Ariew, R., & Dupuy, B. (2010). *Français-Monde: Connectez-vous à la francophonie* (1st ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Heilenman, K., Kaplan, I., & Toussaint Tournier, C. (2010). *Voilà! An introduction to French* (6th ed.). Boston: Thomson-Heinle.

Mitschke, C., & Tano, S. (2011). *Espaces: Rendez-vous avec le monde francophone* (2nd ed.). Boston: Vista Higher Learning.

Oates, M., & Oukada, L. (2013). *Entre Amis: An Interactive Approach* (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Terrell, T. D., Rogers, M. B., Kerr, B. J., & Spielmann, G. (2009). *Deux mondes: A communicative approach* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Thompson, C. P., & Phillips, E. M. (2013). *Mais Oui!: Introductory French And Francophone Culture* (5th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Valdman, A., Pons, C., & Scullen, M. E. (2009). *Chez Nous: Branché Sur Le Monde Francophone* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Valette, J.-P., & Valette, R. M. (2009). *Contacts: Langue et culture françaises* (8th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Wong, W., Weber-Fever, S., Ousselin, E., & VanPatten, B. (2013). *Liaisons: An Introduction to French* (1st ed.). Boston: Cengage-Heinle.

Second year textbooks

Bissière, M. (2013). *Séquences: Intermediate French through Film* (2nd ed.). Boston: Cengage-Heinle.

Blood, E., & Mobarek, Y. (2011). *Intrigue: langue, culture et mystère dans le monde francophone* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/Prentice Hall.

Bragger, J., & Rice, D. (2012). *Quant à moi* (5th ed.). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Muyskens, J., Harlow, L., Violet, M., & Brière, J.-F. (2012). *Bravo!* (7th ed.). Boston: Thomson-Heinle.

Oates, M., & Dubois, J. (2010). *Personnages: An Intermediate Course in French Language and Francophone Culture* (4th ed.). Hoboken NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

St. Onge, S., & St. Onge, R. (2012). *Interaction: Langue et culture* (8th ed.). Boston: Thomson-Heinle.

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English Language Learners Describing Graphs Successfully

Tony Waterman

A version of this article was presented in poster form at the MATSDA conference, Liverpool, 2016.

Introduction

Graphs are an example of visual data which learners encounter during their studies and possibly future careers, too. Other examples of visual data include: tables; pie charts; bar charts; flow charts; and diagrams. These types of data are prevalent in general English, ESP, EAP and EOP course books as well as on-line materials, with their often-narrow genre-types in terms of written texts with their 'formal properties and communicative purposes' (Hyland, 2009, p.65). Learners contend with them in workbooks and other practice material, both paper- and digital-based and of course they feature in high stakes examinations such as IELTS. These visual data are ubiquitous in careers related to building, business, economics, engineering, finance, management, medicine, politics and science so that learners who already have a firm grasp of the concepts, construction and details inherent in such data will enjoy an advantage in the competitive world of the 21st Century. Being able to accurately and concisely describe graphs requires both input of key language and extensive practice to produce an accomplished standard of oral and written description. This article presents strategies for writers and teachers to train learners for the classroom and / or self-study by skilling them in essential grammar, lexis and appropriate genre writing. A range of tasks, varying incrementally in degree of difficulty, is presented to de-construct and then re-construct graphs by engaging the four skills while completing tasks individually or in pairs.

Presenting and practising new language

Using graphs to present and practice new language offers writers and teachers with visual input during all three stages of the learning process: input; learning; and use (Scrivener, 2011). Such visual material suits learners with a propensity for visual learning (Oxford, 2011) whilst providing simple, clear input for learners with other learning styles. Graphs offer input which can be authentic (Thornbury, 2005), adapted (McGrath,

2002) or created (Richards, 2001) depending on the needs and abilities of the learners.

Graphs offer flexible material for use in a variety of approaches to presentation of language. Currently popular ways to present new target language (TL) include discovery of TL (Bolitho and Tomlinson, 2005; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010), the lexical approach (Lewis, 1997), noticing TL (Batstone, 1996) task-based language teaching (Nunan, 1998, 2004; Willis and Willis, 2007) and the still ubiquitous presentation-practice-production (PPP) model (Scrivener, 2011). Graphs and other visual data, by their very nature, can optimize impact (Ur, 2012) and promote learner interest to positively affect learner motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Graphs can also offer meaningful controlled and guided practice (Ur, 2012) and structure-based discourse composition (ibid.).

Learner needs

Clearly, learners need to be well prepared to cope with these types of visual data successfully and yet I would suggest that such practice, as is included in course materials, often falls short of providing sufficient affordances for learners to acquire key lexical items and have the sub-skills needed to attain a satisfactory, or even comprehensive, level of competence. Therefore, I would like to propose a range of strategies and classroom / self-study activities to facilitate greater competence in this area of language acquisition. I have selected graphs as the focal point but the ideas presented here could mostly also be applied and used to the other forms of visual data listed above.

Typical ELT visual-data material

Imagine that the next task for your current learners is to describe the graph shown in *Figure 1* overleaf.

How would your learners react to such a graph? If your answer is 'No problem!' then you have obviously prepared them well for dealing with graphs. However, I would suggest the majority of teachers would say 'Goodness, that would be a real challenge!' There is nothing wrong with challenging learners (Tomlinson, 2003) but why is this such an unfriendly text for

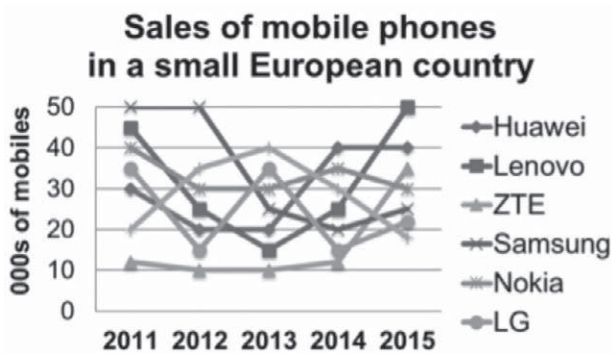


Figure 1: An example of overly-challenging material

learners to work with? First, it looks complicated and highly demanding, which could easily lead to learner de-motivation and loss of confidence. Second, the graph's content is not meaningful or relevant to the learners (or anybody else, come to that) with no country actually named. Third, the physical appearance of the data presented makes the task of describing them accurately extremely difficult. Finally, even though this ELT material may hold some face validity (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) for learners in terms of their future needs, it presents a daunting challenge whether the tasks accompanying it involve spoken or written description. Clearly, this *text* as defined by Mishan (2005) has been produced specifically to provide practice for ELT learners. As such, it lacks authenticity in terms of the real world, being material devised for classroom use and which can only be 'authenticated' by the language practice task(s) produced for use with it. I have created all the subsequent visual data included in this article to my professional specifications to exemplify my approach to supporting learners working with such data. However, authentic material could be used for all the tasks which follow if available and appropriate for the local learning context to create a classroom environment conducive to learning (Pinner, 2016).

Skilling the learners

Learners need clear presentation material whichever approach or model the teacher, or syllabus, selects to present new language. Learners also need to practice and produce language no matter which approach is selected. Harmer (2007) offers a simple but clear model: engage-study-activate to acquire new language and skills. Moreover, the majority of learners will need support, or scaffolding, if they are to enjoy success. So, what are the grammatical and lexical items together with specific sub-skills practice that learners need to describe visual data with accuracy and competence, either in the spoken or written form? Well, first they need to have the understanding and awareness to be able to study visual data and decipher the messages

these convey. Learners need to comprehend how such data are constructed. They need to be able to see, understand and produce the macro-view of the text - its key elements, in the above example graph: sales of GSMs (global system for mobiles); manufacturers' names; numbers sold; and years charted. Second, they need to be able to see, understand and produce the data's micro-elements: the individual companies' data; the fluctuations in yearly results; comparisons between companies' results; and the fact that all these data are in the past (2011-2015).

To cover both the macro and micro requirements of describing such visual data, learners need a considerable amount of specialized and focused preparation. Learners need to acquire the comprehension skills to understand and prioritize the various elements as outlined above to produce descriptions which identify key data to form an overview of the total picture. They need the analytical skills to be able to identify and present key trends and results using key grammatical and lexical items. They also need the pragmatic skills to produce objective descriptions without including any inference, personal knowledge or opinions - particularly relevant in the IELTS writing test unless specifically required to do so by their course work or future needs.

Pedagogic and authentic tasks

The tasks presented below are all pedagogic tasks, specially created / adapted and designed for the classroom. Accompanying written descriptions represent well-crafted but simplified versions (Guariento and Morley, 2001) of authentic graphs to enable learners to achieve success. Such pedagogic tasks are related to authentic tasks requiring learners to produce authentic responses (Long and Crookes, 1992), particularly in terms of spoken description of such visual data in keeping with Breen's (1985) notion of the pedagogic authenticity of the classroom in relation to real-world needs.

Producing learner-friendly materials

It becomes clear that learners require a range of different types of scaffolding. In order to enable learners to understand visual data, they need to appreciate how such data are constructed so providing practice of de-constructing such data is a logical way to support learner-needs. In the practice material shown in Tasks 1, 2 and 3 below, learners are sensitized and then given practice at identifying a range of important data.

Tips for teachers preparing materials

All the graphs presented in this article were produced using Microsoft Word's menus: Insert Chart Line and then using this user-friendly, intuitive software

to click and change the template by adding / deleting new data and increasing / decreasing the complexity of the graph. Everything from the chart title and indices to X and Y axes, to position of the title and indices, to detailed data for constructing graph lines, to colours and fonts can be manipulated to ensure the finished visual data suits the level of learner ability and the task. It is also advisable to produce answer keys in the event other teachers use the material as keys clarify the task as well as freeing up teacher-time to support individual learners during the task.

De-constructing graphs

The following three tasks offer learners receptive skills practice, viewing and reading, to de-construct graphs. Task 1 below presents a simplified graph to ensure clarity of the visual data to facilitate learner appreciation of the key elements of a typical graph. Such presentation material can be produced to focus not only on the content but include reference to 'specialised' language, for example nouns, verbs or adverbs, pertaining to graphs or other types of visual data if the teacher / writer considers this helpful and in line with previous course work. Starting with simple comprehension tasks can prepare learners for more challenging reading tasks while providing 'opportunities for students to experience comprehension success' (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p.132). In Task 1, learners are asked to circle the nouns in the written description which correspond to the data presented in the graph and link the two with an arrowed line.

Task 1

De-constructing a graph (nouns = n):

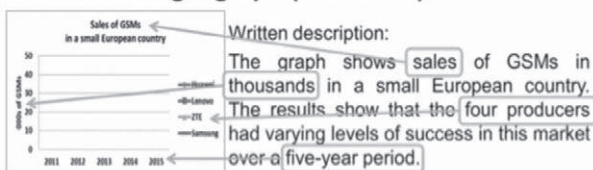


Figure 2: De-constructing a graph focusing on key nouns (Answer key)

Task 2 below presents sales results for a single manufacturer of GSMs to cover common verbs used to describe graph data. The Microsoft software enables the producer of the graph to show a single trend and is a highly visual way to link the learners' language needs to the results they can see. This is in keeping with Grabe and Stoller's curricular sub-principle for reading instruction of building 'students' text structure awareness' (ibid.). Learners are tasked to circle and link verbs in the written description with data as represented by the graph line.

Task 2

De-constructing a graph (verbs = v):

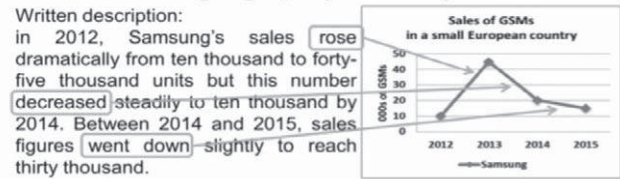


Figure 3: De-constructing a graph focusing on key verbs (Answer key)

Task 3 below presents a single years' worth of data for three of the original six manufacturers' sales data, thereby keeping the graphic data clear, simple but highly important in terms of the target language, adverbs, which heighten the concept of sales results going down. In Task 3, learners circle and link the adverbs to the corresponding graph lines.

Task 3

De-constructing a graph (adverbs = adv):

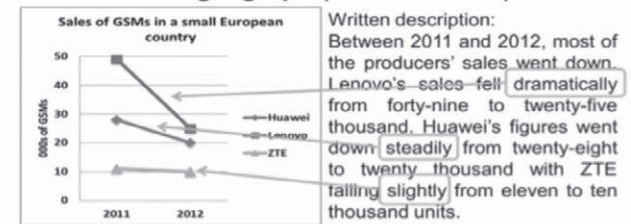


Figure 4: De-constructing a graph focusing on key adverbs (Answer key)

Tasks 2 and 3 focus on key language items thereby fulfilling another of Grabe and Stoller's (ibid.) curricular sub-principles by integrating content and language learning goals whilst also requiring learners to actively see and use new words (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2008).

Using learner-friendly materials

These three examples of visual data tasks can form the basis for several strategies relating to learner understanding. First, they guide teachers / writers to create materials which enable learners to de-construct visual data by focusing on macro-elements as in Task 1 or micro-elements as in Tasks 2 and 3. Second, these materials are easily transformed from tools to aid learner understanding to tools which provide practice in de-constructing, or re-constructing, visual data with learner practice taking the form of spoken English or the written form or both, with speaking preceding writing. Third, by simplifying the original visual data through reduction and focus on individual

elements, writers / teachers can grade the language (Wilkins, 1976) and content (Wong-Fillmore, 1985) to pitch materials according to their learners' abilities. Furthermore, this process of simplification allows for the setting of challenging but achievable tasks for learners. Creating class-specific materials empowers writers / teachers to supply sufficient scaffolding to facilitate greater learner success and this success can be enhanced from initial, simplified practice to more complex and challenging tasks on an incremental scale closely linked to learner ability. Moreover, Word's user-friendly software allows writers / teachers to create or adapt visual data which have relevance, interest and face validity, that is particular groups of learners can appreciate that this material and accompanying tasks are relevant to their present and future needs, thereby increasing learner motivation to attempt the challenge which describing visual data presents.

Providing affordances for skilling learners

In the example materials presented in Tasks 1 - 3 above, learners are tasked with de-constructing graph data to assist and enhance their understanding. The next step is to provide materials which task learners to re-construct visual data. There follows a selection of materials and tasks which offer writers / teachers numerous options providing affordances for oral and written production of data. Learners, working individually or with partners, can develop their understanding, analysis and production of language by engaging with these tasks.

Re-constructing graphs

The logical progression from the above examples of presentation material is to provide learners with visual data and texts for them to identify key language and data for themselves. Tasks 4 - 7 offer learners receptive skills practice as per the previous tasks to re-construct graphs.

Receptive practice

Working individually and then checking in pairs, Task 4 presents learners with three graphs and they must match up the correct one with the text. The writer / teacher can design three graphs which differ widely and a text which is simple to make the task easy or make either the difference between the graphs very small and the text more complex to alter the level of challenge for learners. The task requires both intensive reading and interpretation of the visual data.

Task 4

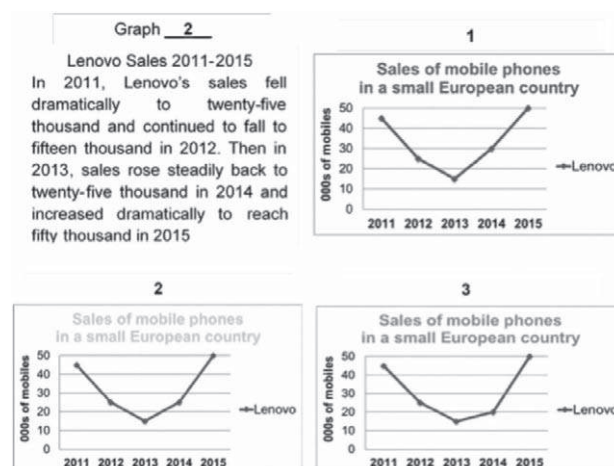


Figure 5: Matching the correct graph with the text (Answer key)

Working either individually or in pairs, Task 5 presents learners with several texts only one of which matches a partial graph.

Task 5

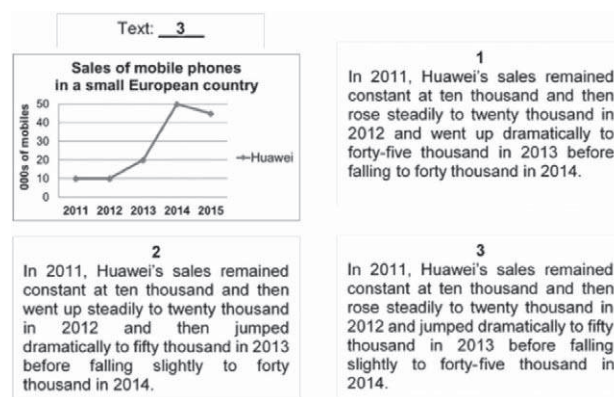


Figure 6: Matching the correct text with the graph (Answer key)

Task 6 extends the amount of content presented to learners for them to match up. This enables the writer / teacher to include a wider range of target language such as verbs and adverbs as well as setting less differentiation between graphs and hence greater challenge for learners.

Task 6

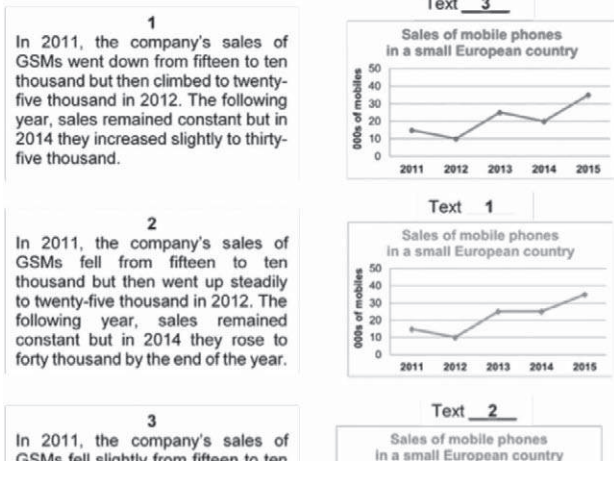


Figure 7: Matching texts with graphs (Answer key)

Task 7 (no visual included here, for reasons of space) builds incrementally on Tasks 1 - 6 by presenting complete texts and complete graphs for matching. Naturally, this content requires greater space and can follow the format of either of the two previous tasks thereby allowing for various levels of challenge.

Productive practice

The following re-construction tasks are designed to be communicative information gap tasks completed in pairs. The learners are tasked to either read text aloud or describe visual data for their partner to draw the data or write it in textual form. Working face-to-face, or back-to-back, and without being able to see or read each other's worksheet, the learners must negotiate the message and check repeatedly to ensure they are transmitting and receiving the correct data. In this way, the learners are engaged in authentic communicative scenarios consistent with a fundamental tenant of communicative language teaching, that of placing a high value on language in use to facilitate effective language acquisition (Hughes, 2011). With both the speaker and listener working hard to complete the task successfully, both partners are making cognitive commitments to producing language/understanding the language produced. This is seen as vital in ensuring both quantity and quality of input, as well as engagement in interaction to develop listening and speaking skills.

Task 8 requires learner A to read a short text describing a single manufacturer's graph line of results while learner B listens and draws the line on an empty graph. Then B reads and A draws as illustrated in Figure 8.

Task 8

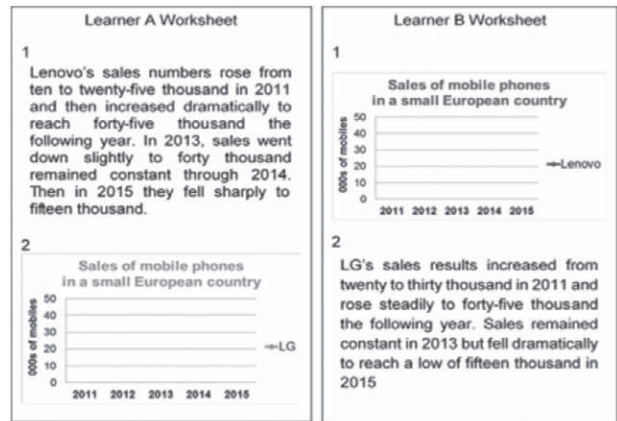


Figure 8: Reading partial texts aloud for line drawing

Task 9 builds incrementally on Task 8 by requiring learner A to read a complete text aloud for learner B to draw on his/her graph to provide extensive practice of listening, clarifying and producing a correct artefact for later checking together with the same partner or another partner.

Whilst previous productive tasks have provided only the listener with considerable challenge to receive and produce drawings or texts, Task 10 presents both learners with more challenging work. In Task 10, learner A describes a single line of results and learner B draws the line on an empty graph and vice versa as before as presented below.

Task 10

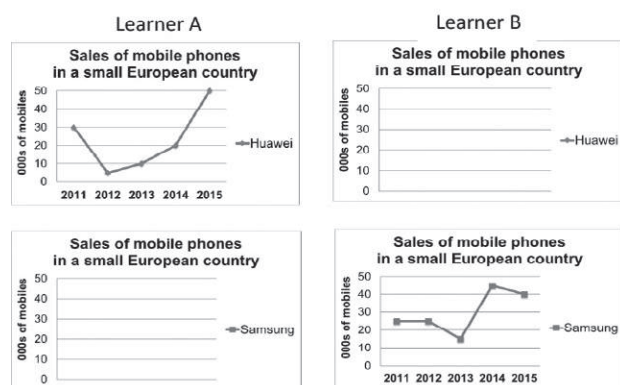


Figure 9: Describing a single line for drawing

Task 11 requires Learner A to describe a single line of results for learner B to write a corresponding text as shown below.

Task 11

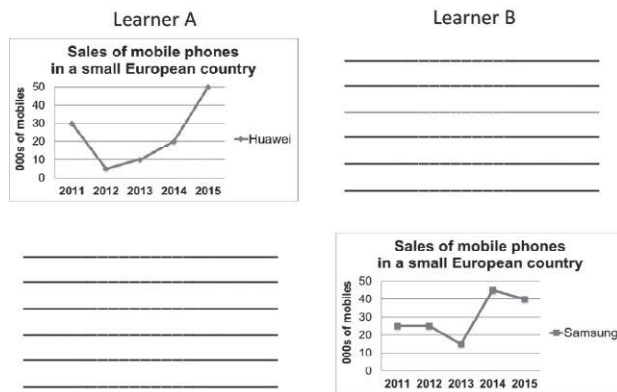


Figure 10: Describing a single line for text production

Task 12 has learner A describing a complete graph for learner B to produce a complete graph. Depending on the level of difficulty the learners can handle, this task could require pairs to describe all aspects of the graphs including the title, X and Y axes labels and the legend (of manufacturers in our graphs here) and then vice versa to give both learners opportunities to receive and produce visual data.

Task 13 is the pinnacle of the series of tasks outlined above. Learner A has to describe a complete graph for learner B to write a complete text. Successful completion of this task requires both A and B to communicate information accurately to enable correct textual data to be produced.

The above tasks offer writers / teachers with multiple options, some or all of which can be selected and produced to provide learners with multiple opportunities for receptive and productive skills work over an extended period. They offer numerous opportunities to insert recently-learned language into the syllabus to satisfy the notion of learners needing multiple exposures to such language to facilitate acquisition (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000).

Writers and teachers can select some of the tasks to fit locally-appropriate approaches and develop materials to address the local learning context (Husbands, Kitson and Pendry, 2003). These tasks are also applicable for content-based instruction (CBI) with content subjects, such as economics combining EAP and academic subject practices to develop both content and language uptake (Guthrie et al, 2004).

Another advantage of these tasks is that learners produce artefacts, either visual or textual in nature, which can then be exhibited on classroom walls in a similar way to Beck et al's (2008) suggestion of a word wall. In particular, the visual, graphic artefacts could then be used to re-cycle or even test learners at moments throughout the course. With learners' work

being exhibited, it may also be rewarding for writers and teachers to negotiate certain parts of the syllabus with their learners (Senior, 2006). In this case, interesting and relevant topics and sources for the selection and inclusion of authentic or adapted visual data 'texts' to increase learner engagement and levels of motivation as learners authenticate visual data into their own words, thereby gaining a sense of empowerment and autonomy (Kramsch, A'Ness and Lam, 2000).

Conclusion

The thirteen tasks outlined above represent a range of practical ideas for providing learners with receptive and productive tasks for using and acquiring key language in the challenging area of describing visual data. By engaging in communication, learners demonstrate their progress at acquiring this target language and developing their skills work. These materials and tasks offer writers / teachers multiple options for communicative practice in the classroom which facilitate interaction, collaboration and multi-skills practice. However, these tasks are not a finite group nor are they immutable but exemplify various ways to facilitate language acquisition through practice. I hope the reader finds them interesting, intriguing even, but most of all I present them as stepping stones to triggering creative ideas in writers and teachers to produce similar or widely-differing materials and tasks to support teachers and learners as they grapple with the challenges which describing visual data pose.

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Assessing Teaching and Learning Culture through Language Coursebooks: Experienced EFL teachers' perspectives

Saw Thanda Swe

Introduction

This paper discusses EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning cultures through ELT coursebooks. Eighty-five EFL teachers participated in this study and shared their thoughts about teaching culture in EFL classrooms. Both native and non-native speakers of English language teachers were recruited and the results revealed that many teachers prefer teaching culture in the classroom through coursebooks. However, some think it is unnecessary to have them and that it would be more efficient to learn culture from other people (class teacher, classmates) or through authentic settings.

Whether or not learning culture is useful when learning a foreign language has been discussed by many researchers and theorists over the last decade. It is, in fact, difficult to avoid teaching culture when teaching or learning a language because language and culture are interconnected, and 'the study of language cannot be divorced from the study of culture, and vice versa' (Seelye, 1997, cited in Nault, 2006, p. 137).

On the other hand, as Apak and Tanrıverdi (2008, p.2) state; 'Culture is often neglected in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and ESL (i.e. English as a Second Language) teaching/learning, or introduced as no more than supplementary diversion to language instruction'. Since cultural elements are presented in coursebooks however (e.g. *New Cutting Edge*, Cunningham and Moor, 2005; *Clockwise*, Naunton, 2010 include 'culture as behaviours' elements, such as the do's and don'ts of particular cultures), teachers have to deal with them. They have to find materials, think about some suitable activities, plan how to teach them and consider whether the materials should be modified in some parts in order not to create any cultural conflicts in the class.

There is no doubt that teaching culture helps learners to understand how people think and compels them to see each other through their own cultures. Having mentioned that teaching culture in ELT holds a role in learning because of the connection between language and culture, it is important to discuss how to teach

culture(s) through language. It could, for example, be taught as an individual topic or cultural elements might be delivered through language. Furthermore, it is important to consider whether EFL teachers who are the 'leaders of (ELT) classrooms' (Swe, 2016) think these elements should be taught or learnt through personal experiences.

The English language and its relationship with culture

Nihalani (2008, p.243) questions 'Who is to say what is 'real' English in a world where native speakers of British and American English are in the minority?' when explaining the use of English in local languages such as Spanglish and Singlish by Singaporeans. In this case, the English language stands not only as a language for communication among users but it takes the role of a first language with local cultures because it is likely that Chinese/Singaporean speakers use the language through their own cultures. I myself use, write and interpret English through a Burmese context as I was brought up in my local culture and this influences me cognitively (that is, my thinking process is influenced by my own culture which, for example values respect and politeness so that when addressing someone I think about how I should address them, etc.). This is therefore to say that a non-English language user uses a foreign language through his/her own cultural context.

The use of English across cultures

In terms of the use of English as a medium for international communication, Baker (2008, p.133) gives an example of using English as a lingua franca among different first language users: 'English is much more likely to be used in communication between a Singaporean and Thai, or a Chinese and Japanese'. Nihalani (2008, p.244) calls English 'a global product', and notes that English is used by speakers, both native and non-native, around the world for many purposes (e.g. for education, business, etc.).

The term 'global lingua franca' (McKay, 2003, p.31) is therefore given to English, since it is being used for communication or receiving information between native and non-native or among different first language users in various settings (e.g. exchanging emails for businesses/course registrations or querying about hotel rooms for holidays, etc.). Thus, Baker (2011, p.62) maintains that since 'the English language is now used as a global lingua franca in a huge range of different cultural contexts, a correlation between the English language and a particular culture and nation is clearly problematic'. Different cultures between two speakers can create conflicts or uncomfortable moments. The issue of the use of titles in academia (professor, etc.) in different cultural settings is a case in point. As a teacher of English, I felt that these sorts of small elements of culture should be taught/shared with language learners, and in this study, I investigated other teachers' opinions of whether cultures should be taught in language classrooms.

Language Learning and Intercultural Competence

McKay (2003, p.45) notes that 'English is being studied and used more and more as an international language in which learners acquire English as an additional language of wider communication'. When a person learns English, s/he is called an English language learner; and the term 'English language learner' is not only a process of learning language 'even though it encompasses scores of native languages, cultures, socioeconomic levels, and educational backgrounds' (Case, 2015, p.362). Thus, one is compelled to learn about culture when learning a language. As I experienced, many language teachers deliver, and learners focus more on, language (e.g. grammar), especially among Asian English language teachers and learners. I myself concentrated more on grammar and lexis in my first few steps of learning English whilst I was attempting 'to achieve native-like competence in the language' (McKay, 2003, p.35). However, I later developed cultural awareness when I became a fluent speaker of English and when I had been exposed to multicultural settings.

Learning about culture helps learners to become intercultural/multicultural; 'the ability to interact with people from other cultures' (Nault 2006, p.138) is known as intercultural competence. Those who are 'bilingual users of English' (McKay, 2003, p.33), such as many Chinese, Singaporeans or Chinese British in the UK, already possess two languages (i.e. English and their mother tongues) and two cultures since they were born in such countries. However, they will still need to acquire intercultural competence when they arrive in foreign countries or they may also need it in their own country when speaking with an English speaker or meeting with people from other parts of the world.

In terms of definition, Byram Gribkova and Starkey (2002, p.10) say intercultural competence is: 'their (learners') ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality'.

Lopez and Gonzalez-Davies (2016, p.67) stress that teachers nowadays are asked to develop learners' 'intercultural competencies as well as their communicative competence, due to the new communication and social needs of our globalized world'. As more and more people are travelling across the globe and as technological advances have enabled the international operation of business online, people need to have some level of proficiency in English since, as noted above, it is commonly used as a lingua franca in interactions over the telephone, email or using other communications media. They need to understand basic cultural conventions (e.g. regarding punctuality and politeness in terms of language use and social behaviours). Furthermore, Yu (2006, p. 115) highlights that 'for non-native speakers, the misunderstandings they are often faced with in the cross-cultural realization of communicative acts usually arise from their failure in appropriate use of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence'. In this paper, only sociopragmatic competence will be discussed as it is related to the main theme of the research, for it refers to some extent to certain social conventions: for example, complimenting and thanking.

Although having a sense of socio-cultural aspects implies a certain ability for communication, this aspect has often been ignored in teaching. Omaggio (2001, cited in Yu, 2006, p.114) argues that 'language teachers often think that they do not have time for sociocultural teaching in an already time-limited curriculum'. However, in my opinion, sociocultural knowledge can still be delivered through texts or materials by choosing some cultural aspects (e.g. how to address someone in different cultures) and practising these skills through a variety of tasks. If there are different usages, behaviours and meanings between the target culture and students' cultures, teachers can engage in mini-discussions on socio-cultural competence and this will help learners to become intercultural. If, for instance, a teacher is teaching words such as 'wed' and 'wedding' without meanings or its culture (such as how to celebrate weddings in different cultures), this would adversely affect learners as Yu (2006, p.115) points out :

mastery of linguistic forms combined with sociolinguistic confusion can make learners seem so improper as to cause misunderstandings or even offence when they can understand only the literal meaning of the words but do not know the sociolinguistic rules of use for interpreting those words.

I have had a similar experience in my first year residing in the UK. I used the word 'fat' while describing someone's appearance, but then learnt from my academic supervisor that using 'plump' is a better term to use, for it is more polite in a British context. If this kind of usage and experience is shared with learners, they will learn not only useful cultural knowledge but its specific application. They will also be able to break down many cultural barriers. Learners need to achieve an understanding of the differences or similarities between their own cultures and other cultures as it helps to build better communication and helps them to follow the appropriate social etiquette.

Teaching English and culture in the EFL classroom

Lee (2015, p.147) notes that 'learners in EFL contexts are primarily dependent on ELT materials as well as teachers' instructions for their English language learning'. If this is the case, teachers ought to select relevant effective coursebook materials which are of interest to the students and which have a positive outcome on learning. Byram et al. (2002, p.21) suggest that 'themes treated in text-books can lend themselves to development of an intercultural and critical perspective'. Moreover, Apak and Tanrıverdi (2008, p.5) stress the advantage of teaching culture as it 'raises understanding of and reduces prejudice towards other cultures and peoples'. Some claim that teaching culture(s) can help learners to have 'an understanding of the similarities and differences between one's own culture and that of another's [and that this] enhances inter-cultural tolerance and effective global communication' (Al-Seghayer, 2001). Teaching culture in the classroom helps learners to improve not only their language skills but also social skills. Therefore, Byram et al. (2002, pp9-10) explain: 'Language teaching with an intercultural dimension continues to help learners to acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing, to formulate what they want to say/write in correct and appropriate ways'.

Lopez and Gonzalez-Davies (2016, p.68) explain that 'potentially, the EFL classroom is a translanguaging situation par excellence since there are at least two languages involved', translanguaging being 'the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes' of both/all of their languages Garcia, n.d. , p.140). This gives opportunities to share students' cultures and languages: i.e. their first language and an additional language which they have studied or been taught at their local schools. The EFL classrooms in the UK that I visited between 2012 and 2014 represented this sense of both multi-culturalism and translanguaging as students were using more than three first languages (such as Japanese, Dutch, Arabic

and Korean, etc.). In such classrooms, it is possible to have good discussion sessions about cultures as learners can represent their own cultures and learn from each other if their teachers suggest some cultural topics to explore. This study therefore sets out to assess whether teachers think culture should be taught and whether they think students need to learn about it in tandem with their language learning. The research question addressed in this study was 'Do teachers think students should learn culture through coursebooks?'

Methodology used for this study

The author chose 'qualitative research' that has the 'ability to study the phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere' (Silverman, 2006, p.43). This study accesses EFL teachers' experiences and their perspectives which can be varied based on their backgrounds and the places where they have taught English. Brown (2014, p.91) also notes that qualitative methods can allow the researcher 'to focus on and describe individual cases [...] qualitative methods can be useful for describing complicated and multifaceted phenomena thickly in rich detail'.

The present study was based on Tas (2010), which studied teachers and students' perspectives on teaching and learning culture through English language coursebooks with 15 teachers and 35 students in Turkey. The study was done at the Preparatory School of Foreign Language at Namik Kemal University. His participants' instructors agreed that the coursebooks that they had used included some sections where cultures and cultural aspects of that language were taught. In the findings, the percentage of students (91.5%) who thought it was necessary to learn culture while learning a language was relatively larger than their instructors (86.7%). Tas also stated that '93.3% of the instructors mentioned that teachers should also support the coursebooks in terms of culture teaching' (2010, p.175). His findings are different from the current study which surveyed and interviewed teachers, and with 85 EFL teachers, the rate of teacher participation is higher than in Tas's study.

Many of the participants in the present study were recruited through course coordinators/directors of the schools as I needed to ask permission from them to get into schools and they helped me with either circulating emails or mentioning it during their weekly teachers' meetings for participation. Some of the others were contacted directly by myself and a few were acquired through the snowball sampling method. All the participants were given a questionnaire pack that included a background information sheet and an ethical consent form. To ensure the confidentiality of participants' details, pseudonyms are used when presenting the data in this study.

I used two instruments: an open-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. I believe that the former allowed me to collect primary data so that I could prepare and highlight the findings of common issues/problems and experiences; and the latter helped me to delve into participants' thoughts and experiences based on the questionnaire data. There are several reasons why I chose these two instruments: the 'open-ended questionnaire' allows 'participants to write a free account in their own terms' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison., 2011, p.382) as I aimed to give more freedom in answering the questions, and the 'interviewing' which is 'one of the main qualitative data techniques' in the research world (Aurini, Heath and Howells., 2016, p.80) enables the researcher to go 'more deeply into the thoughts, experiences or perceptions' of contributors (Aurini et al., *ibid*). This has enabled me to learn how teachers are actually thinking and dealing with issues of teaching cultural elements. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview which I chose allowed me to connect with the informants' returned questionnaires and add more questions while interviewing them; or, as Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.358) put it, to add 'additional questions in response to participant comments and reactions'.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

After the stage of data collection, I analyzed all collected data through coding. A code can be defined as 'a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data' (King, 1998, p.119), or 'a system of symbols (such as letters or short words)' (Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.422). Questionnaires were coded manually and interviews were transcribed, then imported to the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 9 to interpret the data. I named codes depending on participants' responses through content analysis and they passed through two stages of coding before I interpreted and summarized the final results. As this research is qualitative, the data is presented more in words than statistics in the following section.

Findings

Many of the 85 teacher-participants in this study believe that teaching culture/s is necessary, although there are a small number who think it could be learnt through people and real life experiences. To be precise, two-thirds of the respondents are more positive than negative towards teaching culture/s through coursebooks. They responded that teaching culture/s should happen in the EFL classroom and that students should be taught this subject, because they see it as essential when learning a foreign language as the two are interlinked. A selection of responses is presented below, using pseudonyms to designate participants:

- Sandy: *"If the course is a language course then there is a necessity for the teacher to teach the cultural element as well because language is part of culture."*
- Joe: *"Yes, I do because students need to have the knowledge of different cultures supposing they will study or work in foreign countries."*
- Lim: *"...since it can benefit students who have plans to study abroad."*
- James: *"Teaching any language involves dealing with culture to a certain extent"*
- Anna: *"Absolutely – to provide a context and promote discussion, e.g. - comparing cultures."*
- Kate: *"It creates a good atmosphere in a classroom. It helps students to get to know one another."*
- Sophie: *"Yes, it is definitely related to students' life and also a good opportunity to expand their views on the world."*
- Keith: *"an opportunity for Ss to explain themselves."*
- Jasmine: *"Yes, culture can help the learner understand the language better."*

Having looked at these responses, I presumed that EFL teachers were strongly in favour of teaching cultural elements in ELT classrooms. For example, as Sandy and James said, it is an accepted fact that we (teachers and learners) will have to deal with culture/s as any language is used through culture. Some teachers, however, had different opinions, saying, for example, that students do not need to learn about culture through coursebooks, and some prefer learning through people:

- Anna: *"...lots of angles and viewpoints are needed to stop students getting stereotypical views from coursebooks."*
- Emma: *"learners should learn cultures through people (teachers and classmates)."*
- Bobbie: *"No.... better use cultural experience and images"*
- Katie: *"not essential but interesting"*

Some other participants such as Vel thought learning through experience was more efficient: *"I think experience, role-play or discussion is better"*, and Patricia similarly voiced *"you can use the students' 'experiences' if they are living in UK"*.

Discussion and Implications

It could be possible to learn cultures through people as respondent Emma suggested. However, English language learners who learn English in their own countries and have less opportunity to meet expatriates have the least chance of learning both authentic language and authentic (foreign) cultures, and this could be fulfilled by using authentic materials (accessed via the internet, YouTube, the BBC and other TV channels) for teaching cultural elements. This was one of the major components of my PhD study (see Swe 2016 from which this study is drawn), although it is omitted from this paper for reasons of space and scope. However, learning through 'experience' as respondent Vel described would, I think, be difficult for those who have never been exposed to any foreign cultures or for those who have never been out of their own countries. When comparing the positive and negative aspects of teaching cultural elements in EFL classrooms, it is obvious that many participants agreed to have such elements in their language teaching. People can of course hold different opinions, and one of the characteristics of a qualitative study is that it explores people's thoughts and experiences.

As the results above suggest, many teachers feel positively towards teaching and learning cultures through coursebooks. Standards (2006, cited in Moeller and Nugent, 2014) suggests that 'culturally appropriate interaction occurs when two individuals engage in a reciprocal conversation based on mutual understanding and an attitude of openness'. Knowing how to behave appropriately in specific settings (such as either bowing or shaking hands in a formal meeting) will reduce the rate of perceived impoliteness which can 'either break[ing] social norms or be[ing] deliberately offensive and disrespectful towards an interactant' (Mugford, 2008, p. 375). This is because a person's behaviours can break down communication, especially those who have to work with people from different cultures. In addition, social norms which convey some cultural values (for example, in Britain, dinner guests bringing a bottle of wine to show their appreciation) should be taught and understood so that learners can be flexible and adaptable to a particular setting. Al-Seghayer (2001) also mentioned that food can present the value of one's culture: 'Through being introduced to some typical foods, students will learn certain properties and values of the target culture, as well as gain some insight into stereotypes of other cultures' lifestyles'.

Looking at research findings and literature, teaching culture(s) through language in EFL classrooms has many benefits for language learners. In addition, cultural topics/materials brought into the classroom may enhance learners' attention (especially when they are familiar to them) and the conversation can be expanded towards the target culture/s. From there,

learners will not only acquire cultural knowledge but also the language use (e.g. linguistic forms) effectively as Byram et al. (2002, p.13) highlight: 'The role of the language teacher is therefore to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop a knowledge of a particular culture or country'.

Dheram and Rani (2007) acknowledge that some students stand as cultural ambassadors of their countries and are keen to share their own even if they do not know many others (such as other nationalities of their classmates) in a multicultural classroom; thus, asking students to talk about their countries can be a good lead-in activity, and a discussion can then be built on the similarities and differences between learners' own countries. If the teacher is a novice (or less experienced at teaching cultures or any foreign language teaching) and wants to develop learners' intercultural skills (i.e. language and cultural knowledge), s/he can follow Byram et al.'s (2002, p.21) suggestions: 'teachers can start from the theme and content in the text-book, and then encourage learners to ask further questions and make comparisons'.

Therefore, it is important that cultural elements are not ignored if they are presented in coursebooks. Teachers should elaborate more on such topics to allow students to broaden their horizons and break cultural barriers. The more students learn about cultural differences, the better intercultural speakers they will become in the international community. As Apak and Tanrıverdi (2008, p.3) point out, 'successful language learning requires language users to know the culture that underlies language' since people bring words into meaning and interpret them through their own cultures, and similar thoughts were shared by the EFL teacher-participants in this study.

Conclusion

Although this paper has presented 85 EFL teachers' perspectives on teaching and learning cultures through English language coursebooks based on their practical teaching experiences, it may still be different from the readers' experiences if there are dissimilar teaching backgrounds or different levels of teaching (e.g. teaching English to children might be different from teaching adults). Nonetheless, it is hoped that these findings will help the readers in terms of preparation, for it should give them some insight into other EFL teachers' perspectives about teaching culture.

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BOOK REVIEW

Reconceptualising Authenticity for English as a Global Language

AUTHOR: Pinner, Richard, S.

TITLE: Reconceptualising Authenticity for English as a Global Language

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BOOK REVIEW by Aileen Bowe

This book attempts to both widen and clarify the debate on what constitutes “authenticity” in language teaching. It is written primarily in the first person and is both a personal and academic account of the journey of the author towards a fuller more inclusive understanding of the concept. The offering of an ‘authenticity continuum’ along which to conceptualise authenticity is a key element of the book. This provides a dynamic and accessible resource for teachers and academics as well as an easily digested overview of the main schools of thought on authenticity in English language teaching.

Pinner deals with the philosophical underpinnings of the concept in some depth in Chapter 2. He raises interesting questions around what it means to be an ‘authentic teacher’, citing the example of telling his students that he likes football in order to bond with them, despite the fact he does not. There is a great deal of research on learner identity (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009) and Pinner discusses this in the context of the learner’s L1 and L2 self, noting that the process of language learning must allow both these selves to be present in the language learning environment if the experience is to be authentic, an issue which recurs in Chapter 6. Pinner includes a section on the social side of language learning, with particular reference to sociocultural theory. Much of this section concerns personal anecdotes of the author’s experiences as a teacher and a learner, which shines some light on the connection between sociocultural theory and authenticity. A more in-depth look at this relationship, which Pinner recognises as being intrinsic to the nature of authenticity, would perhaps have been useful. The discussion on complex dynamic systems

and chaos theory is interesting. Certainly its relevance to the process of language learning is worth exploring, and the contention that ‘acknowledging complexity in authenticity’ counter-intuitively allows us to simplify our understanding of it (2016, p.32). As an aside, it might be valuable for future writers to include more female and non-European philosophers and thinkers within the context of these discussions for a more inclusive perspective

In Chapter 3, the concept of English as a Global Language is introduced. It is not a new English language term, but it is interesting that Pinner chose this as opposed to sister concepts such as English as an International Language, World Englishes or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). It stands to reason that authenticity might be conceptualised differently according to the different models of English. Pinner defines English as a Global Language phenomenon and refers to its specific uses in second or foreign language learning (institutional) contexts. It seems that the reason for choosing English as a Global Language is the author’s own proximity to and experience with this model of English. He goes on to outline Kachru’s (1985, 1988) Circles Model and the debate between this and Quirk’s (1990) standardised model. While acknowledging opposition to Kachru’s model, Pinner nonetheless seems to use it as a starting point. Pinner’s argument that English as a Global Language is opposed to linguistic imperialism and therefore allows the language to be understood in a democratic fashion reads somewhat of a false equivalency (2016, p.41). Pinner cites Jenkins (2014) and Norton’s (2013) arguments that English language tests can be gatekeepers to accessing the cultural

capital of English language skills. If English as a Global Language is a model which relies on traditional testing procedures and is taught in second and foreign language learning contexts for the purpose of securing further access to cultural capital, it is discomfiting to accept it as the model which best encompasses a democratic model of English language learning. Although he does not adopt it, Pinner argues that English as a Lingua Franca is 'inherently authentic' as its usages between speakers internationally can often be of 'life and death' situations (2016, p. 36). Pinner concludes that it is authenticity as a concept which needs to be re-imagined in order to include L2 speakers 'more overtly'. Perhaps conceptualisations of 'English-as-a-' might also need to be re-examined in this light.

Pinner discusses authenticity in language teaching in Chapter 4, noting that it might seem strange to have the seemingly most important chapter appear fourth, but the structure of the book is coherent and each chapter logically builds on the next. He gives an account of the varying definitions of authenticity from important works but also cites incidences where he questioned people as to their conceptualisation of authenticity, and this gives an honest feel to the book. He touches on the 'classroom' vs 'reality' debate, noting Mishan's suggestion that 'the classroom is no less real than a post office or bank' (2016, p72), again bringing up the idea of the interplay between context and context of use in discussing authenticity. Mishan's book *Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials* (2005) was evidently a significant influence on Pinner's writing of this book and he spends three pages discussing her concept of the 3C's of authenticity: culture, currency and challenge. He gives personal examples of how he has reflected on these concepts within the parameter of his classroom and how he has negotiated his own meaning of authenticity. This leads onto a discussion on the domains of authenticity, which Pinner represents as text/materials, output/production, tasks and language in use. He argues that authenticity is not a 'thing' made of parts but as a *process* which relies on dynamic interactions' (2016, p.82, original italics). Authenticity as a fractured, non-whole entity is a theme of the book, and it is important to conceptualise it as such. The section on authenticity and textbooks and corpora might be the most relevant topics for some readers, yet these sections are relatively short.

Pinner's contribution to conceptualising authenticity for English as a Global Language is his Authenticity Continuum (AC) in Chapter 5. The AC is intended to provide a 'packaged definition' (2016, p.102) of authenticity and as such, somewhat disappointingly perhaps, it does not encompass comprehensively what Pinner has discussed thus far in his book. Nonetheless, the examples and diagrams to explain the AC are useful and illustrate to the reader the concepts of 'use domain', 'classroom', 'individual' 'community'. Pinner

has as an aim of the authenticity continuum (AC) diagram to make it easier 'for language teachers to begin critically evaluating the content that they use for teaching' (2016, p.104). It would seem important to include the aspect of English as a Global Language within this context for critical evaluation. If the process of critiquing authenticity is to be a goal for language teachers, it is obvious that the questions of 'authentic for who? by whom? from where?' must be asked (as in MacDonald, Badger and Dasli, 2006, p. 253). Challenging the notion of authenticity belonging to a certain subset of speakers begins with deconstructing the notions of 'English-as-a-' which are to some extent, controlled by the 'inner circle' speakers, testers and book publishers. Further exploration of this topic would be interesting in this context. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Pinner uses the voices of participants on his workshop to tease out the reception to the AC amongst language teachers, whether positive, negative or confused. In the section on empowerment, it is clear that Pinner is aware of the danger of being patronising in trying to be empowering, and he gives an account of how he hopes the AC can be a genuinely empowering tool for language teachers. He discusses the problematic elements of the English language teaching industry and how an endemic system of othering exists (and possibly always will) within the complex.

Chapter 6 discusses authenticity in bilingual contexts and it is short but dense. The section on CLIL and how it relates to authenticity will be interesting to those practitioners in the CLIL area; more examples of the way authenticity can manifest and be utilised for language learning purposes would have been even more beneficial. The discussion on the use (or prohibited use) of learners' L1 in the language classroom is brought up, highlighting the disparity that exists for language teachers between student expectations (and often management insistence) of speaking only English in a classroom, and the research which exists to show that code-switching can be useful and motivating. This leads onto the discussion of English as a medium of instruction and the 'internationalisation' of universities (2016, p.141). Pinner states that 'it seems quite astonishing that an entire university could operate in a foreign language, and yet such is the force of English and globalisation now' (2016, p.142). He states that the challenge of learning a subject in another language is motivating and cites Mishan (2011) here, but this seems to be a misreading of second language acquisition theories of challenge and motivation. Pinner clearly eschews a neoliberal stance on this in favour of the pragmatics of English language needs in a global world.

In Chapter 7, Pinner uses three personal stories to highlight how the line between the personal and the private has become blurred due to technology and new media and how this manifests in particular situations. He adds to a growing debate on the methods of

communication, the construction of self and how authenticity fits into this paradigm shift in global communications. In a section on authenticity online, Pinner discusses a meme with a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln (intended to warn of the dangers of believing everything one sees online), making an interesting point about what can be considered authentic or not online and reminding us of Mishan's (2005) warning not to take authentic 'cultural products' out of their context. He also raises questions about how close the relationship online between teachers and students should be, but recognises the importance of a sense of community in language learning. The final section on exposure to language and culture gives an example of an interaction between L2 YouTube commenters on a video, discussing the use of dubbing and subtitling. As language teachers, the gains made by students who interact with others online is evident from anecdotal evidence, but more empirical research into the types of learning and how the classroom environment might benefit from these types of exchanges would be an interesting direction in future research.

The book gives an excellent overview of the authenticity debate and honestly notes that despite the body of research which exists (which Pinner comprehensively shows in Chapter 4 is in need of more empirical studies), many English language practitioners still associate authentic materials with realia from an English-speaking country. A more critical discussion on the question of 'from who?' 'from whence?', (such as MacDonald et al's (2006) 'whose English') would be a welcome addition to the next edition of authenticity in English language teaching materials. Some practical examples of how to incorporate the very useful findings from Pinner's experiments and workshops into a language learning environment would be a fantastic addition to future editions of this book (such as those given in Mishan and Timmis, 2015). For example, in Chapter 3, Pinner extensively discusses models of Englishes and their perceived authenticity by a group of language learners. A group of students from an Academic English course were asked to judge a variety of accents on their comprehensibility and authenticity. Although relevant on an experimental level, this is also an example of involving learners in the debate on authenticity. Some further signposts to

enable teachers to bring this debate to the classroom would be welcome in future editions. As well as this, a simple criterion for evaluating authenticity in light of the authenticity continuum (and with reference to varieties of English) might have been a useful addition.

In concluding, Pinner expresses unease at the idea that L2 teachers and learners still submit to the 'inner circle' model and blames the equation of 'nativeness' with 'authenticity' on the complexities of authenticity itself. This is certainly one aspect of the issue, but it is a more multi-faceted issue. A hearty discussion on postcolonial identities, non-institutional learning contexts and ownership of language may have demonstrated how authenticity functions for English as (just?) another world language. Nonetheless, the main strength of this book lies in its ability to bring the concept of authenticity to a new audience and into new discussions in English language learning and teaching materials. This is especially true for English language practitioners who are searching for empirical studies relating to authentic materials and research-based theories. Pinner shows, through personal insight and experience, how authenticity can be made more accessible and applicable to a variety of contexts.

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The University of Limerick undertakes programmes of education and research to doctorate level in the following areas: **business, computing, dance, education, engineering, humanities, mathematics, music, social science** and **science**. The extensive modern campus of the University is located on the banks of the River Shannon at the heart of the 640 acre National Technological Park, approximately 3 miles from the centre of Limerick city. The University has excellent educational, cultural, sporting and residential facilities and accommodates some 12,500 students.

INTRODUCTION

This full-time MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) has been designed specifically with the aim of providing initial teacher education for those wishing to become teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

The programme allows teachers to develop and reflect upon their understanding of the various theoretical and practical issues that impact upon the field of language teaching. It places particular emphasis on the notion of informed and critical teaching and the need for teachers to mediate between theory and practice in constructing pedagogies according to specific teaching-learning contexts. In line with the most recent approaches in the field, Language technology, and particularly corpus-based approaches to the study of language, feature strongly in our modules. A balance is maintained throughout the course between linguistic content, pedagogic content, and teaching-related research. The programme concludes with a 15000-word dissertation giving students an opportunity to engage in empirical research.

SAMPLE MODULES

- ☐ Language Systems
- ☐ Second Language Acquisition Theory & Classroom Application
- ☐ Research Methodology
- ☐ Teaching Practice
- ☐ Linguistics for Language Teaching.
- ☐ Language Pedagogy for ELT
- ☐ Technology & Language Studies

CAREERS

Students graduating from this course have followed a number of career paths in the past. These include:

teaching at various levels (including university) at home and overseas, school management, publishing, materials' development, technical writing, adult education and support, further study to PhD level.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

A Second or first class honours level primary degree or equivalent professional qualification (Primary degree: level 8 NQAI).

Candidates who do not meet the above degree requirements but have equivalent prior professional experience are welcome to apply for admission. All candidates will be required to attend an interview or Skype interview.

Applicants' qualification for entry to some of the modules, e.g. TP and Materials Development modules, will be ascertained on the basis of prior teaching qualification/s and teaching experience.

International students require an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) composite score in the range of 6.5 - 7 and not less than 6 in any one component, as for entry to all programmes in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences.

APPLICATIONS

Apply online at <http://www.graduateschool.ul.ie>

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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Freelance Register

Inclusion in the Freelance Register does not constitute a recommendation by MATSDA of the individuals concerned or their services, nor a guarantee of the quality of any services that might be offered.

This list is also available on the freelance register page of the MATSDA website. If you would like your name to be added to the list, please refer to the guidelines at <http://www.matsda.org.uk/register.html> where you can find the registration form which can be e-mailed to the MATSDA web coordinator. Registration is free.

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The C Group

(Creativity for Change in Language Education)

The C group was formed in 2013. It aims to bring together ELT professionals who share an interest in developing more creative approaches to teaching, learning, materials writing and assessment, as a counterweight to the prevailing culture of control, uniformity and measurement.

Please take a look at our website: <http://thecreativitygroup.weebly.com> where you will find more detailed information about the group, including its aims and manifesto.

If you are interested in joining the group and feel you could contribute to it, there is a simple form on the website. Just complete it and return to Chris Lima chrislima90@yahoo.co.uk. This is intended to be an inclusive group, open to all who share our views.

Do pass this information on to anyone you feel might be interested in joining us.

Alan Maley and Chaz Pugliese

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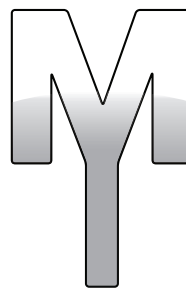
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