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TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL) MASTER OF ARTS (FULL TIME)



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Arts,
Humanities and
Social Sciences

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 13,000 students.

INTRODUCTION

This one-year full-time MA in Teaching English to Speakers Of Other Languages (TESOL) provides teacher education for those wishing to become teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It is also designed for experienced teachers who wish to update their knowledge and skills. 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 corpus-based approaches to the study of language feature strongly in the programme. A balance is maintained between linguistic content, pedagogic content, and teaching-related research. The programme concludes with a 15,000 word dissertation giving students the opportunity to engage in empirical research, or with an internship allowing students to directly apply the theoretical and practical knowledge they learned on the programme. An alternative graduate diploma exit route is available for those who choose not to do the dissertation or internship.

SAMPLE MODULES

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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 at PhD level.

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

APPLICATIONS

The programme commences in September of each year.

Apply online at: www.ul.ie/gps/

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Telephone: +353-(0)61-234377

FURTHER INFORMATION

Applicants who wish to discuss detailed elements of the programme may contact the Course Director: Jane Seely School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics.

Email: Jane.Seely@ul.ie

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For advertising and contributions please contact Freda Mishan, *Folio* Editor, email freda.mishan@ul.ie

www.matsda.org

From the Editor

Freda Mishan, University of Limerick

This issue of *Folio* showcases work on materials development globally, from Pakistan, China, Brazil, Russia, Germany, Portugal and Britain, teaching languages including Portuguese, French, English and German. The range of articles is more international than ever, and includes research studies, a number of materials spot pieces, and reviews of two new books in the field. The articles explore the gamut of materials development contexts: CLIL (Ana Boléo, in the Portuguese context); ESL (Asma Aftab, in the Pakistani context); language and culture (Ge Zhang teaching French in China); professional development (Irina Malinina, training Russian special education teachers), language learning games (in Germany, Klaus P. Michelsen, and in Britain, Simone Gugliotta and students) and the developing of humanistic learning materials (in Japan, Sakae Onoda). The books reviewed are two important new contributions to the materials development canon, *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* by Brian Tomlinson (President of MATSDA) and *Exploring Creativity Through Writing: A Handbook for Teachers* by Alan Maley and Sharoon Sunny.

As in every issue of *Folio* I extend sincere thanks on behalf of MATSDA to the contributors to this issue, who have been willing to share their experience, knowledge and expertise with the materials development community.

I step down as editor of *Folio* after this issue. I would, first of all, like to thank MATSDA and the president Brian Tomlinson for the opportunity and privilege of editing their journal. *Folio*, and myself as editor, need to thank the host of international authors who have so generously contributed their research for publication. Last but not least, I must extend thanks to the artworker for the journal, Will Cove, whose unseen hand is evident in the professional layout and attractive presentation of the journal.

*Freda Mishan, Editor
Limerick
March 2026*

Greetings from the President

Brian Tomlinson, MATSDA President

Welcome to another issue of *Folio* and to the prospect of another successful MATSDA Conference.

MATSDA Conferences

A very successful MATSDA Conference was held in Beijing on Saturday June 7th and Sunday June 8th, 2025, at the Fragrant Hills Hotel. The Conference was co-hosted by MATSDA, the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Teaching Materials and Beijing Foreign Studies University, with the theme of Humanising Language Learning Materials. The Plenary Speakers were Rod Ellis, Alan Maley, Hitomi Masuhara, Hae-ok Park, Sun Youzhong and Brian Tomlinson and there were over a hundred parallel presentations to select from for the three hundred plus participants.

The next MATSDA conference will be co-hosted by The Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo in Pachuca, Mexico on June 3rd and 4th, 2026. The theme will be The Role of Written, Spoken, Visual and Mental Texts in Language Learning, and the plenary speakers will include Rod Ellis, Maria Ferradas, Hitomi Masuhara, Jayakaran Mukundan, Brian Tomlinson and Sun Youzhong. Details of the Conference can be found on the MATSDA website www.matsda.org

The 2027 MATSDA Conference will be held at the University of Limerick in Ireland and the 2028 MATSDA Conference will be held in the Netherlands.

Publications

1. The book based on the 2023 Rufina Conference (*Materials for Language Assessment* edited by Asma Aftab) has been published by Cambridge Scholars.
2. The book based on the 2025 Lisbon Conference (*Developing Materials for L2 Communicative Ability: Theory and Practice*, edited by Brian Tomlinson and Hitomi Masuhara) is in the process of being published by Bloomsbury and should be on the shelves in about three months' time.
3. The revised version of the book based on the MATSDA 2012 Limerick Conference (*Applied Linguistics and Materials Development Vol 2*, edited by Freda Mishan and Brian Tomlinson) has gone to

Bloomsbury to begin the publication process.

4. The book based on the MATSDA 2025 Beijing Conference (*Humanising Language Learning Materials*, edited by Douglas Bell and Brian Tomlinson) has just been officially approved for publication by Bloomsbury and the twenty-six chapters are in the process of being written and edited.

References

- Aftab, A. (ed.) (2025). *Materials for Language Assessment*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Bell, D. and Tomlinson, B. (eds) (2027). *Humanising Language Learning Materials*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mishan, F. and B. Tomlinson, B. (eds) (2027). *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development* (2nd ed.) London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Tomlinson, B. and Masuhara H. (eds) (2026). *Materials Development for L2 Communicative Ability - Theory and Practice*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

New Committee Member

Niall Walsh from Aichi Prefectural University in Nagoya, Japan has joined the MATSDA Committee as a Promotions Officer responsible for spreading the word about MATSDA, its journal *Folio*, its conferences and its materials development competitions.

Neill recently gave a very interesting presentation at the MATSDA/TMAC Conference in Beijing on 'From Passive Reception to Active Creation: Learner-Centered Approaches in Materials Development' and he has developed a chapter from it for *Humanising Language Learning Materials*.

The MATSDA Materials Writing Competition

2024-25

The 2024-25 competition to develop a unit of humanistic language learning materials was won by Asma Aftab from Pakistan and her prizes were awarded to her at the MATSDA/TMAC Conference in Beijing in June, 2025. The second prize was won by Poo Reun Noh from South Korea and the third Prize by Hoan Nguyen from the USA.

2026/2027

MATSDA is inviting submissions for a materials writing competition in which entrants will be asked to produce a complete unit of material for L2 learners which is driven by written, spoken, visual or mental texts. The unit should appear as it would in a published course and should:

- be designed to provide about three hours of activities for the learners following the course
- be addressed to the learners
- be designed to facilitate clarity and engagement through the use of spacing, staging, colour, choice of typeface, headings, symbols, illustrations etc.
- be learner centred.

The target learners can be of any age and of any level and be learning the target language for any purpose in any context.

The material should be humanistic in that it is learner-centred and 'respects its users as intelligent and individual human beings with ... experience of language use and life and helps them to exploit their capacity for learning through meaningful experience'. It should include 'activities which make the language learning process a more affective experience, finding ways to help learners to connect what is in the unit to what is in their minds and making the experience of using the unit rich, meaningful, personal and enjoyable' (Tomlinson, 2023, p. 129).

Together with the unit, entrants should submit a rationale for the materials which provides information about:

1. their name and affiliation
2. the learners' age(s), level, reason(s) for learning the L2 and context of learning
3. the objectives of the materials
4. the theories which have been applied in the development of the materials
5. the sources of any references, quotations and texts.

Entrants can be individuals, pairs or teams and each developer should provide a brief bio of about 100 words. Anybody can enter but bots are banned.

The closing date for entries is January 10th 2027 and entries should be sent as attachments to me at brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com and copied to Hitomi Masuhara at hitomi.masuhara@gmail.com

The prizes for the winners will be presented at the MATSDA 2027 Conference at the University of Limerick and will consist of:

First Prize: £150 + a fee waiver for the MATSDA 2027 Conference + signed copies of books published by the plenary speakers

Second Prize: £100 + signed copies of books published by the plenary speakers

Third Prize: £50 + signed copies of books published by the plenary speakers

All entrants will receive priority status for:

- presenting at MATSDA 2027
- publication in *Folio* (the MATSDA journal)
- publication in a possible book of text-driven material.

Reference

Tomlinson, B. (2023). 'Humanising the coursebook.' In B. Tomlinson (ed.) *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. London: Bloomsbury.

Freda Mishan

Freda is retiring from her position as Editor of our journal *Folio* after publication of this issue. As President of MATSDA I would like to represent the MATSDA Committee and everyone who has contributed to *Folio* in thanking Freda for her dedication, hard work and editorial skill in developing *Folio* into a much respected and influential contributor to the field of materials development. I would also like to thank Freda for her excellent work as a co-editor of the second edition of *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development*, which will be published by Bloomsbury in early 2027.

Hope to see you in Pachuca in June 2026 and in Limerick in 2027,

Brian Tomlinson
President and Founder of MATSDA

Teaching language to learn content: Curricular integration and the development of interdisciplinary materials in Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue

Ana Boléo

Introduction

The Portuguese educational landscape has undergone profound transformation over the last decade, largely as a result of increased immigration. This demographic shift has led to a growing number of students in basic and secondary education and, consequently, to an increased demand for Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue (PLNM) provision. However, this demand has not been matched by a proportional expansion of PLNM classes, due to factors such as teacher shortages, limited specialised training, and, until recently, restrictive administrative conditions governing class formation. As a result, access to PLNM has often been shaped by organisational constraints rather than by learners' pedagogical needs.

Although recent legislative changes have introduced greater flexibility, facilitating the creation of PLNM classes with smaller groups at initial proficiency levels, the structural challenges associated with linguistic diversity in Portuguese schools remain. These constraints reinforce the need for pedagogical approaches and teaching materials that support learners' access to the curriculum from the earliest stages of Portuguese language development.

Against this background, we believe that pedagogical issues related to PLNM must continue to be discussed, 'so that the country may successfully achieve the full integration of migrant families, with all the benefits for social cohesion that this entails' (Fernandes & Gonçalves, 2024, p. 14). It is for this reason that, in the following sections, we will present a reflection aimed at contributing to the clarification and operationalisation of the PLNM Essential Learnings (see below), incorporating principles associated with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and

subsequently present teaching materials developed on the basis of this premise.

Interdisciplinary curricular integration in the teaching of Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue

In Portugal, the teaching of PLNM is guided by a set of national curricular documents that define expected learning outcomes and inform classroom practice. Central among these are the PLNM Essential Learnings (AE), published in 2018 for proficiency levels A1, A2 and B1, which structure teaching objectives in terms of domains, skills and strategic actions. While these documents play a key role in shaping pedagogical practice, their organisation and level of abstraction have direct implications for the design of teaching materials, particularly in contexts where learners must simultaneously develop linguistic competence and access the content of other school subjects.

An examination of the introductions to the PLNM AE at levels A1, A2 and B1 reveals the presentation of a conceptual framework aligned with the major guiding principles of Portuguese educational policy, particularly with regard to inclusion, interculturality and the role of language as a vehicle for accessing the school curriculum. Across these introductory texts, which are notably similar in structure and wording, the importance of the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dimensions of PLNM teaching is repeatedly emphasised, as is its role as a language of schooling indispensable for students' full integration across curricular subjects. However, this emphasis

operates primarily at the level of programmatic discourse and is not translated into clear and concrete didactic guidelines.

Indeed, the high degree of textual homogeneity across proficiency levels reinforces the notion that interdisciplinarity is treated as an implicit given, rather than as an aspect to be problematised or operationalised. For teachers with no prior experience in PLNM, particularly those whose background lies in the teaching of Portuguese as a mother tongue, the introductory sections are therefore unlikely to provide clear criteria for the selection, sequencing or integration of content from other curricular areas.

Beyond the introductory discourse, the operationalisation of the PLNM AE is presented through a table organised into four transversal columns: (1) AE domains (oral comprehension, oral production, oral interaction, reading, writing, grammar and intercultural interaction); (2) knowledge, skills and attitudes; (3) strategic teaching actions aligned with the student profile; and (4) descriptors of the student profile. Within this structure, occasional references to interdisciplinary content can be identified, although in a limited and fragmented manner, such as ‘understanding common scientific vocabulary’ in reading, the use of lexical fields related to measurement, time or transport in grammar, or the use of verbs associated with calculation and justification in writing (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c).

However, an analysis of this operationalisation reveals a significant tension between the introductory discourse and the content effectively prescribed. While interdisciplinarity and language as an instrument for accessing the curriculum are foregrounded in principle, the structure of the AE remains firmly anchored in a formal-linguistic logic, organised according to traditional domains of language teaching, without explicit articulation with specific disciplinary areas or transversal curricular macro-concepts. Grammatical and lexical content is thus presented in a largely self-referential and decontextualised manner, relying on broad formulations that do not specify disciplinary contexts, levels of conceptual complexity or classroom practices through which integration might be realised. As a result, responsibility for establishing links with other subject curricula falls almost exclusively on the teacher.

This limitation becomes particularly problematic when one considers the heterogeneity of the PLNM target population, as learners positioned at level A1 may be enrolled in any year of schooling from Year 1 to Year 12, making the prescription of specific disciplinary content unfeasible. Nonetheless, this constraint does not preclude the articulation of more robust principles of curricular integration, for example, through types of school discourse, transversal cognitive functions or concepts shared across areas of knowledge. The

absence of such guidance contributes to a situation in which interdisciplinarity, although nominally present, remains underdeveloped and supported by minimal operational direction.

In this sense, and recognising that curricular integration has become a structuring principle of European educational policies, particularly in contexts marked by increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, the articulation between language and content must be clear, intentional and explicitly assumed in guiding curricular documents, as learners’ academic success depends largely on their ability to mobilise the language of schooling in the service of learning across subjects.

Content and Language Integrated Learning

It is within this framework that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) emerges as a particularly relevant conceptual reference. CLIL is defined as ‘a generic term to describe all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional or minority language and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than language lessons themselves’ (European Commission/Eurydice, 2006, p. 8). In this way, language learning serves a present communicative and cognitive purpose, rather than being oriented solely towards future use. As stated in foundational European Union documents, ‘achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language’ (European Commission/Eurydice, 2006, p. 7). CLIL is thus grounded in the principle that learners acquire subject knowledge not only with but also through an additional language, assigning equal importance to content learning and language learning, and implying an integrated pedagogical approach distinct from traditional models of language teaching as isolated subjects.

It is nevertheless important to clarify what CLIL is not. As explicitly stated in key European reference documents, CLIL does not correspond to the teaching of foreign languages as autonomous subjects, nor to models of total immersion, nor to language support programmes aimed exclusively at integrating immigrant learners into the language of schooling, as clarified in the following excerpt:

The teaching of foreign languages in the strict sense as separate subjects in the curriculum is thus not covered by this study. Neither are total language immersion that uses a single language to teach all subjects in the curriculum, nor arrangements for providing language support to immigrant pupils or those whose mother tongue

is not the language of instruction, with the aim of ensuring their gradual integration into mainstream education in that language.

(European Commission/Eurydice, 2006, p. 10)

CLIL, therefore, refers to a set of approaches in which an additional language is used to teach certain curricular subjects, while maintaining specific methodological and organisational characteristics. This distinction is particularly relevant in the context of PLNM, as the objective is not to transform the subject into a CLIL model, but rather to acknowledge that immigrant learners attending PLNM classes continue to study all other subjects in Portuguese, without being explicitly taught the academic and scientific language required for that purpose.

From this perspective, applying CLIL principles to PLNM does not entail introducing specific disciplinary content into the AE, but rather reformulating their organisational logic in order to make the articulation between language and curriculum explicit. Such an approach would allow interdisciplinarity to move beyond a generic statement and become a structuring axis of the subject, supporting teachers' pedagogical practices and promoting greater equity in PLNM learners' access to the curriculum.

Development of interdisciplinary materials in Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue

Building on the premise explored above, that language learning should take place simultaneously with the learning of scientific content from different curricular areas, and considering, in line with Albino (2023), that 'teaching materials, namely manuals, continue to have a relevant role in learning and teaching languages' (p. 164), this section presents a project involving the development of three interdisciplinary textbooks for the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (CEB), articulating the PLNM AE with the Essential Learnings of the three foundational curricular components: Portuguese, Mathematics and Environmental Studies.

1, 2, 3... Português! Atividades interdisciplinares de Português Língua Não Materna (1, 2, 3... Português! Interdisciplinary tasks in Portuguese as a Non-Mother Tongue) is a collection of books designed with the purpose of facilitating the integration of children in the 1st CEB who have recently entered school in Portugal. Grounded in an interdisciplinary didactic approach, the materials encourage children to develop vocabulary while taking their first steps in the construction of scientific knowledge in Portuguese, Mathematics and Environmental Studies. Organising

the materials into 12 thematic units per book made it possible to design tasks that articulate the contents set out in the guiding curricular documents, with the aim of enabling PLNM learners to expand their lexical repertoire, learn facts about themselves and others, explore the world around them and, at the same time, become familiar with scientific vocabulary associated with different curricular areas.

The *1, 2, 3... Português!* collection is structured into three levels of linguistic proficiency, A1, A2 and B1, corresponding to the PLNM AE and to the curricular frameworks of the 1st CEB. The A1 volume was developed on the basis of the A1 PLNM AE, articulated with the AE of Portuguese, Mathematics and Environmental Studies for Years 1 and 2. Each thematic unit at A1 level draws on a theme from children's everyday life (for example, school, family, the human body, neighbourhood, food, weather or professions), common to the three curricular areas, thus enabling lexical, grammatical and discursive development to occur simultaneously with the introduction of basic scientific concepts. In this way, learners do not merely learn words or structures; rather, they use language to classify, describe, compare, explain, interpret data and solve problems through tasks aligned with the cognitive demands of the 1st CEB curriculum. From this perspective, and starting from the principle that 'the selection of materials involves matching the given materials against the context in which they are going to be used and the needs and interests of the teachers and learners who work within it, to find the best possible fit between them' (Rubdy, 2014, p. 37), the developed materials illustrate the diversity of didactic strategies mobilised, namely through: (i) the development of thematic vocabulary and reading comprehension in PLNM, based on a scientific theme (for example, the weather), thereby creating space for access to Environmental Studies content and, concomitantly, proposing lexical enrichment tasks with words from the same family, while also encouraging the use of connectors in short sentences (Appendix A); (ii) the articulation between Portuguese Language and Mathematics through work on telling the time and organising daily routines, mobilising functional vocabulary related to ordinal numeration (Appendix B); and (iii) the exploration of scientific themes, such as the organs of the human body, as a starting point for the development of basic scientific vocabulary and Environmental Studies content, articulated through matching tasks (Appendix C). These options allow for progressive and contextualised preparation for accessing scientific content across the three curricular areas, by promoting the expansion of learners' lexical repertoire and the functional use of language in cognitively meaningful tasks.

The A2 and B1 volumes in the *1, 2, 3... Português!* collection follow the same logic of progression, establishing articulation, respectively, with the AE

for Years 3 and 4. This choice aims to ensure coherent linguistic and cognitive progression, while also responding to the specific curricular requirements of each year of schooling.

In addition to the textbooks, a set of didactic games was designed to reinforce, in a playful and systematic manner, the linguistic and conceptual content addressed in the units. These games revisit vocabulary, linguistic structures and curricular concepts, promoting oral interaction and the consolidation of learning. In the book *1, 2, 3... Português! A1*, for example, this includes the card game *Peixinho (Go Fish)*, based on the thematic units, Time Bingo, and a set of memory games.

From a materials development perspective, the collection was designed to move beyond an exclusively linguistic

approach to PLNM, proposing tasks that mobilise language as a tool for knowledge construction, in alignment with principles of curricular integration and meaningful learning. The design of the materials in the *1, 2, 3... Português!* collection is based, for the reasons outlined above, on a set of didactic design principles intended to make explicit the articulation between language learning and curricular learning, thereby addressing the gaps identified in the PLNM AE. Rather than adopting an approach centred exclusively on isolated linguistic content, the materials were developed according to a language-content integration logic, in which Portuguese is systematically mobilised as an instrument for knowledge construction in Portuguese, Mathematics and Environmental Studies; this constitutes the first guiding principle of the collection.

Unit	Plnm Linguistic Focus	Portuguese	Mathematics	Environmental Studies	Task Example
Unit 1 School	Everyday school vocabulary; simple sentences	Reading functional words and sentences	Counting students/ objects	Organisation of school space	Organisation of school space
Unit 2 Family	Naming and describing	Descriptive speaking	Basic quantity notions	Family structures	Family structures
Unit 3 Human body	Basic scientific vocabulary	Lexical comprehension	Counting and matching	Human body and care	Human body and care
Unit 4 Home	Spatial lexis	Oral description	Relative positions	Types of housing	Types of housing
Unit 5 Days of the week, months and seasons	Temporal expressions	Text sequencing	Sequences and order	Seasons	Seasons
Unit 6 Daily routine, meals and time	Present tense verbs; telling the time	Simple instructional text	Telling the time	Daily routines	Daily routines
Unit 7 Food and colours	Lexical fields	Descriptive vocabulary	Simple tables	Healthy eating	Healthy eating
Unit 8 My neighbourhood	Spatial and functional lexis	Oral production	Route notions	Community services	Community services
Unit 9 Weather	Scientific vocabulary; connectors	Informative text	Reading data	Weather phenomena	Weather phenomena
Unit 10 Means of transport	Naming and classification	Short narrative	Graphs and problems	Mobility	Mobility
Unit 11 Professions	Lexis + gender/ number	Noun agreement	Counting and sets	World of work	World of work
Unit 12 Clothing and footwear	Adjectives and agreement	Description	Combinations	Seasons and culture	Seasons and culture

Table 1. Language-content integration across the *1, 2, 3... Português! A1* thematic units

A second principle concerns linguistic and cognitive progression. The units display controlled progression both in terms of linguistic complexity (gradual expansion of lexical repertoire, progressive introduction of sentence structures and connectors) and in terms of the cognitive operations involved. Tasks develop from activities of identification, association and naming, towards tasks requiring interpretation, oral explanation, problem-solving and short written production, respecting the competences prescribed at A1 level, while gradually preparing learners for more academic uses of language.

Recycling and lexical expansion constitute another central principle. Vocabulary introduced in a given unit is revisited in different contexts and across disciplinary areas, thereby promoting consolidation and transfer of knowledge. For example, terms associated with time, food or neighbourhood spaces appear in reading and oral activities, in Mathematics (tables, graphs, problems) and in Environmental Studies, reinforcing learning through meaningful recurrence and avoiding artificial compartmentalisation of content.

Finally, the materials systematically draw on multimodality, combining images, written text, orality (reception, production and interaction), manipulation of objects, games and graphic tasks. This option is particularly relevant in PLNM teaching for children at an initial stage of schooling in Portuguese, as it reduces excessive linguistic load, supports comprehension and encourages active participation. The inclusion of complementary didactic games reinforces this dimension, enabling consolidation of learning in playful, interactive and communicatively authentic contexts.

Taken together, these design principles reflect an approach which, although it does not fully constitute a CLIL model, clearly incorporates its integrative logic, making explicit the mediating function of PLNM between learning Portuguese and accessing the school curriculum.

Table 1 illustrates how the PLNM AE were operationalised into concrete materials design options, making explicit the integration between linguistic objectives and content from Portuguese, Mathematics and Environmental Studies, for the volume corresponding to level A1.

Conclusion

The significant increase in the number of students learning PLNM in the Portuguese education system over the last decade has brought new challenges for schools, teachers and the curricular documents that guide teaching. The linguistic and cultural diversity currently present in primary and secondary classrooms has made particularly visible the tension between learning Portuguese and ensuring full access to

curricular content, revealing limitations in existing pedagogical responses and reinforcing the urgency of approaches that articulate language and curriculum in a more explicit manner. It is at this point that the conceptual proximity to Content and Language Integrated Learning becomes particularly relevant. It is important to recall that PLNM is not, nor should it be confused with, a CLIL model. However, the situation experienced by many immigrant students in the Portuguese education system presents a paradoxical configuration: students leave Portuguese language classes to attend PLNM lessons, yet continue to learn all other subjects through Portuguese, without being explicitly taught the scientific and academic concepts required for their academic success. In this sense, the incorporation of CLIL principles, namely the intentional articulation between language, content, cognition and culture, could contribute to a redefinition of the PLNM AE, making explicit their mediating function between linguistic learning and curricular learning.

Thus, rather than merely adding disciplinary content to the PLNM AE, it becomes necessary to rethink their organisational logic, so that interdisciplinarity ceases to be merely an introductory statement and instead becomes a structuring axis of curricular operationalisation. Such a redefinition would not only support teachers in their pedagogical practice, but would also ensure greater equity in access to the curriculum for students whose first language is not Portuguese, responding more effectively to the challenges posed by the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of Portuguese schools. It is within this framework that the proposal for didactic materials presented in this article is situated, conceived as a concrete response to this need for curricular integration.

The materials are intended for children who do not have Portuguese as their mother tongue and who attend the 1st CEB in Portugal, where Portuguese is assumed as the language of schooling and the primary means of access to the curriculum. Accordingly, the contributions drawn from CLIL should be understood primarily at the level of curricular organisation and pedagogical intentionality in PLNM teaching. The integrative nature of CLIL, which seeks to teach 'two subjects in one' - language and subject content - highlights the centrality of language in the success of conceptual learning, reinforcing the idea that there is no content learning without learning the language through which that content is mediated.

In this context, the materials presented in this article do not aim to replace the current curricular documents, but rather to demonstrate how the PLNM AE can be operationalised in a more explicit, coherent and pedagogically grounded manner when curricular integration is adopted as a design principle. By making visible the articulation between language and scientific content from Portuguese, Mathematics

and Environmental Studies, the 1, 2, 3... *Português! Atividades interdisciplinares de Português Língua Não Materna* collection seeks to respond to a concrete need identified in schools: supporting immigrant students' access to the curriculum without reducing PLNM to decontextualised language instruction. It is therefore argued that making these principles explicit may contribute not only to reflection on the in PLNM Essential Learnings, but also to the development of didactic materials that are more closely aligned with the realities of linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.

From a broader perspective, the pedagogical principles underlying this proposal are not limited to the Portuguese context. Similar challenges arise in many educational systems where learners are required to access the curriculum through a language that is not their home language, whether in contexts of migration or linguistic minority. In such settings, the integration of language learning with curricular content, informed by CLIL-related principles, may offer a productive framework for the design of the teaching materials that mediate access to subject knowledge. Therefore, the approach outlined in this article may be adapted to other national curricula and languages of schooling, contributing to more inclusive pedagogical responses to linguistic diversity in classrooms across different educational contexts.

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Appendices

The materials presented in the appendices consist of selected excerpts from three units of 1, 2, 3... Português! Atividades interdisciplinares de Português Língua Não Materna A1 (pre-publication materials, reproduced with permission), chosen for their clear illustration of language-content integration and the design principles discussed in this article.

Appendix A - Excerpt from Unit 9 (Weather) - PLNM A1 - Portuguese Language

Integration of scientific vocabulary from Environmental Studies with lexical expansion tasks and the construction of simple sentences.

Nível A1 – U9 – Meteorologia



Objetivos: Compreender e saber usar expressões sobre o tempo. Associar palavras da mesma família (nomes e adjetivos). Usar conectores de adição, contraste, causa e consequência.



1. Numera as figuras de 1 a 7, seguindo a ordem com que as ouves.



2. Completa as frases com palavras relacionadas com cada uma das imagens.
céu – chover – granizo – ondas – vento – nevar – nuvens

Hoje, as nuvens estão cinzentas e está a _____.
Há muitas _____ no mar. Não se pode tomar banho.
O sol brilha no _____. Está um dia quente!
No inverno, costuma _____ na Serra da Estrela.
No verão, há poucas _____. O céu costuma estar limpo.
Os meus cabelos voam com o _____.
O _____ não é chuva nem neve.

3. Há palavras que são da mesma família. Associa os nomes aos adjetivos.

NOMES	ADJETIVOS
nuvem •	• ventoso
chuva •	• nublado
sol •	• marítimo
vento •	• chuvoso
mar •	• ensolarado



4. Ouve o texto e completa com as palavras em falta.

céu – chover – chuva – mar – meteorologia – nevar – região – sol – tempo – vento

O Tempo em Portugal

No território de Portugal continental, o tempo é diferente em cada (1) _____.
A norte, vai haver muitas nuvens no céu e vai (2) _____.
Além disso, na Serra da Estrela, o inverno faz-se sentir, porque pode (3) _____.
Já a sul, o (4) _____ está nublado, mas não há previsão de (5) _____.
No entanto, no (6) _____, há aviso amarelo por causa da agitação marítima.
Nas ilhas, o (7) _____ também varia. Na Madeira, o céu está limpo e há muito (8) _____.
Por isso, é um bom dia para brincar no jardim! Por outro lado, nos Açores, está muito (10) _____.
É importante ver a (9) _____ todos os dias, para sabermos que roupa vestir e o que podemos fazer.

Appendix B - Excerpt from Unit 6 (Daily routine, meals and time) - PLNM A1 - Mathematics

Example of articulation between Portuguese Language and Mathematics through telling the time and organising the daily routine, mobilising functional vocabulary related to ordinal numeration.

Nível A1 – U6 – Rotina, Refeições e Horas



Objetivos: Reconhecer números ordinais em contextos diversos. Ler e escrever horas.

7. Responde:

Eu almoço às 12:00.
Uma hora depois são _____.

Eu janto às 19:30.
Duas horas antes são _____.

8. Olha para as seguintes imagens de uma parte da rotina do João.

6:30	12:30	17:00	22:00

8.1. Escreve as horas em cada relógio.

8.2. Ordena, do mais cedo para o mais tarde, as seguintes frases:

- O João brinca às 17:00.
 O João acorda às 6:30.
 O João almoça às 12:30.
 O João vai dormir às 22:00.

1.º - Primeiro
2.º - Segundo
3.º - Terceiro
4.º - Quarto
5.º - Quinto
6.º - Sexto
7.º - Sétimo
8.º - Oitavo
9.º - Nono
10.º - Décimo

8.3. Qual é a primeira atividade do dia? _____

8.4. Qual é a terceira atividade do dia? _____

8.5. Qual é a última atividade do dia? _____

8.6. Olha para os seguintes relógios. Escreve a hora e diz o que achas que o João pode estar a fazer.

a)	b)
_____	_____

Appendix C - Excerpt from Unit 3 (Human body) - PLNM A1 - Environmental Studies

Example of integration between lexical enrichment, elementary scientific vocabulary and Environmental Studies content, articulated through matching tasks.

Nível A1 – U3 – Corpo humano



Objetivo: Distinguir os principais órgãos - coração, pulmões, estômago e rins.

6. Completa as frases com **coração, pulmões, estômago** ou **rins**, de forma a formares afirmações verdadeiras.

Quando bebes muita água, os _____ trabalham mais.
Quando corres muito, o _____ bate muito depressa.
Depois de comer demais, o _____ pode doer.
Quando respiras fundo, os _____ enchem-se de ar.
O _____ bate e faz o sangue circular no corpo.
Os _____ ajudam-nos a respirar.
O _____ serve para digerir a comida.
Os _____ filtram o sangue e produzem urina.

7. Associa o órgão à sua função e ao respetivo cuidado a ter.

São os principais órgãos do sistema respiratório.

É o principal órgão do sistema digestivo.

É o principal órgão do sistema circulatório.

São os principais órgãos do sistema urinário.



Devemos mastigar bem a comida.

Devemos praticar exercício físico.

Devemos respirar ar puro.

Devemos beber bastante água.

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Ecological reconstruction of cultural representation in language textbooks: An empirical study of two Chinese French textbooks

Ge Zhang

Introduction

In language classrooms, the teaching content consists of both language and culture, each constructed through distinct processes. The language component is a methodological construct with established procedures of organization and instruction. By contrast, the construction of the cultural component is more complex, since there is no reference grammar: the amount and organization of cultural content remain under-explored. The textbook, as the primary medium for disseminating knowledge and structuring the content of a language course, is a key pedagogical resource and has therefore attracted considerable scholarly attention. One of the areas explored concerns the sociocultural representations embedded in textbooks, which vary from one work to another and reflect not only didactic and cultural orientations but also broader worldviews.

The study of sociocultural representation in textbooks has shifted from merely identifying cultural content to analyzing modes of representation in order to uncover their underlying logic and implicit meanings. Research in this field generally relies on content analysis and critical discourse analysis, often adopting interdisciplinary perspectives. Nathalie Auger (2000), for example, compared representations of culture in 42 foreign language textbooks from 13 European Union countries, highlighting their role in identity construction. Geneviève Zarate (2004, p. 11) conceptualized the language textbook as a 'cultural mediator', examining representations through lenses such as geopolitics, sociocultural context, pedagogical orientation, and editorial logic. Karen Risager (2018) proposed five dimensions for the study of cultural content in textbooks - national studies, citizenship education, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and transnational studies - thus systematizing the criteria for selecting cultural elements. Similarly,

Mélanie Buchart (2013) investigated the relationship between cultural representations in textbooks and the development of foreign language learners' cultural competence.

Over the past five years, cultural representation in textbooks has also become a major research focus in China. Studies have mainly concentrated on four areas: developing analytical frameworks for cultural representation (Zhang & Li, 2022); comparing modes of representation (Zhang, Chang, & Su, 2024); examining the representation of Chinese culture in foreign language textbooks (Tian, Ke, & Wang, 2024); and analyzing the content and characteristics of cultural representation in textbooks for different languages (Li, Zhang, Chang, & Guo, 2023).

At present, most textbook research in China remains confined to analyzing textbook content without sufficiently linking it to learners or classroom practice. Textbooks are often treated as static texts, with researchers seeking to explain their design logic, the factors shaping cultural representation, or the principles guiding selection. However, such studies rarely evaluate how teachers and learners actually receive and engage with these representations. Current research typically addresses questions such as 'what to represent', 'how to represent it', and 'why represent it this way', but seldom asks whether such representations are truly necessary or what impact they have on actual teaching.

Against this background, the present study adopts an empirical methodology. Its corpus consists of two French textbooks published in China - one in the 1990s and another in 2019 - both widely used in university French programs. Surveys and interviews were conducted with six classes across three universities in Beijing and Tianjin to assess how teachers and students perceive the representation of French culture in these textbooks. This research seeks to answer two key questions:

- 1) Do the cultural representations of France in these textbooks meet the teachers' and learners' expectations?
- 2) To what extent are these cultural representations integrated into classroom teaching and learning practices?

Presentation of the corpus

The corpus for this study consists of two textbooks published in two different periods of China's educational history. Both were designed for university students majoring in French and serve as core materials for general French courses, which are regarded as central to foundational language instruction.

The textbook *Le Français* was developed between the 1990s and 2010¹ by Professor Ma Xiaohong of Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) and published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP). Recommended nationally by the Ministry of Education, it has been widely used in universities offering French as a major. Even today, it remains in use in several institutions - particularly in the Beijing and Tianjin region - such as the China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) and Tianjin Normal University (TNU). Like most French textbooks published in China, *Le Français* adopts a pedagogical organization centered primarily on language. Texts and dialogues introduce grammatical and lexical knowledge, reinforced by three recurring sections - Vocabulary, Grammar, and Exercises - which systematize linguistic instruction. At the same time, the book is distinguished by the inclusion of substantial encyclopedic content on French civilization and mass culture. Cultural learning is mainly conveyed through four sections: Text/Dialogue, French Civilization, Notes and Reading Exercises, which also incorporate sociocultural elements, with representations of France and China appearing in 'translation' or 'rapid comprehension' activities.

The textbook *En Route* was developed over a decade (2009–2019) under the direction of a group of teachers, mainly from Beijing International Studies University (BISU). Its four volumes were published by the FLTRP between 2017 and 2020. Like *Le Français*, *En Route* is intended for the first two years of university-level French learning. It is part of the FLTRP's 'New Classic' (新经典 *xinjingdian*) series, whose Chinese name reflects an effort to reconcile the legacy of earlier textbooks with methodological and content innovations. The French title *En Route* emphasizes the idea of language learning as an ongoing journey without a fixed endpoint.

In *En Route*, cultural representation does not occupy a position as systematic or as central as in *Le Français*.

The Civilization section is retained but expanded in scope compared to French Civilization in *Le Français*. Each unit is organized around a central theme that structures the accompanying pedagogical materials. Unlike in *Le Français*, France is no longer the sole object of study; instead, it becomes an entry point to a multicultural perspective and a broader understanding of the world. Sociocultural representations encompass not only France and Francophone countries but also global phenomena and universal values. Another distinguishing feature of *En Route* is its emphasis on authenticity. Alongside numerous authentic materials, created dialogues and texts are embedded in specific communicative contexts, featuring identifiable settings and clearly defined characters. Cultural content is not transmitted encyclopedically, like entries in a 'dictionary of culture' (Hu, 2017, p. 3), but progressively and constructively, through cultural cues embedded in everyday linguistic exchanges.

Research methodology

This study employed an empirical methodology combining teacher interviews with student questionnaire surveys.

Teacher interviews

Interviews were conducted with six French teachers from three universities: BISU, TNU, and CFAU. All teach first-year French majors and use either *Le Français* or *En Route* as their primary instructional material. To preserve anonymity while ensuring clarity, a coding system was adopted: the first letter indicates the teacher's status (T for teacher), the second letter identifies the home institution, and the number indicates the chronological order of the interview. For example, TB2 refers to the second teacher interviewed from BISU University. Although limited in scope, the sample reflects diverse pedagogical and professional experiences. Three teachers had less than three years of teaching experience, while others had five, nine, and 17 years, respectively. All had completed undergraduate studies in French at Chinese universities, earning a Bachelor's degree. Four subsequently pursued a Master's or doctoral degree in France, while the other two completed advanced training in China. Their fields of expertise span six disciplines: classical studies (TC), translation (TB2), international relations (TT2), linguistics (TB3), French literature (TB1), and English linguistics (TT1). All had also received training in didactics, providing them with a general understanding of foreign language teaching methodologies.

The purpose of these interviews was to document teachers' evaluations of the textbooks and their classroom use. The analysis was structured around

1. The four volumes of the textbook were published between 1992 and 1993. Volume I and Volume II were revised and republished in 2007 and 2009.

three key questions:

To what extent do teachers find the sociocultural representations in the textbooks relevant?

Which aspects of the textbooks are considered most valuable?

How do teachers adjust or supplement cultural content they perceive as inadequate?

Student survey

The student survey involved 121 first-year students, aged 18 - 19, enrolled in the courses given by the six interviewed teachers. Students were divided into three groups according to their universities and the textbooks used:

Category	Number
Total questionnaires distributed	121
Total questionnaires retained	121
Group 1: CFAU students using <i>Le Français</i>	21
Group 2: TNU students using <i>Le Français</i>	30
Group 3: BISU students using <i>En Route</i>	70

Table 1. Overview of the Student Sample

The survey was administered in two stages. The first, at the very beginning of students' French learning, sought to identify pre-existing representations they held of French language and culture prior to formal study. The second, conducted at the end of the first semester, examined changes in these representations and gathered student evaluations of the textbook used in their general French course.

The questionnaire contained approximately 15 questions in different formats (open-ended, closed, and multiple choice). These covered: students' overall impressions of the textbook (*Le Français* or *En Route*); the sections considered most interesting or useful; preferred lessons; the diversity and authenticity of the cultural content provided; and students' representations of France, French people, and the French language. The underlying hypothesis was that learners' appreciation and acceptance of the textbook would influence, to some extent, their motivation to learn.

Findings

The cultural dimension in general French courses

To assess the extent to which cultural content is integrated into the teaching of general French, and to identify the types of cultural themes prioritized, I first

focused our questions on the 'Civilization' section of the two textbooks *Le Français* and *En Route*. Surprisingly, this section was largely overlooked - or even ignored - by most of the teachers interviewed. It was either omitted entirely, assigned for independent reading, or covered only briefly for general comprehension.

TB3: *"I don't teach the Civilization part. Students work on it independently at home. Otherwise, I leave it to a colleague who teaches French civilization in another semester."*

TT1: *"I don't cover the Civilization section. Students read it on their own after class."*

TB1: *"The Civilization section only begins from Lesson 13, which I haven't reached yet. I think I will teach it, because the texts are short in French, and I can help students grasp the general meaning."*

Teachers who chose to reduce or omit this section generally cited two reasons: insufficient class time due to the heavy grammatical load, and cultural themes judged as too "banal" or "distant from students' reality."

TB2: *"Text, grammar, and vocabulary take up most of the time. As for the Civilization section, I assign it for self-study and we discuss it very briefly - just a few minutes."*

In practice, cultural content is not limited to the Civilization section. In both textbooks, each text or dialogue introduces sociocultural elements - French and sometimes Chinese - through communicative contexts. For example, in *En Route I*, Lesson 7 *Here and There*, the authors include two short texts presented in the form of postcards sent to a friend. The texts depict two protagonists traveling in Montauban and Aix in France. They enthusiastically share their travel experience in introducing the geographical locations and cultural features of these two cities to their friend - for instance, Montauban as the birthplace of the painter Ingres, and Aix as a city known for its many prestigious universities. Compared with the Civilization section, cultural representations in the texts are more implicit and less concentrated, since the texts are mainly designed for grammar and vocabulary teaching and for fostering students' communicative competence. I therefore investigated how teachers actually use these cultural materials in class (see *Table 2*).

Three main findings emerge from this analysis:

Cultural content is not confined to textbooks; teachers act as key cultural mediators. Their personal experiences - perceived as "alive" and "authentic" - strongly engage students.

TT1: *"When I share an authentic experience, the students listen with fascination."*

The digital age reduces the problem of outdated

Teacher	Exploitation of Cultural Representations in Texts and Exercises	Methods and Materials	Cultural Aspects Emphasized
TC	Develops cultural themes in texts with additional details, except in simple texts where linguistic goals are the priority. No cultural exploitation via exercises.	PPT presentations; oral explanations; authentic documents such as press, videos, or student presentations.	Practical knowledge about French culture, particularly useful in case of a stay in France.
TT1	Expands or clarifies certain cultural aspects mentioned in the texts, except when the cultural purpose is not very obvious. No cultural exploitation in exercises.	Oral explanation.	Cultural themes judged “interesting,” for example, table manners.
TT2	Basic scientific vocabulary	Oral explanation. Complementary materials such as online videos, or activities from other textbooks (e.g., <i>Alter Ego</i> +). Comparative discussions between students and their daily lives.	Subjects judged “attractive,” especially those that directly concern the students’ lives.
TB1	Briefly presents French personalities or cities mentioned in the texts. Gives explanations on certain phenomena or cultural words based on personal experiences (e.g., “au pair,” “la poste”). Compares French and Chinese cultures. Very low cultural use in exercises.	Oral presentation; use of images and photos.	Values, mentalities, intercultural approach.
TB2	Gives a concise explanation of French cultural representations in the texts, due to the cognitive limits of beginners and the already present grammatical and lexical weight. Students are sometimes not very curious about the cultural aspect. Explanation nourished by personal experience. Very limited cultural exploitation in exercises.	Oral explanation.	Cultural elements that hold the students’ interest.
TB3	Introduces some cultural elements to make the course more attractive, especially in teaching of phonetics. Explains the cultural phenomena of the texts, sometimes in comparison with China. Very limited cultural exploitation in exercises.	Oral explanation. Authentic materials (songs, short films, posters, etc.).	For true beginners: encyclopedic culture; for more advanced levels: values and mentalities.

Table 2: Teacher Perspectives on the Use of Cultural Representations

textbooks. Teachers supplement and update cultural references using diverse resources. Sensitivity and adaptability to cultural realities matter more than textbook ‘perfection’.

Despite efforts toward communicative and authentic materials, general French courses in China remain text-centered, with linguistic acquisition as the main

focus. Cultural content is often reserved for specialized courses in later years. In general French, culture plays a secondary role.

TB3: *“I introduce cultural elements, especially in phonetics, to lighten the atmosphere and make the class more lively.”*

	Authenticity	Variety	Quality
<i>Le Français</i>	“Lacks authenticity” “artificial” “dated”	“Varied content” “fairly complete themes”	Judgments generally absent. ²
<i>En Route</i>	“Updated expressions” “living language” “examples anchored in reality” “Some sentences are too difficult for beginners because lexical and grammatical authenticity is prioritized”	“Abundant content” “sometimes overloaded” “Some cultural aspects are more universal than specifically French”	“Depth is appropriate for beginners” “interesting” “close to student experiences”

Table 3: Teachers’ Opinions on Representations of France in *Le Français* and *En Route*

Evaluation of the representation of France in the textbooks

Teachers were also asked to assess the representation of France in *Le Français* and *En Route*, focusing on authenticity, variety, and quality. *Table 3* gives the most frequently-mentioned comments.

Findings suggest that both textbooks have strengths and weaknesses. *Le Français* often sacrifices cultural authenticity for linguistic simplification, resulting in outdated representations. By contrast, *En Route* emphasizes universal sociocultural themes, intercultural dialogue, and global perspectives. The authors clearly seek to provide a broad vision of French culture, but the density of the content makes it difficult for teachers to truly appropriate and integrate it. Teachers particularly value its content that connects with students’ lived realities.

Usefulness: Language vs. culture

Although the inseparability of language and culture is widely recognized, in practice their teaching often remains separated. In China, general French courses prioritize linguistic instruction, with culture playing a secondary role. In both textbooks, cultural content is introduced through themes chosen by the authors and further mediated by teachers, while students remain mostly passive recipients.

The student survey explored what learners considered “interesting” or “useful”. Four guiding questions were asked:

Q1. Which sections of a lesson contain the richest cultural content?

Q2. Which themes in the French Civilization section interest you most? Why?³

Q3. Which lessons do you find most attractive? Why?⁴

Q4. Which sections are most useful for your French learning?

The first three questions, deliberately oriented toward the cultural dimension, aim to highlight the components that convey the strongest representations and the themes most likely to spark curiosity. The fourth question, by contrast, seeks to elicit an overall evaluation of the textbook’s perceived usefulness by the students.

For Q1, Groups 1 and 2 ranked the French Civilization section highest, followed by Lecture or Texte/Dialogue. Group 3 prioritized Communication, Civilisation, and Texte/Dialogue, reflecting differences in textbook structure. For Questions 2 and 3, students were asked to select the cultural themes they found most interesting, with multiple selections allowed (maximum five themes). Considering that students might find it difficult to prioritize among several themes, no weighting was assigned to the options in the analysis of these questions. The numbers in *Tables 4* and *5* indicate how many times each theme was selected by students. Results show clear patterns.

Students showed strong interest in gastronomy, *savoir-vivre*, daily life, and family, while telecommunication and housing were less appealing. Explanations included: “it’s practical,” “interesting,” “close to life,” “different from Chinese culture,” “useful for future life.”

The difference between Questions 2 and 3 partly explains the variation in responses: the former targets a specific section, while the latter concerns the entire lesson. Yet

2. None of the interviewees commented on the quality of the cultural representations in *Le Français*, Volume I. However, ET1 referred to Volumes III and IV that “the texts in Volumes III and IV address social issues in France. These are well-crafted texts.”

3. For students in Groups 1 and 2, who use *Le Français*, Volume I, the question pertained to the section *Un peu de civilisation*, which is an integral component of each lesson and is often thematically aligned with the main texts or dialogues.

4. For students in Group 3, who study with *En Route*, Volume I, the question was framed differently, since the *Civilisation* section only appears beginning with Lesson 12 (out of a total of 14 lessons in *En Route I*). Nevertheless, cultural themes are already present within the lesson texts and dialogues.

Themes in Le Français	Group 1 (N=20)	Group 2 (N=30)
<i>Savoir-vivre</i> (greetings, punctuality, invitation, etc.)	17	27
Daily Life (the gardens of the French)	10	19
Education (young French people at school, higher education in France)	13	16
Housing (housing for students in France)	8	9
Family (family relationships in France, housework, French families)	10	13
Telecommunication (some figures on the telephone)	3	5
Gastronomy (the meals of the French)	0 ⁵	27

Table 4: Themes of Interest in Le Français (Responses of groups 1 & 2 to Question 2)

Theme of lesson	Total
Introduction: Lesson 2 <i>In the Department of French and Italian</i>	4
Greeting: Lesson 3 <i>Mr. Berger meets his neighbor Mrs. Vaillant in the street</i>	22
Introduction: Lesson 4 <i>Add me / Do you know?</i>	4
Leisure: Lesson 5 <i>It's for a survey</i>	10
Family: Lesson 6 <i>Family Tree</i>	29
Travel: Lesson 7 <i>Here and There</i>	17
Gastronomy: Lesson 8 <i>What's in the fridge?</i>	13
Gastronomy: Lesson 8 <i>French Meals</i>	38
Gastronomy: Lesson 8 <i>In a Chinese Restaurant in Paris</i>	25
Shopping: Lesson 9 <i>Shopping Madness</i>	30
Character Description: Lesson 10 <i>Smile, You're on Camera / Paparazzi Time / A Secret Among Girlfriends</i>	16
Housing: Lesson 11 <i>Au Pair Girl / Xiaomei's Diary</i>	30
Number of questionnaires retained: 67	

Table 5: Lessons of Interest in *En Route* (Responses of Group 3 to Question 3)

Group 3 shows trends similar to Groups 1 and 2, with 'gastronomy' as the most popular theme, followed by 'shopping', 'housing', 'family', and 'greetings'. Students particularly value the vividness, usefulness, lexical richness, and diversity of content, which they see as enhancing the effectiveness of their learning.

Responses to Question 4 indicate that learners prioritize linguistic components considered most "profitable" (grammar, texts, vocabulary, phonetics, and exercises), while civilization ranks last. Responses to Question 4 show that for all students, the sections Grammar, Text/Dialogue, Vocabulary, Phonetics, and Exercises are considered the most "beneficial". The Civilization

section even ranks last among Group 3. This reflects the traditional emphasis on linguistic acquisition in foreign language teaching in China.

These findings raise a key question: how can cultural knowledge be organized so that it is both attractive and genuinely beneficial for learners?

Discussion

This empirical study highlights a significant gap between the design of sociocultural content in foreign language textbooks and its actual implementation in classroom practice. Despite the updated approach

5. The survey was carried out at the end of the semester, at which time the students in Group 1 had not yet covered Lesson 15. This accounts for the lack of selection of the theme 'Gastronomy'.

of recent textbooks like *En Route*, the cultural representations contained in the textbooks primarily reflect macro-level factors such as national policies, ideological orientations, societal context, institutional characteristics, and official curricula. Yet the classroom itself functions as a complex ecosystem in which the state, the educational institution, the teacher, the textbook, and the learners' knowledge, needs, and cognitive characteristics all interact to shape the learning process.

The interview and survey data indicate that the cultural content of textbooks does not fully meet the expectations of teachers and students, nor is it consistently integrated into classroom pedagogy. This disjunction can be explained by the essentially static nature of textbook-based cultural representations, which tend to shift in practice from the status of an authoritative source to that of a mere 'reference framework.'

The ecological approach

The ecological approach to language education emerged at the end of the twentieth century. Leo Van Lier (1997) first introduced this perspective in classroom observation, emphasizing the dynamic interactions between language learning and its environment. Later, Claire Kramsch (2008) and others further developed the approach, applying it to multilingual and multicultural contexts. More recently, Chong, Isaacs, and McKinley (2023) synthesized ecological applications in second language research, identifying five core components: Relationships, Quality, Agency, Context, and Dynamism. Brian Tomlinson (2024) emphasizes the need for coursebooks to be more humanistic, engaging learners by connecting materials to their lives and experiences.

From this perspective, language learning is conceived as a dynamic, interconnected system in which learners and teachers interact not only with each other but also with their environment. The ecological approach emphasizes the quality of the educational experience and recognizes learner agency as a central element.

Ecological reconstruction of cultural representation

Building on the ecological approach, I argue that the design of cultural representations in language textbooks should balance factors across the three levels of the educational ecosystem:

- Macro level: international relations, national policies, ideological orientations, and sociocultural environments determine the orientation and essential themes of cultural representation - the 'static core' of cultural knowledge.

- Meso level: curricula, institutional specificities and pedagogical objectives set the criteria for the quantity and quality of representations.
- Micro level: learners' cognitive capacities, individual needs, emotional engagement, motivation, and teachers' intercultural competence introduce dynamism and interactivity into classroom practice.

The rise of artificial intelligence, particularly large language models (LLMs), offers new opportunities to reconstruct cultural representation in textbooks. Unlike published materials, which cannot be updated in real time, AI tools such as ChatGPT enable teachers to enrich, adapt, and extend static cultural content. They can present it in more diversified and multidimensional forms, thereby establishing a genuine ecological interaction between target culture, local culture, world culture, and learners' own cultural backgrounds. It should be noted, however, that AI-generated content is based on existing data, and teachers need to use it thoughtfully to ensure its accuracy and relevance.

For example, in *En Route II*, a text titled *Les Français au volant* ("The French at the wheel") presents traits such as impatience and a taste for speed among French drivers. For Chinese students who have never been to France and do not drive, such cultural content may be difficult to grasp. Teachers can activate learner agency by transforming this text into a more practical resource, such as "road safety and etiquette advice for Chinese students traveling in France." Using ChatGPT, the teacher could prompt: "*Based on this text, propose safety and courtesy advice for Chinese students in France.*" The AI-generated suggestions, while retaining the vocabulary and structures of the original, would be relevant, context-specific, and engaging. This approach creates a closer connection between textbook representations and learners' realities, thereby enhancing pedagogical usefulness.

Conclusion

This study examined two French textbooks widely used in Chinese universities, drawing on data from six French teachers and 121 first-year students across three institutions. Through interviews and surveys, it explored how teachers and students evaluate the representation of French culture in these textbooks and how far such representations are integrated into classroom teaching.

Findings show that teachers adapt and explain cultural content selectively, often supplementing it with their own experiences, while students are most engaged by cultural themes closely linked to daily life. Both groups were of the opinion that linguistic knowledge remains the core of instruction, with cultural sections frequently relegated to autonomous reading outside class.

From an ecological perspective, these results highlight the need for a more balanced integration of cultural representation across macro, meso, and micro dimensions of education. Textbook design should incorporate learners' cognitive and motivational factors while providing adaptable, context-sensitive resources.

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Developing inclusive materials for glocal pedagogy: Addressing special educational needs in multicultural English programmes

Irina Malinina

Introduction

As a lecturer working at the University of Science and Technology MISIS in Moscow, Russia, I have constantly observed that teaching a Master's course on special educational needs (SEN) to students for whom English is a foreign language has been challenged by many factors. First, teaching learners with SEN is highly contextualized and rooted in local educational practices and knowledge. After finishing the Master's degree course, the teachers will return to their home countries or will be working in various countries of the world (for example, Vietnam, China, Tanzania, Egypt, Syria, Nigeria), which have their own long-established rules and regulations in special educational needs. Official institutions in every country include different needs and learning difficulties in their definitions of SEN, each with their own idiosyncratic and varied manifestations. Different regions have different procedures for collaboration between school administration and parents, teachers and parents and other key issues. Hence, the course should equip the students with relevant knowledge of educational legislation in terms of working with learners with SEN in their countries. It should also address how these needs are identified and dealt with by psychologists, neuropsychologists, speech therapists alongside school administration and teachers.

Secondly, teacher education should take into account local practices in dealing with learners with SEN. Oftentimes they stem from the knowledge generated by local specialists and official educational bodies. So, what is required in this situation are articles exploring local contexts, videos demonstrating real life examples of behavior of learners with SEN, artefacts demonstrating how they write, read, speak, behave and communicate with their teachers and peers. Voices of local parents and teachers should be also represented in teacher education courses.

Given that the course is conducted using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), all the aforementioned components should be in English. The main issue and dilemma are that there is a scarcity of local materials in English on special educational needs from the students' countries. From my personal observation, the majority of such materials in English exemplify learners and educational contexts in Anglophone countries, whereas local cases and practices are represented in local languages. Some infrequent exceptions are materials designed and developed by local teachers of English. However, as Canagarajah (2002) argues, 'in the professional sense, practitioners develop a knowledge of accomplishing their work in ways that are not acknowledged or recommended by the authorities/experts' (p. 243). In Russia, for example, these materials are mostly self-published in a limited number of copies and distributed through social networks and personal sites.

Besides, there exist numerous parallel terminologies in the SEN domain in various countries, which pre-service teachers should be aware of. For example, in Russia dyslexia (a learning disability manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading) and dysgraphia (a written language learning disability) are singled out as two discrete disabilities, whereas in other countries dyslexia serves as an umbrella term for these two special educational needs.

Such concerns lead to a set of questions, such as:

- How can the course include diverse geocultural contexts?
- How can international student-teachers contribute to the course and make it more localized?

In this article, my intention is to outline how glocalization (Robertson, 1995) can be used as a framework, offering a pluriversal approach (Escobar, 2018) instead of ontological universality.

Why glocalize SEN education?

Roudometof (2016) offers the following definition of *glocalization*: 'refraction of globalization through the local' (p. 79). In other words, similar to a ray of light bending upon entering into another medium, glocalization as a lens can transform the vision of the world by seeing the global through the local. Another analogy from physics could enhance our understanding of glocalization as 'diffraction', offered by Bayley (2018, p. 39). Diffraction is a physical process and can be observed when light passes through an opening and spreads out. It becomes more pronounced with narrower openings.

Metaphorically speaking, diffraction in our teaching context denotes looking at a small unit of a phenomenon (local) and seeing its bigger picture in a larger social and professional landscape (global). In a similar vein, Appadurai (1990) points out the difference between seeing the local within a global landscape as opposed to an ideoscape. As the result of synergy of the local and the global, new knowledge is created, shaping student-teachers' views on teaching learners with SEN and helping them drift from a static view of special educational needs to one which is more dynamic and well-rounded.

As I mentioned before, one of the obstacles in the way of glocalization is that when the course is delivered in English, the materials and the entire input (videos, articles) are most frequently in English too. I have made an attempt to find videos in English about dyslexic learners in Tanzania or Russia, for example, but I did not find a wide choice. Most videos are about Anglocentric countries. Similarly, the majority of scholarly research on special educational needs is published in English. However, a lot of research remains unnoticed and unavailable outside the local scholarly circles if written in local languages. Such research is often considered insignificant and limited to local communities because of the dominant standing of English as a communication medium and the wide proliferation of western-based products (Gray, 2002).

Despite the challenges, local knowledge adds value to the syllabi for SEN programmes. Even some controversial and more debatable facets of local knowledge become food for thought. For example, Russian education still bears the enduring legacy of 'defectology', an integrated approach which 'brings together psychology, medicine, philosophy, sociology and political theory in order to diagnose, educate and rehabilitate people with mental and physical handicaps' (Rouse et al., 2000, p. 8). In fact, it 'strengthens the segregated provisions' (Florian & Becirevic, 2011, p. 375) and emphasizes the supremacy of biological and psycho-physiological treatment over inclusive education. Yet, the Soviet concept of defectology gave rise to valuable research in psychology, dyslexia

treatment, speech therapy, and systemic rehabilitation of learners with special educational needs.

Another example of controversial approaches is the attitude towards albinism in sub-Saharan African regions. Albinism is 'a genetic condition caused by a deficit in production of the pigment melanin' (Franklin et al., 2018). People with albinism are considered disabled due to their poor vision, which is understandable. Simultaneously, there are a lot of folklore and mythological biases against them, which stigmatize and marginalize such people (Ndomondo, 2015).

Such local and contextualized wisdom can be easily labeled as inferior compared to western knowledge and practices, however 'anti-essentialist critiques of modernity' (Pennycook, 2017, p. 57) should take such vernacularity into account. Here, vernacular denotes 'a state of being native, original, and contextual to geography and places' (Suartika & Nichols, 2020, p. vii). Instead of eschewing some controversial local views on special educational needs, one should recognize them as food for thought and make an attempt to understand their strengths and weaknesses within their local contexts.

Glocalized materials

Articles and books

The course reading included articles and books of three types: (a) those written by local authors and published in English but featuring various geographical contexts, preferably of the students' countries; (b) those written in local languages and summarized in English by the students; (c) those written and published in English by Western scholars. For example, we read articles about teaching children with special educational needs in rural settings in various countries and identify what problems they have in common and in what way they differ. I ask students to search for articles on inclusion and special educational needs written by the authors from their countries which have been published in their local languages. After that, they are asked to present the summary in English to the whole group. This redresses the balance in the course towards local authors and adds a polyphony of voices to the course materials

Videos and films

The course on special educational needs is highly practical and requires a sufficient number of videos to illustrate manifestations of neurodiversity, behaviour, and speech patterns of learners with SEN. As a teacher I interact with parents of learners with various learning difficulties in Russia. I asked them to share videos of their children studying, playing and doing everyday routines. They gave me permission to use these short videos in my university classes. In one of the videos,

a 13-year-old boy was filmed during his English class, and in the second one, a girl with Down syndrome was doing maths.

Videos showcasing the way inclusion is implemented in the countries where the students come from were also included. Despite limited video material on some countries, all videos from the same region proved to be relevant. For example, we watched a video about autistic children in South Africa in a group with two students from African countries.

Furthermore, episodes from local films were used to illustrate certain issues. For example, I showed a scene from *A Hostess of an Orphanage* (*Khozyaika Detskogo Doma* in Russian), a Soviet film illustrating teacher-child relationships. Such films contextualized the course and provided examples of interaction between various actors of the educational process. Apart from entertainment, films 'offer unique scope for getting acquainted with other cultures' (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993, p. 207). This was a compelling and informative cultural experience, albeit entailing explanation of extralinguistic culture-bound problems. School realia, teacher-parent meetings, interaction between school administration and other actors of the educational process demanded translation. What added to the glocalised approach was the discussion of cultural schemas (Sharifian, 2014). For example, such lexical items as 'orphanage' or 'adoptive family' evoked multiple interpretations from people who have grown up in different contexts.

Local cases

During the course, stories emerged as real-life cases and vignettes in interactive theatre, which were discussed by the students. In interactive theatre, or 'forum theatre', the students are offered performance sketches with a follow-up discussion and analysis. These sketches, or vignettes, are used as cases and stories illustrative of school environment through which the students' perceptions and attitudes could be identified. The sketches are collected either by the students, or by myself during my 25-year-long teaching practice at schools. The students are asked to act out the scenes from school life and then analyse what was happening.¹

Case 1. Patimat, 9 years old

Patimat has speech-related difficulties. The child exhibits challenges with motor skills and peer interactions, does not want to draw, and does not hold scissors well. It is difficult to take her for a walk: she does not want to fasten buttons herself. There is a disorder of successive functions (she cannot

consistently reproduce a series of actions). There are difficulties with mirrored writing of letters. She perceives visual instructions easier than verbal ones.

Case 2. Anna, 14 years old

Anna communicates little with other children and teachers. She does not participate in games, and she tries to be alone. There are stereotyped repetitive movements - she can open and close a pencil case for the entire lesson. Anna has a very good memory - involuntary auditory and visual. Her carers need to be careful when playing music in the classroom or bringing new objects, toys, etc. into it: recently Anna became hysterical because of a musical toy that someone played in the class. There are cases of self-injury over seemingly trivial matters.

In class, the SEN teachers discussed possible approaches, interventions and solutions for these learners.

Local epistemologies

The pluriverse of epistemologies and the idea of a curriculum contents as 'the world in which many worlds would co-exist' (Mignolo, 2011, p. 71) bring to the foreground various academic contexts and socio-educational practices. Creating a curriculum that acknowledges and values diverse ways of knowing requires a shift away from the traditional Western-centric curriculum towards one that incorporates multiple knowledge systems and perspectives. In doing so, we can 'empower those who have been epistemically disempowered by the theo- and egopolitics of knowledge' (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 61) and those who have been historically marginalized and oppressed by colonial and capitalist systems.

Although many works by Soviet pedagogues as well as speech therapists have never been translated into English, I have incorporated them into the course. For example, the psychological structure of writing was analyzed (Luria, 1950) and a model of the formation of writing skill, describing its complex brain organization, was developed by the Soviet neuropsychologists (Akhutina, 2018; Luria, 1950). Several key cognitive prerequisites for reading and writing were developed (Egorov, 1953; Elkonin, 1989; Kornev, 1995; Lalaeva, 1989; Luria, 1962).

Glocalised output

Students' presentations

I typically ask all international students to prepare Power Point presentations about inclusive education

1. For example, one of the scenes we acted out was as follows: the teacher forced a neurodiverse 5th grade learner (with dyslexia) to read aloud a text in class, which is usually quite difficult for some neurodiverse learners. After watching this scene, I asked the students what they would do if they were the teacher and saw the child struggle that much over reading out loud in English. There were different opinions as to whether the teacher should insist on her reading aloud or not.

and teaching learners with special educational needs in the countries of their origin. The students inform others in the group about the history of inclusion in their country, the latest developments in legislation and predicaments schools and parents have to tackle.

To illustrate, a student from Tanzania highlighted an interesting feature of the special educational needs framework in their country. According to this framework, people with albinism are considered disabled and are often stigmatized and discriminated against in the sub-Saharan countries (Franklin et al., 2018; Ndomondo, 2015). Importantly, children with albinism are not automatically included in the list of those who need special education in other countries of the world. Thus, it makes sense to explore this issue further and debate how justified and evidence-based this attitude is.

In Russian classification of special educational needs, or 'limited health abilities' as they are still called in legal documents, there is a similar case. Such diagnosis as 'psychic development delay' (a lag in mental, cognitive, or psychological growth) does not exist in other countries. In a similar vein, other differences and similarities between national legislation and local practices can be focused on and explored further by the whole group.

Some students offered cases involving their local contexts for other students to think of some solutions. For example, the following scenario was used:

Suppose you are a school principal in Tanzania. You are going to accept some learners with albinism. Think of some measures to prevent stigmatization and discrimination towards such learners.

Assessment

The majority of assessment tasks on the course are grounded in local contexts. As Emmanuel et al. (2022) claim, since glocal education concentrates on the local context via the prism of national and global paradigms, it has an impact on evaluation in terms of design and intention.

During the course, I asked the students to complete the following collaborative and individual written assignments:

1. Write a brief information sheet about the characteristics and difficulties of students with dyslexia (300 words) for a group of teachers in your school.
2. You are a research assistant to the Head of the Federal Education Agency (Ministry) in your country, who needs to develop an anti-bullying program for inclusive schools in order to prevent

bullying of learners with autism. Design and develop recommendations for the program.

Such context-grounded assignments completed in small multicultural groups allowed the students to compare different contexts they teach in and brainstorm various approaches to inclusion and teaching learners with SEN.

For example, the tasks mentioned above allowed the student-teachers to think of acting as learners' advocates. Learners with special educational needs are particularly vulnerable at schools and are often denied the right to attend English lessons under the pretext that they are not able to learn foreign languages or that they are not capable of doing this because they struggle with their native language.

The task on the information sheet about dyslexia highlighted some well-rooted traditions in treating dyslexic learners in different countries. The teachers discussed possible reaction to this information sheet from their peers and foresaw the objections that can arise. Working in groups the teachers exchanged their experience, beliefs and fears with regard to learners with special educational needs. The teachers who come from the educational contexts where inclusion has a long-standing history shared their experience of debunking myths about low learning agility in learners with SEN and showed some difficulties learners with, for example, dyslexia may have to deal with in class (see Appendix 1, *Figure 1*).

Task 2, developing the anti-bullying prevention program, required doing research of best practices around the world and discussing if they are applicable in other educational contexts. Simultaneously, the teachers discussed the reasons why bullying happens and how it stems from the structure of society, for example, social classes, castes, privileged groups (see Appendix 1, *Figure 2*).

Such discussions also raised an important dilemma of agency vs. structure in educational institutions. Through the discussion of multiple local contexts, the teachers saw a bigger picture of schools as institutions. Can teachers act as agents of change? Is society 'a web of crystallized interactions' (Simmel, 1955, p. 35) or is it a monolith people cannot influence much? As Martin (2009) argues, 'society can seem like a thing outside us and frequently opposed to us, when it is nothing but the aggregate of our own actions' (p. 2). Completing the aforementioned assignments in multinational groups, the teachers conversed on their agency in promoting positive attitude towards learners with SEN.

Discussion and conclusion

In a world 'increasingly characterised by competition, commercialisation, self-interest and status building'

(Knight, 2018, p. 18), glocalization could potentially become a tool for sustaining openness and combine 'international outlook with national distinction' (Trippstad, 2016, p. 11). In our contemporary education realities, universities are viewed as transcultural sites where participants from various social contexts, linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact.

What glocalized learning should aim at is helping the learner make sense of their experiences and lived reality. In glocalized teaching and learning, the emphasis is on critical thought and comprehension of significant and pertinent links between learners' local and global perspectives. Students bring a variety of cultural worldviews to the 'third culture space' (Bhabha, 1994) represented by universities, charting their common futures by respectfully exchanging their cultural richness (Patel & Lynch, 2013).

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Appendix 1

Foreign Language Learning and Dyslexia

- 1 Dyslexic people can be involved in foreign language learning but with some exceptions.
- 2 The experience of different individuals may vary considerably.
- 3 Classes where immersion is close to natural language which is though rare in schools but practically useful.
- 4 Motivation and positive attitude to the new language subject matter but do not guarantee a learner's success.
- 5 Due to weak memory, the long process of learning any new language may consequently become less efficient.
- 6 To activate all senses, Multisensory Structured Approach can suit. Some other facilitating and engaging strategies can work as well.
- 7 As for language choice by the criterion of similarity in structure, Spanish is one of the best options to opt for.
- 8 To sum up, there is no magic pill for each dyslexic learner, so the main idea is to monitor a child's performance.

Figure 1: Dyslexic learners and learning foreign languages (Spelling errors in the original)

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Figure 2: Anti-bullying program for inclusive schools

Quagmire underlying ESL acquisition: Impact of outside of classroom language experiences

Asma Aftab

Introduction

Applied linguists have reiterated that notwithstanding the importance of investigating the impact of language learning materials, primarily textbooks, limited research has been conducted on this significant area; 'there is already quite an extensive literature on research and materials development but regrettably little of it provides empirical evidence of the effects of materials on their users' (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 169). The notable cited reason for this omission is of a practical nature related to financial issues and time constraints since such research would be usually long-term (Tomlinson, 2012). Furthermore, language acquisition is dependent on other important factors apart from textbooks, including student-teacher interaction, the nature of teaching, techniques of adapting textbooks, and the outside classroom target language interactions and experiences of students. All these elements are undoubtedly extremely difficult to regulate and manipulate as required in typical experimental research (Tomlinson, 2012).

For instance, linguists have asserted that target language exposure including extensive listening and reading of books, newspapers/magazines, movies and programmes, can have positive impact on language acquisition (Muñoz, 2014; Aliyev & Albay, 2016; De Wilde, Brysbaert & Eyckmans, 2020, Asyidiq & Akmal, 2020; Alharthi, 2020; Bostanci, 2022). Three questionnaire survey-based studies in which Jordanian, Indian and Malaysian university students were asked to self-report their experiences (Al-Zoubi, 2018; Jabarani, 2019; Roslim et al., 2021) indicated that outside the classroom, target language exposure supported the development of the four skills as well as vocabulary development. Matusevych and Backus (2017) demonstrated that contact with inputs in both the first and second languages helped improve the participants' grammatical knowledge and usage. Kozhevnikova's (2019) quasi-experimental research highlighted the positive influence of a six month long informal English language exposure on the vocabulary

and grammar development of the target language of undergraduate level Russian learners.

Maley (2005) advocates the positive impact of extensive reading on language learning. In fact, studies conducted in the last decades have shown the benefits of extensive reading on language learning (for instance, Elley, 1991; Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004; Gopala, Rahim, Marimuthu, Abdullah, Faizah & Jusoff, 2009; Ferdila, 2014). Nkomo (2021), for example, highlighted that an extensive reading project helped improve the cognitive abilities, critical thinking and motivation levels of Grade 3 level South African students. In fact, reading for pleasure helps to develop learners' autonomy and self-assurance, enhance their attention, retention, world knowledge, and abilities to cope with any kind of experiences; it also keeps their minds active (Aliyeva, 2021). Park's (2020) South Korean school-based study demonstrated that the attitudes of learners who were engaged in extensive reading improved as compared to students (from the same population) who were only provided intensive reading practice. The attitudes incorporated rational opinions, emotional perceptions, and positive inclination and motivation towards reading.

Renandya and Jacobs (2016) maintain that both extensive reading and listening are beneficial for language learning. Öztürk and Tekin (2020) indicated through a small-scale case study that six Turkish English language school learners improved specifically their listening and reading skills, pronunciation and vocabulary through extensive listening. Rusmiati et al. (2024) elicited positive feedback from three Indonesian university English language learners especially with regard to improvement in listening comprehension, vocabulary development and pronunciation through extensive listening practice. Furthermore, extensive listening activities are more stimulating and thus contribute towards language development since learners can choose materials which are compatible with their tastes and have value for them (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Movies are one such type of materials which

have been shown to be useful for extensive listening. Television series are among other materials which are especially advantageous for language learning because the recurring and frequent contact with language (especially vocabulary) while watching these series (what can be referred to as ‘narrow listening or viewing’) (Ivone & Renandya, 2019, p. 246) make it more likely for learners to improve their language and specifically facilitate lexical development. However, in order to reap maximum benefit of this kind of listening and viewing, the students should be engaged in it for ‘lots of time over an extended period for listening to a large amount of comprehensible and enjoyable listening material’ (ibid., p. 242).

With the introduction and exposition of complexity theory in relation to language learning, language development has been characterized as a complex phenomenon reflecting adaptable interactions/relationships between component elements which exert varying influences, incorporating a series of processes which are flexible, unpredictable and contextualized, and manifesting established but variable patterns (Larsen-Freeman 2017; Al-Hoorie et al., 2021). This phenomenon is dependent on each learner’s previous linguistic and cognitive experiences and his/her abilities to draw implications, perceive, analyze and retain. Frequency, value and significance of the exposed linguistic structures can impact learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2023). Based on these assumptions, language acquisition can be considered as multi-faceted and ‘chaotic’ procedure incessantly being affected by varied situations.

This article presents a small-scale case study which explores the possible influences on language learning of a small group of ESL undergraduate Pakistani learners. The aim of the current study was open-ended since, as has been noted above, multiple factors can affect learning of a second language and it is very difficult to conclusively demarcate any one of these elements as impacting learning. However, I attended to just one of these factors, specifically outside classroom English language exposure, which has also been identified as influencing target language learning in previous literature and research (as discussed above).

Research design and methodology

The current research adopted a mixed method approach (based on Dörnyei, 2007). This study attempted to investigate possible influences on language teaching/learning and does not utilize any previously established fixed research paradigm but adapted a case study methodology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Case studies examine in depth a small number of individuals or events aiming to identify some specific patterns in order to elucidate or discover possible

reasons for the behaviour (Stake, 1995; Dooley, 2002; Zainal, 2007). Such studies can adopt both quantitative and qualitative approaches while attempting to offer explanations or judgments, or to validate/challenge theories and beliefs (Stake, 1995; Dooley, 2002; Zainal, 2007). This particular study utilized eight linguistics undergraduate students. The learners’ outside classroom English language exposure was highlighted through questionnaires with open-ended items and their ESL skills were assessed through open-ended tests; thus, both qualitative and quantitative data (the test marks) were elicited. The primary aim was to find out any possible co-relationship between the learners’ target language development and the influence of their informal experience of English in the form of reading books/newspapers/magazines and watching programmes/movies. Here it is important to point out that considering the small sample size, the mixed research procedure and tools, the complex nature of language development and the many possible influencing factors, neither conclusive claims can be made nor can the findings be generalized. Instead, only specific observations related to the participants could be made and probable patterns highlighted.

The objective of the study was not to verify or establish any theory or belief, but rather to attempt to explore how far the participants’ English proficiency could be attributed to informal language exposure. Due to the small sample size, this study can be taken as a preliminary stage of future research aiming to investigate factors affecting language performance. The findings of this research can show theorists, researchers and practitioners possible influences on second language development and suggest areas and procedures for conducting further long-term and in-depth studies using a larger number of students.

The target population was undergraduate level female Pakistani students studying linguistics in a public college in central Pakistan. They were aged between 21 and 25 years and belonged to diverse social and educational backgrounds which implied that their schooling and informal English language experience was varied. Prospective participants were initially asked to complete a short, open-ended ‘language exposure’ questionnaire which attempted to assess the nature of their informal exposure to English outside their classroom; specifically, this research tool identified their favourite/popular books, newspapers, magazines, movies, programmes and fictional characters. I selected eight individuals who specifically and clearly responded to the language exposure questionnaire items by providing the titles of their favourite books, movies, television series and newspapers/magazines. They were assigned code names A – H.

Thereafter the participants’ general English language skills were assessed through their normal major subject (linguistics)-based class tests. Their reading and

Criteria					
Marks Allocation	Task Achievement	Understanding	Application of concepts	Linguistic Accuracy	Organization
90% and above	Successfully accomplished the task – all relevant details provided	Complete in-depth and critical understanding displayed	Effective application of under focus concepts	Accurate and appropriate expression	Completely coherent and effective presentation
80% - 89%	Managed to accomplish the task appropriately	Displayed in-depth and critical understanding to a great extent	Application of concepts illustrated	A few errors could be observed	Mainly coherent and effective presentation
70% - 79%	A few relevant details were not provided	Displayed in-depth and critical understanding to some extent	Application of concepts illustrated to some extent	Some errors could be observed	Coherent presentation
60% - 69%	Some relevant aspects were missing	Displayed limited understanding	Application of concepts illustrated to a limited extent	A number of errors could be observed	Coherent presentation only to a limited extent
50% - 59%	Many relevant aspects were missing	Lacked critical understanding	Application of concepts was not illustrated	Weak expression	Weak organization and presentation
Below 50%	Failed to accomplish the task	No understanding displayed		Very poor expression	Very poor organization and presentation

Table 1: Test Rubric (devised by the author)

writing skills were assessed through a test (Test I) which involved reading an excerpt from a subject- related web article, namely *The Roaring in the Chimney* (Thornbury & Meddings, 1999) which focuses on the weaknesses of language textbooks, summarizing its main theme and commenting on the expressed viewpoints. Their speaking skills were assessed through Test II which involved asking the participants to orally respond to one of five pre-prepared subject-based questions; these questions were adapted from Richards (2014, pp. 34-35). Listening was not tested due to limited course time. Both the tests incorporated open-ended questions. The responses to the tests were given scores according to the rubric provided in *Table 1*.

Test I

Reading: Ability to comprehend an academic text related to the relevant field of study.

Ability to:

- understand basic and literal meanings
- infer and read between the lines
- identify the main idea
- respond critically and emotionally

- relate what is being read to past experiences.

Writing: Ability to respond critically and emotionally to an academic text related to the relevant field of study in academic written format.

Ability to:

- express ideas clearly
- convey relevant meanings
- evaluate and make connections
- use relevant and formal academic English
- write coherent texts.

Test II

Speaking: Ability to communicate orally ideas related to the relevant field of study.

Ability to:

- express ideas clearly
- convey relevant meanings
- evaluate and make connections
- use relevant and formal academic English
- communicate orally in a coherent manner.

Marks (%)	Evaluation
100 - 90	Excellent
89 - 80	Good
79 - 70	Above Average
69 - 60	Average
59 - 50	Below Average
49 - 40	Poor
Below 40	Very Poor

Table 2: Rating system (devised by the author)

The eight students identified the ESL textbooks series which they used in their middle level school grades. These materials could suggest the types of ESL activities these students had been engaged in during their school-based formal English learning experiences. The textbook titles are presented in *Table 3*.

The *Step Ahead* and *Stepping Forward* series support the development of all ESL skills as well as creative and cognitive abilities of target students. These coursebooks focus on diverse types of genres and utilize different kinds of reflective tasks. *Oxford Progressive English* primarily caters to reading skills and vocabulary development. English relatively incorporates the most controlled and mechanical activities and uses non-authentic texts for reading and listening skills.

Students	Prescribed (Grades VI – VIII) English Language Textbook Series	Publishers	Dates of Publication
A	<i>Step Ahead</i>	Panpac Education Private Limited (Singapore)	2006
B	<i>Step Ahead</i>	Same as above	Same as above
C	<i>Oxford Progressive English</i>	Oxford English Press (Karachi, Pakistan)	2005
D	<i>Oxford Progressive English</i>	Same as above	Same as above
E	<i>English</i> (PTB)	Approved by the provincial Punjab government textbook board (PTB) (Lahore, Pakistan)	2003
F	<i>English</i> (PTB)	Same as above	Same as above
G	<i>Stepping Forward</i>	Local Pakistani version adapted from Panpac Education Private Limited (Singapore)	2006
H	<i>Stepping Forward</i>	Same as above	Same as above

Table 3: The participants' school textbook series titles

Students	Reading and Writing Test (%) Marks	Evaluation ¹	Speaking Test % Marks	Evaluation	Total % Marks
A	70	Above Average	50	Below Average	60
B	60	Average	40	Poor	50
C	35	Very Poor	40	Poor	37.5
D	70	Above Average	60	Average	65
E	40	Poor	40	Poor	40
F	70	Above Average	50	Below Average	60
G	60	Average	60	Average	60
H	70	Above Average	40	Poor	55

Table 4: Participants' test scores

1. Based on the rating system provided in *Table 2*

The findings

Test scores

The scores received by the eight participants in the two tests are presented in *Table 4* on the previous page.

Students A, D, F and H obtained 70% marks in the first test which assessed their reading and writing skills. According to the rubric (see *Table 1*), these four participants displayed comprehensive and analytical understanding and could apply the concepts to some extent; by and large their answers were properly organized. However, a few relevant content areas were not mentioned and a small number of language errors were apparent. On the whole, their reading and writing abilities were assessed to be above average. Students B and G received 60% marks in the reading and writing test. Their answers illustrated limited understanding and organization skills, while a number of important content points were not discussed and some linguistic errors could be seen. Overall, their work was of average caliber.

Students D and G obtained 60% marks on Test II which assessed their speaking abilities. Their oral replies indicated inadequate understanding and organization skills. In addition, some significant content areas were not mentioned and they made some language errors while speaking. Generally, the speaking skills of these participants, though better than the rest, were of average standard. Students A and F received 50% scores on their speaking tests. They did not mention a large number of relevant content areas and their answers displayed poor understanding, linguistic accuracy and organization.

Students E and C scored 40% and 35% in the first test respectively. Students B, C, E and H received 40 % in the second test. These students not only failed to answer the relevant questions, but their language and organization skills were also poor.

Participants' tastes and language experiences

Student D had a wide range of favourite Urdu and English books, specifically *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Twilight*, and the Urdu fictional works *Amar Bail* and *Pir-e-Kamil*. Similarly, her favourite movies and television programmes were also varied; popular television series included *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *The One Who Came from the Stars*, *The Originals* and *Teen Wolf*, and her favoured movies were *A Walk to Remember*, *Spirited Away*, *The Secret Life of Pets*, *Thor the Dark World*, and *Wreck It Ralph*.

Student A's favourite books were *Persuasion*, the *Mortal Instrument* series, *Narnia*, *Pir-e-Kamil*, and *Percy Jackson*. Her preferred television series were

Supernatural, *Sherlock*, *Big Bang Theory*, and *The Ellen Show*. Her frequently watched television channels were the Pakistani channel ARY News, and Star Movies. Her favourite movies were *Prince of Persia*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Fathers and Daughters*, *Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

Student F's favourite books were mainly Urdu publications namely *Mushaf*, *Jannat Kay Pattay*, and *Karakoram Ka Taj Mehal*; the specified English books were *Forty Rules of Law*, and *The Alchemist*. Her favourite television programmes were *Grey's Anatomy*, *Once Upon A Time*, *Arrow*, *The Flash*, and *Teen Wolf*. She did not specify the channels which she watched frequently. Her favourite movies were *The Maze Runner*, *Tangled*, *Maleficent*, *Frozen*, and *Leap Year*. She admitted that she usually did not read newspapers. Lucas Scott (*One Tree Hill*), Derik Shephard (*Grey's Anatomy*), Oliver Queen (*Arrow*), Rapunzel (*Tangled*), Anna (*Tangled*), and Haya Jahan (*Jannat Kay Pattay*) were specified as her favourite characters.

Student G's preferred books were the *Harry Potter* series, the *Little Women* series, *Dastan-e-Amir Hamza* (Urdu translation), the *Narnia* series and *Dear America*. Her favourite television programmes were *City Hunter* (Korean), *Game of Thrones*, *Sherlock*, *Modern Family*, *Avatar*, *The Last Airbender*, and *Friends*. She usually watched the channels Star World & MBC. Her favourite movies were *Pride and Prejudice (2005)*, *From Up on Poppy Hill* (Japanese), *Lord of the Rings*, *the Hobbit* series, *Princess Mononoke* (Japanese) and the *Marvel Movie* series. She frequently read the newspapers/magazines *National Geographic*, *The Daily Times*, (a Pakistani newspaper) and *Smash* (a local English children's magazine). Her favourite characters were Sherlock Holmes, Mr. Darcy, Monica Geller (*Friends*), Arya Stark (*Game of Thrones*), and Peter Pevensie (*Narnia* series).

Student B specified *Sand in the Castle* and *Aab-e-Hayat* (Urdu) as her favourite books. Her favourite television programmes were the two Urdu soap operas *Bin Roye* and *Roshni*, and the English *Vampire Diaries*. She usually watched the local Urdu channels Geo TV and Hum TV. Her favourite movies were *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Finding Nemo*, *The Lion King*, and *Cinderella*. She frequently read the newspapers/magazines *Jung* (an Urdu newspaper), *The Times* and *The Express*. Her specified favourite characters were Spider Man and Maira Khan (an actress).

Student H had mature taste in books and movies; for instance, *Ashes, Wine and Dust*, *Fan Girl*, *The Kite Runner*, and *Diary of a Social Butterfly* were her specified favourite books. *Reign*, *Minute to Win It*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, *Khabar Nak*, and *The Crown* were the programmes which she liked to watch, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Bridget Jones*, *Khuda Ke Laya* (an Urdu movie), and *The Intern*

were her preferred movies.

Students C and E only mentioned extremely popular books and blockbuster movies (such as the *Lord of the Rings* series, the *Twilight* series, *Cinderella*, and *Finding Nemo*) as their preferred material. These responses indicate a limited range of exposure to both target and local languages and thus inadequate experience of any profound language processing.

Discussion and conclusion

Students A, D, F and H displayed above average reading and writing skills, while Students B and G showed average level of these skills. On the other hand, only Students D and G could communicate orally but according to a moderate standard. The best overall scores were obtained by Student D (65%). As can be seen from the obtained scores, one cannot claim the relative effectiveness of any of the four textbooks since the two students who used the same coursebook received varied scores. Especially in the case of *Oxford Progressive English*, one participant (D) got the highest overall score of 65%, while the other student (C) received the lowest overall score of 37.5%. However, the participants' wider reading and listening experience (even in another language) seems to have a positive effect on their English proficiency. In other words, those students (D, A, F and H) who read comparatively diverse kinds of books and watched varied movies and programmes, apparently could display relatively more effective ESL reading and writing abilities. Conversely, students (C, E and even B) with limited experience/exposure of/to written and oral texts seemed to have weaker ESL skills. This study, though limited as far as the number of participants are concerned, supports previous research and theoretical beliefs that indicate that extensive reading and listening to/viewing of materials of interest can contribute towards improving second language skills (for instance, Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Öztürk & Tekin, 2020; Aliyeva, 2021; Nkomo, 2021; Rusmiati et al., 2024). It also corroborates complexity theory to some extent since the study demonstrates that second language development is a multi-faceted and flexible process depending on contextualized exposure, to and mental engagement with authentic language resources.

Thus, this small-scale study indicates that varied and consistent higher level cognitive exposure and processing involving diverse and interesting reading/listening experiences can facilitate students' learning abilities especially related to language acquisition. These findings imply that language learners should be motivated to broaden their interests and tastes with regard to informal extensive reading and listening experiences and engage with any type of language activities for pleasure beyond the classrooms based

on their personal preferences. However, this study is limited especially with regard to the small number of participants and also because no information was formally elicited related to the amount that the participants read/listened to. Hence, it is important that more research projects are conducted using larger number of respondents from varied levels and locations and more diverse tools aiming to explore the influence of the extensive exposure to the target and other languages on language skills development.

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SNAPSHOT OF MATERIALS IN USE IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

Lessons from Bremen, Germany: The Bremen town musicians recomposed

Klaus P. Michelsen

La carte (French for ‘the menu’)¹

Whether or not you have taken beginner-level Québécois French in a large college classroom in Vancouver, Canada – as I did in the early 1990s – you may have heard of *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten* (*The Town Musicians of Bremen*). This well-loved fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm has been translated into many languages and is still popular around the world. In this classic tale, a donkey, a dog, a cat, and a rooster, team up on a bold adventure, dreaming of a new life as musicians in Bremen.

The formal learning environment where I used this popular story was not a large college class in multicultural Vancouver. Rather, it was a small private school in a bike-friendly city in northern Germany—the same city where American jazz pianist Keith Jarrett recorded his legendary solo piano concert in 1973. There, I was assigned a total of four small German as an Additional Language classes, from Year 4 to 7. For reasons of space, this article focuses only on the small Year 6 group, whose young language learners/users (YLLs) were aged 11 to 12.

This class, like the other three, was made up of YLLs from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. While none shared the same L1, all had a positive attitude toward learning German as an Additional Language and valued their rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Unlike the mandatory *Deux Mondes* hardcover textbook required for the non-conversation component in my college L2 class, my German colleagues and I were not required to plan our lessons around a single coursebook. Interestingly, many of the points Ghosn (2016) makes about the unsuitability of coursebooks for very young

L2 learners also seem to apply to this context.

Inspired by the school’s strong reading culture and holistic ethos, I started exploring more flexible and creative approaches to second language acquisition (SLA). These views aligned more closely with my own experience as an L2 user, my pedagogical beliefs, and my evolving understanding of current theories of language learning and neuroscience (see, for example, Immordino-Yang, 2016). Approaches such as extensive reading, language through literature, TPR Plus, the Text-Driven Approach (TDA) outlined by Tomlinson & Masuhara (2021) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), outlined, for example, by Tomlinson & Masuhara (2021), Shintani (2016), and Ellis & Shintani (2013) offered an appealing alternative to more rigid and predictable models. These traditional models include, for example, the PPP (Presentation–Practice–Production) sequence and forms-focused approaches ‘that follow an inventory of forms to teach in a predetermined order’ (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021, p. 109). Unfortunately, I have observed repeatedly across my classroom experience in Germany, Peru, Canada, the UK, and Saudi Arabia that such traditional approaches appear to continue to shape most of the L2 learning materials currently in use.

Fortunately, with no set coursebook assigned to my class, I had the freedom to develop alternatives that aligned more closely with the school’s strong reading culture, holistic ethos, and my own pedagogical preferences. These alternatives included a blend of authentic print-based reading materials – such as picture audiobooks – and a series of multimodal graded readers published by the ELi Publishing Group in Italy. Meaningful stories, and the themes embedded in them, according to Cameron (2001, p. 159) ‘represent

1. See Appendix A for a musical playlist designed to evoke a unique mood and atmosphere before, while, or after reading this article.

holistic approaches to language teaching and learning that place a high premium on children's involvement with rich, authentic uses of the foreign language.'

This article highlights *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten*, a multimodal graded reader adapted by Suett and Vitelli (2017). This CEFR A1 story belongs to the *Erste ELi Lektüren* collection, which, like others in this ELi collection, is part of a broader collection aimed at YLLs at CEFR levels A0 to A2.

Paired with thoughtful teacher adaptation, this multimodal graded reader offered several potential engaging elements for my YLLs: powerful storytelling, colourful illustrations, catchy songs (for a discussion of the use of music in the FL classroom, see Davis, 2017; Degrave, 2019; Dolean, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2024), and the reading while listening (RWL) format. As Vallbona (personal communication, February 16, 2025) notes, RWL 'allows young learners to read books that they would not be able to read without the oral support. It also regulates their reading pace (some students tend to go through the book too quickly): These and other benefits are further supported in Blum et al. (1995), Chang (2012), Chang and Millett (2015), Kartal (2017), Koskinen et al. (1997), Robb and Ewert (2024); Tragant and Vallbona (2018) and Webb and Chang (2012).

By teacher adaptation, I meant that I adapted many of the language activities included in this fairy tale to better align with my preference for holistic approaches to SLA. This echoes the emphasis on user adaptation in Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018), where they define materials adaptation as tailoring materials to make them more appropriate for the learning and teaching environment.

This multimodal article is structured around a metaphorical menu - *la carte*, in French. In the first section, *L'entrée* ("starter"), I highlight a holistic approach to SLA that was new to me: TDA. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021, p. 53) define this approach as 'a learner-centred, experiential approach in which a core authentic text is selected for its potential to engage, and which then drives the activities in the classroom, rather than a syllabus or a predetermined language - or skills-teaching point.' First outlined by Tomlinson (1994) and further developed in later works by Tomlinson (such as 1998, 2018a, 2018b) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021), TDA helped me rethink how multimodal stories like this one could form the basis for open-ended, meaning-focused tasks in a range of formats and delivery modes: from AI (artificial intelligence) -assisted songwriting and edutainment multiplayer games to pencil-and-paper tasks and classroom drama.

When it came to developing digitally-based tasks for this multimodal graded reader, the participatory spirit of TDA also encouraged me to think of a new metaphor that could build on the discussion initiated

by Stevenson (2008) well before the integration of AI in the L2 language classroom. In his paper, Stevenson outlines four commonly used metaphors for the use of digital technology in pedagogical settings: tutor, tool, environment, and resource.

The next section, *Le plat principal* ("main course") walks the reader through how I applied this approach during a five-day learning cycle with my small L2 class. Reflecting the informal, iterative nature of teacher-led action research advocated by Beck (2017), a new learning cycle followed, this time built around another potentially engaging story as the core class text.

L'entrée ('starter')

As Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) point out, 'Research in the field of second or foreign language acquisition is relatively new and no one theory of at least 40 available...is universally accepted.' (Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) in García-Carbonell et al. (2001, p. 481). This wide range of theories likely reflects the complexity of L2 learning - something underscored, for instance, by the 20 factors that Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021) identify as influencing intake. Fortunately, Lightbown and Spada (2013) help bring some order to the complex issue raised by Larsen-Freeman and Long by outlining six *proposals for teaching*, each informed by various SLA theories.

Reflecting on my own beliefs and experiences as an L2 learner in Vancouver, I was also guided by Lightbown and Spada's (2013) teacher questionnaire. This last encourages L2 teachers to critically examine their own experiences and assumptions about how languages are best learned and taught. Through this reflection, I found that many of the creative learning propositions discussed in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021) resonated better with me than Lightbown and Spada's *six proposals for teaching*. These insights, shaped further by my readings and my immediate learning and teaching context, confirmed my preference for holistic, creative, and flexible approaches to SLA.

In other words, had I been assigned an English as an Additional Language (EAL) class rather than German, I would have also gravitated toward creative approaches that emphasize a blend of storytelling, music, and drama. I would also continue to explore a particularly appealing pedagogical combination: Tomlinson's TDA and the learning model described by Bhasker and Prabhu in *English through Reading* (1974).

Prabhu - who Maley (2025, p. 127) calls 'the godfather of TBL [Task-Based Learning]' - describes his approach as one in which 'the subconscious process of learning a language is active when the learner's mind is consciously engaged in intellectually challenging tasks, which call for the use of language (Bhasker & Prabhu, 1974, p. 1).

A second appealing pedagogical combination I would continue to explore is Tomlinson's TDA and the drama-based pedagogy known as process drama, as outlined in Piazzoli (2018). Haseman and O'Toole (2017, p. viii) define process drama as follows:

Process drama is an improvised form of drama in which you construct a coherent dramatic story with yourselves as the character in that story. It is a powerful way to explore, through experience, all of the elements of drama. This approach brings mind, body, emotions, imagination and memories into the classroom to shape and deepen your learning.

As pointed out in *La carte*, the supplementary activities presented in the next section, *Le plat principal*, are grounded in my understanding of Tomlinson's TDA. These activities also meet most of the criteria that Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021, p. 139) identify as facilitating intake in L2 materials. For example, they 'offer achievable challenges, stimulate personal responses, offer choice, encourage interaction and give scope for creativity'.

Spoiler alert: none of these supplementary activities rely on planned explicit instruction of either written or *conversational grammar* (Rühlemann, 2010). Writing for *Prima*, a magazine published in Germany that specializes in German as a Foreign Language in primary education, Piepho (1997, p. 45) reminds us that:

Children between the ages of six and twelve do not require explicit instruction in grammar, as they intuitively absorb, store, and apply syntactic resources and structural patterns. A language course designed for this age group should certainly not include sequentially organized, grammar-focused chapters. [my translation]

Le plat principal ('main course')

This section outlines a sample sequence of supplementary activities designed for a five-day learning cycle built around the multimodal reader *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten*, as adapted by Suett and Vitelli (2017). Each 50-minute lesson ran from Monday to Thursday, with a double period on Thursday and no L2 classes scheduled for me on Friday. An overview of these activities is provided below, followed by a more detailed description.

Overview of activities

Day 1 (Monday)

- Task-free dramatic reading activity: *Wortsport* (Word games)
- Extended pre-reading activity (Option 1): *My Storybook / Book Creator*
- Extended pre-reading activity (Options 2 and 3): Adapted *Kamishibai*

Day 2 (Tuesday)

- Reading while listening (RWL) picturebook session 1 (without group miming)
- While-Reading activity: YLLs-led dance choreography competition
- Post-Reading activity: *Suno* AI songwriting

Day 3 (Wednesday)

- Animated picturebook viewing (session 1)
- Reader's Theatre with alternative endings

Day 4 (Thursday)

- Reading while listening (RWL) picturebook session 2 with group miming
- Task-free music immersion
- Poster, front cover, or advertisement design

Day 5 (Monday)

- Recap of *Wortsport* riddles
- *Blooket* online quiz creation and multiplayer gameplay as formative peer assessment.

Daily activity breakdown

Day 1 (Monday)

'Task-free' dramatic reading activity: *Wortsport*

This is an example of an input-rich activity that is not tied to an explicit comprehension task (based on Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2021). At the beginning of the lesson, I posted on the board four enlarged and laminated animal-themed riddles that were accompanied by colorful and imaginative illustrations from the print edition of *Gecko* (<https://www.gecko-kinderzeitschrift.de/>). This is a German picture book magazine for young speakers of German as an L1 that features illustrated short stories, poems, and playful riddles. I read these aloud expressively to expose YLLs to authentic, unmodified input in a playful context.

Extended pre-reading activity (Option 1): *My Storybook / Book Creator*

Working alone or in pairs, my YLLs created a short visual story using one of the above digital story online platforms available at <https://www.mystorybook.com/> or <https://bookcreator.com>. Each short story consisted of a cover page that included the title *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten* and an illustration or only the illustration without the written title. Then my YLLs had to create at least four additional slides. These slides had to illustrate the four targeted animals and one new animal character not mentioned in the story. In addition, each animal was featured playing a musical instrument. My YLLs had the option of including or leaving out the animal's name and its corresponding German definite article, as well as the musical instrument's name with its corresponding German definite article. If my YLLs opted for the second online platform, they also had the

option of individually or in pairs recording themselves saying the animal's name and its corresponding German definite article, or the musical instrument's name and its corresponding definite article (see *Appendix B* for a teacher sample).

Extended pre-reading activity (Option 2): Adapted *Kamishibai* – animal cut-outs

Kamishibai is a traditional Japanese form of street theatre and storytelling that uses illustrated boards to narrate a story. In this adapted version, working individually or in pairs, YLLs designed, cut out, and coloured their own versions of the four animal protagonists and their pet or favorite animal. Then, they displayed their cut-outs around the class and acted them out.

Extended pre-reading activity (Option 3): Adapted *Kamishibai* – robbers cut-outs

A similar activity to Option 2, this time featuring cut-out robber figures from the folktale and a new character of their choice.

Day 2 (Tuesday)

RWL (reading while listening) picturebook session 1 (without group miming)

We read along while listening to ELI's expressive audio narration. The ELI app provides ten audio tracks for this story – including the narrated story and two original songs – available through the downloadable *Eli LINK* app.

Whilst-reading activity: YLLs-led dance choreography competition

This student-created activity emerged spontaneously during the playback of tracks 3 and 5 from the *Eli LINK* app. It was a spur-of-the-moment-decision taken by my YLLs, and, as such, does not appear to be discussed by others writing on the use of music in the FL classroom mentioned above (Davis, 2017; Degraeve, 2019; Dolean, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2024). Notably, it does not align with Dolean's seven methodological steps for using songs in the FL classroom: (1) teacher modeling reading and group translation, (2) group reading, (3) rhythmic group reading, (4) teacher model singing, (5) repetitions (6) singing in small groups, and (7) final repetition (Dolean, 2015, p. 645). As I played the songs, YLLs split into groups and improvised a freestyle dance competition at the front and back of the class. One YLL acted as the judge, using her fingers to award marks and determine the winner.

Post-reading activity: Suno AI songwriting

Working alone or in pairs, YLLs used <https://suno.com> to transform selected passages from *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten* into songs in their chosen musical styles. They submitted their Suno-generated links for

playback and sharing during this and later lessons.

Day 3 (Wednesday)

Animated picturebook viewing (Session 1)

We watched ELI's animated YouTube version of *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten*, adding another layer of meaningful and repeated exposure to comprehensible input.

Reader's theatre with alternative endings

YLLs read out first and then acted out the graded reader's included script. After swapping roles, they read out first and then performed another simplified and engaging script I helped co-write. This second script, also written at CEFR level A1, featured an added character and a whacky or bizarre ending.

Day 4 (Thursday)

RWL (reading while listening) picturebook session 2 (with group miming)

Instead of playing the audio recording provided by ELI's adaptation of *Die Bremerstadtmusikanten*, this time I reread the story expressively but at a slower pace. YLLs mimed sections of the story in small groups, each performing a third of the text.

Task-free music immersion

While my YLLs worked on the poster, book cover, and advertisement design tasks described below, I played a mix of their own Suno AI-created songs and a curated YouTube playlist. (Note: this playlist contains songs, whereas the music playlist available in Appendix A is instrumental only.) The songs selected for my YLLs include:

- DIKKA's children's rap songs (e.g., *Supermama*, *Superpapa*, *Glücklich*)
- Catchy songs from recent German children's films (e.g., *Das Leben Ruft*, *Mit Träumen kann man fliegen*)

Poster, book cover, or advertisement design

YLLs drew and coloured an original poster, book cover, or advertisement for the four musicians' next concert – an imagined event set in the imagined future. Optionally, they put up their work around the class and talked to their classmates about it in English.

Day 5 (Monday)

Recap of *Wortsport* riddles

We revisited the four riddles introduced on Day 1, reinforcing repeated exposure to engaging authentic materials.

Blooket online quiz creation and multiplayer gameplay as formative peer assessment

Blooket (blue-kit) is an online learning platform that gamifies ‘closed’ and teacher-created quizzes (<https://www.blooket.com/>). Each of its more than twenty edutainment games features embedded multiple-choice questions, along with unique musical loops that give each game a distinct character.

To raise my YLLs’ awareness of some collocational patterns, I first selected ten high-frequency German words (see Jones & Tschirner, 2005) that my YLLs had already met during RWL sessions 1 and 2, animated picturebook viewing sessions, Suno AI creation and playback sessions. Using these lexical items as a starting point, I then ‘stretched’ each word into a collocational chunk by adding one possible collocate. This process resulted in a set of ten collocations, each drawn from *Feste Wortverbindungen des Deutschen: Kollokationenwörterbuch für den Alltag* (Häcki Buhofer et al, 2014), a corpus-based German collocation dictionary. Finally, I used these collocations to create a worksheet featuring each collocation alongside a colourful, cartoon-like illustration.

This approach of recycling comprehensible input reflects the principles of spaced and meaningful repetition outlined by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021), as well as *distributed practice*, which Roediger and Pyc (2012) describe as particularly effective in long-term retention: ‘If information [input] is repeated in a distributed fashion or spaced over time, it is learned more slowly but it is retained much longer’ (p. 243).

A two-part L2 user-led competition

For the first part of this activity, the roles were reversed as my YLLs themselves became the quiz creators. Working individually, they competed to be the first to create ten multiple-choice questions based on the ten targeted collocational patterns. Optionally, they could also incorporate any new words they had learned from the story.

The fastest quiz writer in this first challenge chose which Blooket multiplayer game (e.g., *Gold Quest*, *Tower Defense 2*, *Cafe*) the entire class would play. Each ‘closed’ question – written in English, German, or both – targeted one of the listed collocations and included a relevant, bizarre, or humorous image of the YLL’s choice. Interestingly, most of these questions and answer choices also featured humorous anecdotes about their classmates, further making the quiz memorable.

The second part of the competition involved playing the chosen multiplayer game, now featuring ten questions written by the winning quiz creator. For example, when playing *Cafe*, my YLLs had seven minutes to answer the embedded questions while serving customers and expanding their virtual cafe. Once the time was up, the

top three players were awarded digital *Blooket* tokens, which they could use to buy ‘Blooks’, collect ‘Blooks’, or sell them on the platform. The YLL who had been the second fastest to complete the quiz-writing challenge then selected the next multiplayer game for the class.

In terms of feedback, the roles were again reversed. Rather than the teacher providing corrections, my YLLs provided feedback to each other in real time. For example, if a question included a typo or a mistakenly marked correct answer, it was my YLLs who eagerly spotted and called out the error during gameplay – often loudly and with enthusiasm.

Although the activity took the form of a ‘closed’ multiple choice test, its primary purpose was not for me to formally assess my YLLs’ L2 proficiency. Nor was it to determine how much of the input from Day 1 to Day 5 had been processed or transformed into potential intake. After all, as Ellis and Shintani (2014, p. 27) caution, ‘the ability to get a multiple choice question right amounts to very little if the [L2] student is unable to use the target feature in actual communication.’

Le dessert

No meal – plant-based or not – feels complete without the experience of *dessert*. Likewise, this paper would be incomplete without a few closing thoughts.

In this article, I have tried to give readers a taste of how I used Suett and Vitelli’s (2017) multimodal and graded adaptation of *Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten* as both a class text and the main stimulus for organizing a five-day learning cycle in a small, multilingual L2 class. I have also outlined how my understanding of Tomlinson’s TDA informed my teacher adaptation and guided me in designing, developing, and evaluating mainly meaning-focused and open-ended activities delivered through a range of formats and delivery modes. These included AI-assisted songwriting and multiplayer edutainment games, as well as pencil-and-paper tasks and classroom drama.

With this in mind, this article has offered a practical illustration of innovation in a small, multilingual L2 classroom. As Shintani (2016, p. 30) notes, ‘An innovation can start from a small individual success when a teacher is willing to try something new. One way of encouraging innovation is to provide an example of its adoption and implementation.’ By sharing the examples above, I hope to contribute to that goal.

The examples shared here are by no means exhaustive or prescriptive; they simply illustrate a few of many possible ideas or directions. For example, when using as a class text another multimodal graded reader – such as *Der Fuchs und die Trauben* (*The Fox and the Grapes*) an adaptation of an Aesop fable – or any other folk tale or potentially engaging story from your learning and teaching context, teacher supplementary activities

might be designed within a similar five-day framework, or extended into a longer project. One additional idea: YLLs could work in pairs or small groups to co-create *Kamishibai* story cards (paper or digital – see The Japan Society Website in the References section) across the entire learning cycle. Each version could feature an added character, and the project could culminate in a group performance on Day 5.

The graded reader's input is premodified and simplified, and by some definitions, it might not qualify as authentic (for a discussion of authenticity, see, for example, Gilmore, 2007; Jones, 2022; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021; Ellis & Shintani, 2013). Nevertheless, the selected reading material still meets several key criteria for the 'provision and generation of input in materials for learning' as outlined by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2021, p. 61). Notably, the teacher-adapted activities are 'mainly open-ended' and aim to stimulate both peer interaction and the generation of peer and auto-input (*ibid.*).

As noted in the beginning of this article, my YLLs did not share the same L1. In this multilingual and culturally diverse context, I believe that it was just as important to acknowledge and value that diversity as it was to foster language development and communicative competence. That belief partly underpins the pedagogical reasoning behind my chosen principled approach. Rather than focusing on short-term mastery of the target language (TL) or on documenting students' individual language development through paper-based summative assessments, one of my main goals was to create spaces that encouraged a sense of belonging, peer interaction, and participation. After all, and according to Hall & Verplaetse (2000, p. 11):

Language learning is not a strictly individual, cognitive act, equivalent across learners and situations. Rather, it is presumed to be a fundamentally social enterprise, jointly constructed and intrinsically linked to learners' repeated and regular participation in their classroom activities.

It is this last aspect – the participatory affordances of AI in the L2 language classroom – that, in my view, points to a new role for digital technology not fully captured by the four metaphors discussed in Stevenson (2008). Looking ahead, my hope is that the upcoming European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) guidelines, *AI Language Guidelines for the Use of AI in Language Education*, will continue to refine and expand a new role that is still very much a work in progress.

Looking back at my paper-based college French workbook and its accompanying blue floppy disks, one thing is clear. I successfully completed many 'closed' and decontextualized grammar and vocabulary fill-in-the-blank exercises on my own in a quiet, mostly empty language lab. But those written exercises alone did

not give me the confidence to use my basic Canadian French when our waiter finally came to take our orders.

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Appendix A

By scanning the QR Code (Figure 1), the reader can access a curated YouTube playlist featuring five instrumental music tracks (Table 1) I have personally selected for this article. Each piece evokes a unique mood and atmosphere, and the reader is welcome to listen to these instrumental pieces in any order - before, while, or after reading this multimodal article.

Track Title	Artist(s)	Album
<i>Aerial Boundaries</i>	Michael Hedges	<i>Aerial Boundaries</i>
<i>The Moon is a Harsh Mistress</i>	Pat Metheny and Charlie Haden	<i>Beyond the Missouri Sky</i>
<i>One Quiet Night</i>	Pat Metheny	<i>One Quiet Night</i>
<i>Gregson: 1.1 Prelude</i>	Peter Gregson	<i>Bach Recomposed</i>
<i>Gregson: 1.3 Courante</i>	Peter Gregson	<i>Bach Recomposed</i>
<i>MoonDial</i>	Pat Metheny	<i>Here, There and Everywhere</i>

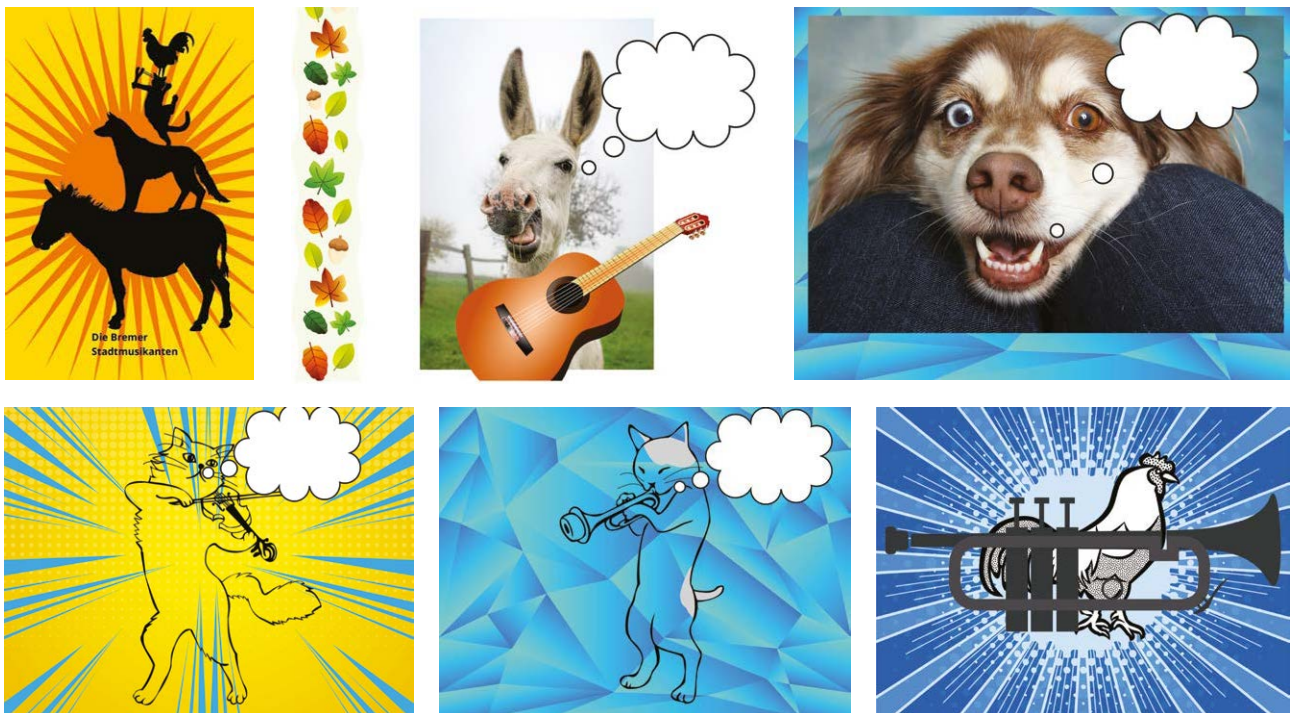
Table 1: My instrumental music playlist



Figure 1: QR Code to access my instrumental music playlist

Appendix B

Sample visual story generated using <https://www.mystorybook.com/> or <https://bookcreator.com.>



www.matsda.org/folio.html

MATERIALS SPOT

Language game and material design creation by future Romance languages instructors

Simone Gugliotta, Sophie Burkhardt, Monia Marie Bamina, Ella Comfort-Cohen, Naomi Piper-Pell, Mikayla Parrales, Suha Khan, Giulia Laurenza, Sarina Duffy, Hillary Connor, Xinhe Li, Andrea Magaña, Dayana Caluna, Kokwe Dadzie, and Alex Herrera

Introduction

This work is the result of the collaboration between the course instructor, a lecturer at Smith College, an all-women liberal arts college established by Sophia Smith in 1875 located in Northampton, Massachusetts, and her 14 students, who are trainee-language teachers fluent or semi-fluent speakers of at least one Romance language. The following article reflects on the experience of creating four simple and effective language games in three Romance languages (French, Italian, and Spanish) during an undergraduate course that offers students proficiency in Romance languages to prepare themselves for a career in language teaching. The course explores issues in Romance language instruction and research that are essential to the teaching of languages with special focus on methods and techniques to teach grammar and vocabulary, the role of instructors, feedback, curriculum, teaching materials design, teaching practicum, and assessments. Additionally, class observations and scholarly readings help students understand the importance of research in the shaping of the pedagogical practice of language teaching. The module presented here was titled 'Language Games and the Importance of Creating Original Materials for Language Classes'. This specific project involved four phases: collaborative brainstorming, creation in groups, presentation and testing of the game within their peers, and finally reflection evaluating the effectiveness of the game.

The class discussion about development of materials for world language classes began with questioning the difference in efficacy between authentic and non-authentic materials. The awareness of this concept

made the student-participants understand their own methodical interests and realities, and how to work with it in the future, when they will be teaching their own language courses.

As Tomlinson states, materials development is a field of study that goes beyond the idea of entertainment and use of creativity. It also embraces practical undertaking.

'As a field, it studies the principles and procedures of the design, implementation, and evaluation of language teaching materials. As an undertaking, it involves the production, evaluation, and adaptation of language teaching materials by teachers for their own classrooms and by material creators for sale or distribution'

(Tomlinson, 2001, p. 66)

The experience of discussing and creating class materials as an essential part of the language teaching and learning process was new for many of the participants of the project described in this article. Teacher-designed materials meant a lot more to many of the participants when they understood that this type of work allows teachers to create activities that actually fit their students' needs and context, having a great impact on what and how they can learn. For some students, Materials Development, or MD, represents a concept that can even revolutionize language learning if academic institutions and instructors started seeing it as a relevant part of the class material, and not only a material to be used as entertainment when the textbook is not being used. By combining creativity and pedagogical knowledge, we can encourage students to enjoy learning more, participate more actively, and acquire good written

and oral skills in learning a world language. The idea of teacher-developed and contextualized materials is indeed appealing. Incorporating more real-life content and allowing instructors to adapt materials according to individual students' needs, interests, or performance can undoubtedly enhance language learning. However, one must also acknowledge the reality that many students eventually face standardized tests as part of their educational trajectory. Individualized approaches, while beneficial to those receiving them, may inadvertently widen the gap for those in less privileged areas. It is unrealistic to expect that all regions have access to the same linguistic resources. That said, how can we ensure educational equity?

In the MD field, the largest responsibility of a teacher is to understand the unique capabilities of each learner and provide them with materials that target areas where they can grow. Using this approach to teaching ensures that even 'inauthentic materials' (see below) can be contextualized to meet the needs of students. Teaching methods and materials can be combined in a variety of ways that offer promising avenues for learning. Students and teachers alike can explore topics through diverse modalities. This abundance of teaching resources can be used to serve students who all learn in diverse ways. Standardized materials published by authors outside the classroom do not offer the same personalized learning experience that instructors can.

Authentic materials versus non-authentic materials

The participants in this project were interested in the discussion of authentic and non-authentic materials used in language learning classrooms. The debate on the differences between the two concepts was intriguing for many participants. In general, authentic materials include news clips, music, movies, or literature in a target language, whereas non-authentic materials are textbooks, commercially-produced audio or visual sources, and worksheets. Some participants add that in their experience authentic materials have given them the tools to better understand life abroad, international social norms, and educational systems, which can be real-world knowledge and a teachable lesson all in one.

For other participants, educators who develop specific skills in developing materials have studied theory, pedagogy, and the application of different teaching styles. It is interesting how this relates to the idea of 'authentic' and 'non-authentic' materials. The way this was understood was that authentic materials are created in-house, are developed by the educators, or even tested by students to be more tailored to their learning experience. On the other hand, 'non-authentic' material is more standardized and

can even be tech-related like the online materials that currently accompany language textbooks or websites specialised in online language games. Though, like anything, there needs to be a balance between what teaching materials are considered 'authentic' or not.

Materials should be 'socio-cultural resources' and also tools for intercultural exchange that are best handled in class with other people (as opposed to being assigned solely as homework) because it is more interactive that way. In his article, Cadena (2019) states that while generic activities like pre-made handouts etc. are efficient and at times useful, they are not very personal to the learners in the classroom, so it is better to use teacher-developed materials instead.

The materials that teachers adopt to use in class can partly determine the knowledge their students learn and the memories they take away from the classroom. In this case, the curriculum has an implicit and explicit agenda. The explicit agenda is characterised by the physical materials used throughout their teaching. The learning objectives describe exactly what learners are going to learn in an explicit manner. In contrast, the implicit agenda contains all the values, expectations, and social norms underlying/implicit in the materials used in the classroom. It can be supported by various materials, but it exists mainly in a hidden way. In our pre-presentation discussions, our participants noticed that teachers who are interested in knowing their students may give them materials based on their individual needs. In this way, even materials that are not authentic still have a contextualised meaning. This aspect offers so many possibilities to serve students who learn in various ways.

Collaborative brainstorming/ creation in groups

The four groups working in the module of language game creation had class time to come up with ideas for the games, which would be presented the following week. As noted above, the project involved four phases: collaborative brainstorming, creation in groups, presentation and testing of the game with their peers, and reflection evaluating the effectiveness of the game. About one week, outside of class time, was devoted to brainstorming, while the other week was focused on physically producing the game. Students worked collaboratively in creating and designing their games using craft materials. The resources and space for the preparation and hands-on part of the project were provided by the Conway Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center. This centre at Smith College is a space for working on projects that take the form of community-based initiatives, educational resources, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. There were two groups working on games in Spanish: a group with four people and the other with three participants; one

group of five participants creating a game in French; and one group with two participants devising the game about fashion in Italian.

Presentation in class

The experience of each group of participants in creating the language game is reported in this section.

Spanish Group 1 - Kokwe, Mikayla, Sophie, and Ella

Game: *Connexiones* (Based on *Connections*, from *The New York Times*)

We decided to create a game similar to one that appears in *The New York Times* called *Connections*. Therefore, players can refer to our game using this title if they wish. This is a game where players group words into categories without knowing the umbrella term under which they fall. Once we chose our game, we started to plan what we needed to create and how we should set about doing it in our next class focused on developing these games. We discussed how to divide the work equally and also wrote a draft of the words we could include, linguistic categories, and game instructions.

Spanish Group 2 - Andrea, Dayana, and Suha

Game: *Loteria* and Bingo

We were inspired by *Loteria* and Bingo, and it helped us think about ways to teach vocabulary in an interactive way. The game encouraged students to practise listening skills, connect words to images, and reinforce vocabulary in context, all of which are important for effective language learning and helping students retain new material. The *tabla* included six items, words that we want the students to be able to identify in Spanish. Overall, it was important to create a fun connection between culture and language, to hone in on an affective aspect of language learning.

Italian Group - Giulia and Sarina

Game: Fashion game

For the physical element of our game, we did something using the elements of Italian culture that we are really excited about, like the fashion and the history of certain designers in Italy. We drew inspiration from Milan fashion week, and just what the current trends or brands' signature style was. So we selected the designers and pieces we wanted to showcase, printed them, and then used clear plastic tape to laminate them, giving the effect of dressing a doll. For the worksheets, we made one where the future stylists can explain their collection using Italian vocabulary words like colours, textures, and style, as well as one where they learn the parts of the body they are dressing, with a fill-in-

the-blank diagram of the model. To accompany all of this, we put together a master list of the clothes and the designers who inspired us, with a blurb about their history in Italy. This took more time than expected, especially the physical creative element, but we really enjoyed the result. I hope that students have just as much fun playing it as we did making it!

French Group - Bamina, Hillary, Alex, Naomi, and Xinhe

Grammar connection card game

Our group was able to work really well together and collaborate using the different ways we learned French and how that contributes to our understanding of strategies that work well and don't work well. While it was difficult to get back into the mind of a beginner French speaker, as all of us have been in classes for a long time, it was easy to recall games or activities we had done in earlier classes that were either effective or ineffective. For example, we were originally going to just do a conjugation-based game, but then we decided that there needed to be a more interactive element, so we brainstormed incorporating acting, charades, drawing, and other creative activities that would make it more engaging. One of the more difficult parts of this process was balancing the engaging nature of the game with the level of complexity. We tried to simplify parts of the game by using clearly colour-coded cards for different elements of the phrase (verb, subject, object, etc.) and by providing a key with the definitions of the words on our cards. Once we had decided on the structure of the game, it was easy to delegate tasks amongst the group (cutting out cards, writing words, writing definitions, brainstorming words, etc.).

Participants' reflections after using the games in class with their peers

Participants of this project described that the process of creating language games was challenging and creative. Some of them also noticed that the whole project made them reflect on who they are as language learners, creating a meaningful impact on educators.

Student 1: Making and playing games is a fundamentally creative process for both students and teachers. These materials benefit us by putting information into a new context that is more engaging than standardized textbooks or lesson plans. Students must collaborate, think creatively, and act decisively to win the game. The most meaningful and long-lasting learning is achieved this way. As someone who aspires to teach my own language class in the future, I appreciated the process of making my own game. I first established with my peers a clear goal of what

language skill we wanted to target with our game and how we would strengthen it in our students. Methods supported by research in the field of learning science are useful when constructing games.

Student 2: No matter how much planning is done, it is hard to simulate exactly how a class will look where real students are involved. That being said, I am proud that we maintained our composure and ran the game without any major issues. It connected a variety of concepts in a creative way that was very engaging for all. Players could learn new words, sentence structures, and pronouns all in one exercise. This mimicked the way languages are often learned when visiting a new country. Travelers aren't necessarily studying vocabulary lists or grammar, but rather learn them through an immersive experience that integrates all parts of the language into one experience.

Student 3: This was my first time creating any sort of game. At first it was difficult to think of game ideas but it was good to have other people to brainstorm with. I felt that the French team worked very evenly, everyone participated. I enjoyed hearing everyone's ideas and I think we reached a good compromise. It was difficult at times to organize the game given its complexity but we all cooperated to do as much as we could. I think we could have tried to simplify the game a little bit, not leaning too heavily on grammar knowledge.

Student 4: I felt content with the process overall. Making the game was an enjoyable, creative process and I enjoyed working with Dayana and Andrea. At first it was a little difficult to put ourselves in the mindsets of young students, especially with what they would find 'fun'. We were going back and forth with ideas for a bit. When we came up with *La Tabla*, we wanted to consider a Spanish-speaking culture, because I believe that one of the most effective and important language learning methods is to create a connection between the culture and self. So, we considered the traditional Mexican board game *La Loteria*. With a background in mind for the game, the next steps came easier. We wanted to make the game collaborative, competitive, and exciting. Taking the inspiration of *Loteria* and its bingo and cards elements, we decided to do a sort of call-out bingo game where the team that checks off all the items on their *tabla* first wins.

Student 5: When we were making the game, we collaborated on all the parts. Not only was our final idea a collaboration of our initial ideas, but also we all worked on different aspects of the game while creating it. Creating this game was helpful in reflecting about how we learn languages best and how we can help other students learn. The challenging parts were designing it initially and then laying it out the day of, but it all worked out in the end!

Student 6: I think the process of creating the project was pretty straightforward and successful. First,

we brainstormed separately ideas for the project. I originally came up with a scavenger hunt that would incorporate aspects such as prepositions (under, near, above, on top of, behind, etc.), directions (left, right, forward, backward, up, down, etc.) and locations on campus – that would hopefully coincide with the class learning about these things. Giulia came up with the idea of a 'fashion show' where we would use paper dolls to teach about clothes and parts of the body, as well as the fashion aspect of Italian culture. In the end, we decided to incorporate the fashion game part of her idea and the grammar aspect of mine, where we make paper dolls and dress them up using clothing by big Italian fashion houses (Ferragamo, Gucci, Missoni, Pucci, Aquazzura, Prada, etc.). We incorporated the grammar aspect by having the students explain their reasoning for the clothing choices using new vocabulary describing clothes, materials, and what was the inspiration.

Student 7: This process forced me to reflect on how I cannot solely rely on my own perception of students' language level or my perception of what parts of the curriculum are engaging or not. I need to get feedback from both colleagues and students and also rely on the various psychology and language-learning theories we have read for this class to provide students with a variety of language-learning strategies and observe what is and is not working.

Conclusion

Materials development initially seemed to be a difficult task, but our group of 14 participants composed of aspiring educators approached it with zeal and curiosity. The results were relevant discoveries not only about the material being created, but also about the ways that future language teachers can reflect on their learning process and envision a better understanding of what they can create in the future.

This type of cooperation and clear communication was key for the entire project and for the four groups. The participants organized themselves according to specific roles during the creation process based on the strongest abilities of each member. Everyone worked on their assigned part and there was an attitude of supportiveness, with participants helping each other out in instances such as if they had time left over. The process of creation and execution took two classes, and the presentation happened in the third week with great success for all. One student said: 'Even though none of the games will probably win prizes for... appearance, it is the effort that matters at the end of the day, and in this way one can assure that the work was done by hand and with love.' Through a shared objective, tied up in a fun and inspirational process, effective learning and teaching go hand in hand.

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MATERIALS SPOT

Acquiring real-world communicative abilities: Learning to be engaged, influential and emotive humans

Asma Aftab

Introduction - Overview of the proposed materials

Second languages are to be used in the real world outside the language classrooms by real human beings with their own aspirations, feelings, mental abilities, interests, and experiences. Moreover, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) applications are part of our contemporary world; IT-proficient individuals can access these AI applications (like ChatGPT) to improve/correct and create texts within seconds by a few key strokes on IT devices (Bailey, 2023; Barrot, 2023; Cotton, Cotton & Shipway, 2023; Ashford, in-print). Thus, I have conceived, introduced and created language learning materials which facilitate the development of *effective communicative abilities*; *involve students as perceptive, emotional, and complex individuals*; and provide opportunities to learners to analyze texts generated by AI applications as part of their learning experiences.

The target learners of the prepared materials are meant to be 10 to 12 year-old boys and girls studying English as a second language in middle level grades (e.g. grades VI-VII). The prime aim is to use it to prepare the learners to use the English language academically, socially, professionally (in their future), and for personal recreational purposes. The main topic of these materials is horror fiction since my previous research has highlighted that this theme is the most popular theme among Pakistanis belonging to the targeted age groups (Aftab, 2017). It is proposed that the students have read and written fictional materials based on topic(s) different from the horror genre before they engage with the activities presented here.

Theoretical frameworks

The materials are based on the 'Creating Waves'

paradigm (Aftab, 2024) which focuses on *purposeful and impactful communicative acts*. This paradigm treats second language learners as *complex emotional and reflective human beings* who have ideas to share while aiming to share with (that is, write for or speak to), *appeal to* and *influence* an audience (individuals who similarly possess their own interests, feelings and beliefs). Thus, the learning experiences provide students opportunities for communicating significant and relevant subject matter utilizing meaningful, imaginative, eloquent, and provocative language. As a result, learners will acquire abilities to communicate in the real world as proposed by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018). The 'Creating Waves' approach is partly derived from complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2020) which asserts that language users and consequently language learners can preferably be flexible, variable, adaptable, enthusiastic, in-depth and spontaneous. In addition, motivation levels, emotions, higher order cognitive and perceptive skills (including critical judgment) of the participants, and the responses/feedback are believed to play a key role in communication.

The developed materials have been based partially on theories derived from humanizing language teaching literature. For example, the activities are derived from Tomlinson's (2023) proposals that language learning tasks should exploit the human abilities for multifaceted mental performances; utilize the target students' tastes, opinions, emotions, and passions; and, be related to the learners' lives and importantly their psyches. Additionally, the developed activities are based on the assumption that 'creativity, involvement and enjoyment are the essential elements for lifelong learning' (Prabhavathy & Mahalakshmi, 2016, p. 5), and the techniques reflected in these tasks incorporate elements of discovery and exploration (Bolitho, 2024). Ghanizadeh, Amiri and Jahedizadeh (2020) have suggested through their quasi-experimental study that emotional engagement, as emphasized in humanizing language teaching, can help to improve students'

EFL proficiency. Thus, the proposed materials aim to involve the target learners affectively as well as cognitively (as also recommended by Mehrigan, 2012). In the following sections, I will list the specific objectives on which the activities are based, present specific sample activities and finally discuss the results of piloting the activities.

The proposed materials

The developed materials, based specifically on the theoretical frameworks discussed in the previous section, aim to involve the target learners in;

- Sharing views and feelings
- Responding to images and texts
- Using ideas based on the provided text-type and audience
- Creating/selecting images reflecting suggested ideas
- Using language which is descriptive and effective
- Using words which reflect specific feelings
- Using their imagination
- Reflecting on and using significant aspects related to composing effective fictional material
- Aiming to create an impact by creating specific and appropriate fictional material for the suggested audience.

The sample activities are categorized into three groups (termed sets one to three) and discussed under specifically formulated objectives.

Set one activities

Objective 1:

- *To facilitate sharing of and understanding of emotional content*

This objective is reflected in preparatory activities which introduce the theme of horror. Examples are the following two main activities and one follow-up task.

- Individually think of a situation which you find/found especially terrifying/scary and share with your class.
- In pairs examine the provided pictures (sample pictures in the Appendix). Which of the scene(s) presented in these pictures can be used as a/the setting(s) of a horror novel?

Follow Up:

What have you learnt about your class fellows' fears?

Set two activities

Objectives 2-6:

- *To facilitate interpretation and analysis of different types of fictional content (including authentic material and AI generated texts)*
- *To facilitate identifying content appropriate for the horror genre*
- *To facilitate identifying and understanding of creative, expressive and evocative language*
- *To expand understanding of the use of nouns, articles and adjectives in fictional texts*
- *To expand understanding of effective fictional titles.*

The objectives 2-6 are manifested in activities focusing on reading different types of texts either which the target students can be exposed to outside the classroom or similar to the ones which they can encounter in their lives, such as sample activities (a) and (b) below, and the language discovery and reflection-based tasks that follow.

- Examine the provided titles of fictional books in Sets 1, 2 and 3 and as a class discuss the titles which appeal to you (that is, you will want to read the books with the preferred titles – in case you have not read the books) providing reasons for your preferences.

Title Set 1

- Skeleton Creek*
 - The 13th Warning*
 - The Mystery of the Haunted House*
 - The Halloween Tree*
 - The Graveyard Book*
-

Title Set 2

- The Phantom Train*
 - Echoes from the Graveyard*
 - Whispers in the Attic*
 - Nightmare on Maple Street*
 - The Curse of the Midnight Clock*
-

Title Set 3

- All Alone*
 - A Deadly Trip*
 - Dark Minds*
 - The Devil's Shadow*
 - Fatal Days*
-

- Discuss in pairs:

- Which set has the most unique (unusual) and descriptive titles?
- Which set(s) has/have the most varied titles?
- What ideas and emotions are evoked by the titles provided in Set 3?

The titles of Set 1 are those of real books. The titles of Set 2 have been created by an artificial intelligence (AI) application ChatGPT. The titles of Set 3 have been especially created for this task.

Writers' Language Kit – Reflections about Language

- What is the effect of using the articles “the” and “a” in the titles of Sets 1 and 3?
 - Why are no articles used in three titles of Set 3?
 - Which words in the titles of all three sets do you find especially interesting? Why? Are these words nouns and/or adjectives?
-

Writers' Reflections

As a class discuss: What have you learnt about titles of horror fiction books?

Set three activities

Objectives 7-11

- *To facilitate using creative, emotional and content appropriate for the horror genre*
- *To facilitate using expressive, evocative and creative language*
- *To expand understanding of effective opening sentences*
- *To use nouns, articles, tense, and adjectives accurately, appropriately and effectively in fictional texts*
- *To provide effective opportunities for using language and ideas according to text types and audience.*

The objectives 7-11 are reflected in a creative activity requiring students to write for particular audience, and one reflective task.

In groups create opening sentences of imaginary horror fictional books and share them with your class...

How many students were you able to scare?

Writers' Reflections

As a class discuss: What have you learnt about composing sentences of horror fictional books?

Pilot study

The main activity belonging to the third set was piloted in grade VI of five private schools (pseudonyms I to V) located in central Pakistani city of Lahore. This pilot study was conducted in October 2024 and

involved eliciting the opinions of the grade VI learners. Quantitative data was elicited from randomly selected 98 students belonging to these institutions after they had undertaken the activities. 81% of the students of the five schools found the activities interesting to a great extent or to some extent. More than 60% students found the horror theme interesting and the activities useful.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with a smaller number of randomly selected learners in three schools. According to one boy from School I, 'It was different from anything I've done before, and I found it both interesting and engaging in its own way'. He appreciated that the activity made him think differently about the topic, which he found engaging. He mentioned that the interactive nature of the activity helped him connect with the material in a way that traditional teaching methods often do not.

61% of the 18 girls belonging to School II liked the topic based on the horror genre. Many respondents shared that the task was beneficial for their learning, emphasizing that it facilitated discovering new ideas and expressing their creativity, as well as helping them to write related to a genre they do not usually focus upon in academic settings. They also stated that the activity improved their storytelling skills and practised creative writing by facilitating them to express their own thoughts. Some students found the activity particularly enjoyable due to its unique and inventive nature; more than half enthusiastically remarked that they loved creative writing. Finally, the activities were also popular being collaborative as the learners stated that they learned a variety of new ideas from classmates and enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas with each other. This feedback reflects that the students appreciate interactive, imaginative learning environments.

The activities were successful in motivating 15 boys belonging to School III because of their creative nature. The majority of the students appeared visibly excited to engage in a creative task that introduced new concepts and encouraged active participation. This excitement was reflected in the students' positive body language, attentive listening, and willingness to contribute. Many learners seemed intrigued by the opportunity to learn something novel, as the tasks reflected a unique approach aiming to develop their writing skills. The students showed strong interest in undertaking similar activities in the future as well. Importantly, the learners expressed a newfound interest in reading and writing fictional works. They noted that creating opening sentences is crucial in capturing a reader's attention and setting the tone for the story. Most students demonstrated openness to share their thoughts and listen to their peers' ideas. This openness fostered a collaborative learning environment where students felt comfortable expressing their ideas reflecting their positive feelings and interest. Several students highlighted how the activities allowed them

to experiment with unique ideas, with one learner expressing excitement over crafting 'ghostly scenes'.

Conclusion

The sample materials involve learners in affective and cognitive engagement and creative and reflective practices. The main theme of the activities seems compatible with the majority of the target students' tastes as indicated by the small-scale pilot study. The materials provide learners opportunities to use and share their ideas and views flexibly and openly, and adapt language flexibly in order to create an impact on the target audience (as reflected in complexity theory – Larsen-Freeman, 2020). Thus, these tasks can help effectively develop ESL students' communicative skills and are apparently motivating, as implied by the opinions elicited from the pilot research participants.

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The sources of texts¹

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The titles incorporated as Title Set 2 for the Category Two Activities were generated by ChatGPT.

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1. The remaining texts of Set Two Activities have been created for the article. The pictures provided in the Appendix are personal photographs.

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Appendix



Sample pictures for Set One activity – task (b)

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MATERIALS SPOT

Adopting a humanistic approach to enhance learners' personal and affective involvement in L2 Learning

Sakae Onoda

Introduction

L2 research suggests that humanistic interactional materials and activities motivate learners to feel enjoyment, fun, achievable challenge, and intrinsic interest, which encourages them to become involved in L2 learning both intellectually and affectively and improves interactional skills and self-efficacy (Onoda, 2024; Tomlinson, 2023). L2 literature also shows that when finely tuned to learners' proficiency, intellectual and motivational levels, intensive use of such tasks facilitates an optimal L2 learning environment that encourages autonomous learning behaviours and improves L2 interactional skills and self-efficacy. Support also derives from a study by Onoda (2012), which indicates that intrinsic motivation instigates self-regulated learning strategies and willingness to communicate, thus improving L2 speaking skills.

The literature on L2 teaching materials (e.g. Tomlinson, 2023) suggests, however, that to cater to a wide variety of learner needs, expectations, and cultural backgrounds, many coursebooks worldwide put a primary emphasis on linguistic and analytical aspects of language learning. Furthermore, they fail to consider that language encountered in real or vicarious situations and which engages the learners emotionally is much more likely to have a profound impact on learning and be retrieved more easily for real-life language use (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021). Given this reality, learners may fail to deeply process the language they have encountered in coursebooks and are not involved in effective and durable learning (Farrell, 2018). For such learning to occur, learners need to relax, feel autonomous, develop self-confidence, and interact with other learners and users of the language with ease and confidence.

Given the finding that humanizing teaching materials promotes learners' involvement in L2 learning which

improves L2 proficiency and especially interactional skills, this article will introduce humanistic interactional activities, including giving life to the stilted dialogues often presented in textbooks, adding follow-up activities connecting learners to their real-life world, and assigning humanistic authentic texts followed by discussions in pairs after each.

Giving life to 'canned' dialogues

As a long-time writer for senior high school textbooks for Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), I have long been confronted with numerous constraints prescribed by the Course of Study (i.e. the curriculum) issued by MEXT and imposed on publishers. MEXT selects a limited range of words and phrases to be used in the textbooks, but the publisher is concerned about the complaints and requests it receives from senior high school teachers. MEXT and the publisher want the textbook writers to use words and expressions many Japanese senior high English school teachers are familiar with, such as *let's...*, *wonderful*, *in my opinion*, *refreshing*, *I agree*, *OK*, and the like. These are consequently overused in the textbooks, which results in a lack of authenticity and naturalness and insipid dialogues. The following examples relate to the writing of the textbook *Mainstream English Logic and Expression 3* published by Zoshindo (2025). The first example is a dialogue the publisher wants us, the textbook writers, to adopt in terms of expressions, tone and length. I revised it to make it flow naturally and with appropriate emotions embedded in it. Myself and the writing team discussed this issue and finally decided to use my suggestion. Below, I present the dialogue the publisher first suggested (A) and then give the finalized dialogue (B) based on my suggestion and eventually used in the activity in the textbook.

Activity 1

Look at the table and the descriptions of Shota and Eriko. Form pairs and describe Eriko following the sample dialogue, using expressions from the Grammar Compass section (boldfaced expressions) such as 'be senior to', and 'be + the comparative form of an adjective + of the two'.

Name	Shota (17 years old)	Eriko (15 years old)
Club Activity	the Baseball Club	the Manga Club
Major Event	pitched in baseball tournament and won the championship	her manga won first prize in the manga contest
Strength(s)	stays focused and calm in challenging situations	sensitive to other people's feelings and friendly
Personality	energetic, sociable	creative, imaginative
Favorite Activity	communicating with others in social media	going to a desert buffet and eating a lot of sweets

(A) Sample dialogue suggested by the publisher

Shiori: Let's talk about what Shota's like.

Daiki: OK. I feel he's **superior to me**; he can stay focused and calm in challenging situations. I imagine he **must have been happiest** when he won the championship.

Shiori: Yeah. I wish I were as energetic and sociable as he is. Whenever we're paired up in an English class, he's the **more active of the two**.

Daiki: I agree.

As can be seen, the publisher makes every effort to make the dialogue succinct and short and avoid colloquial expressions Japanese senior high school English teachers and students may not be familiar with, yielding a rather insipid, stilted, and unnatural dialogue with little emotion embedded. Below is a reworking of the dialogue to be more authentic.

(B) Suggested more authentic and humanistic dialogue

The italicized sections are incorporated to make the interactions more natural and emotional.

Shiori: What do you think of Shota?

Daiki: *Honestly, I'm kind of jealous of Shota* because I feel he's **superior to me**; he can stay focused and calm in challenging situations, *but I can't. My heart is pounding in tough situations.*

Shiori: True! *He's got that going for him.* But you know, that doesn't mean you are inferior to him. *You have good qualities, too!*

Daiki: *Thanks for saying that.* I imagine he **must have been happiest** when he won the championship.

Shiori: *Yeah, I know how he felt back then! You know, I wish I were as energetic and sociable as he is.* Whenever we're paired up in an English class, he's the **more active of the two**.

Daiki: *Yeah, I have the same feeling.* When he's my partner, the teacher thinks he's the **more motivated of the two**. *He's clever, isn't he?*

(Onoda, 2025, p 44)

(It is recognized that 'he's the more active of the two' and 'he's the more motivated of the two' are still very stilted and overly formal but these are the target expressions in the unit and cannot be replaced with more natural expressions such as 'he's more active than me' and 'he's more motivated than me'.)

As opposed to the first short dialogue, the suggested dialogue sounds more natural and personal, and more effective in exchanging learners' feelings. I strongly believe that oral interactions should be as natural as possible because they should provide high-quality input for learners to take in. Yet the publisher's intention seems to be that oral interactions should be as simple as possible so that they may not be a burden on learners and teachers alike. When provided with natural, authentic interactions, learners are motivated to express their ideas more freely while having fun and improving their interactional skills.

Follow-up discussion and writing activities

A coursebook I have been using, *Reading Explorer Level 3*, by MacIntyre and Bohlke (2020) is of unusually high quality because it uses authentic materials, including readings and video materials from *National Geographic*. Not surprisingly, it receives high acclaim from university English teachers. Even so, activities that require deep thinking and likely to evoke affective responses and personalization are rare in the textbook. As an example, one of the units covers reading and video materials titled *How Safe is Our Food*. Yet the questions presented in the unit only check general comprehension of the texts, as can be seen below.

Video script

How often does food make us sick? It's hard to tell since so many cases go unreported, and globalization of food production makes it harder and harder to track. But we do know

this: At least one in six Americans gets sick from food poisoning every year. While most of them recover without any lasting effects, many end up hospitalized - and some even die.

These illnesses can originate at any point from farm to table. Contaminated water, animals, or equipment can taint food. Unhygienic conditions can allow pathogens to grow; improper temperatures can cause food to spoil; poor sanitation can allow bacteria to multiply; and even carelessness in our own kitchens is a risk.

Take an E. coli outbreak in Germany in 2011. Nearly 3,000 people became sick with diarrhea, fever, and vomiting, and 855 developed a more severe illness. The German government raced to find the source of the outbreak and warned consumers to be cautious of lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers. But 16 days later, officials reported that sprouts were the real cause. In the end, 53 deaths and more than 3,800 cases were reported, affecting 15 countries.

Preventing outbreaks like these in the future may prove challenging. In the U.S., 80 percent of food-borne illnesses are caused by unknown pathogens. But by monitoring the risks in our food chain, we all might dine with a little more confidence.

Sample comprehension questions

1. Listen to the audio-recording of the video titled *How Safe is Our Food?* three times and answer the following comprehension questions.

Q1: How many people end up hospitalized annually due to food poisoning in the U.S.?

Q2: How many people are killed due to food poisoning annually in the U.S.?

Q3: What did German officials determine was the real cause of the 2011 E. coli outbreak?

(Adapted from MacIntyre & Bohlke, 2020, pp. 59-60)

As I discuss above and as is often the case with coursebooks, these materials fail to connect the reading and listening texts with the learners' daily lives, interests, experiences, emotions, and intelligence. To assist learners in processing the information deeply, I added follow-up activities that encourage learners to explore relevant information and experience while using target grammar points and expressions.

A. Essay writing and discussion 1

Instructions

Conduct an internet search for information on what causes food poisoning and how it can be avoided, and

write an essay of about 100 words titled 'Food poisoning'. Be sure to use some of the phrases denoting cause-and-effect relationships such as *cause*, *cause an object to*, *be caused by*, *due to*, *because*, *allow an object to*, *help an object to*, *can be avoided by*, and the like. Then form pairs and discuss your findings with your partner. Later, you will be asked to report your partner's ideas to the class.

Examples (extracts)

Food poisoning is caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or toxins. However, harmful chemicals can also cause cases of food poisoning.

Food poisoning can be avoided by washing your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after preparing food.

B. Essay writing and discussion 2

Instructions

Write about your experience of food poisoning or getting very sick by referring to what you think caused it, what symptoms you had, and how you think you can avoid it.

These activities encourage learners to exchange information and emotions relevant to their experiences, which makes them willing to speak to and respond to each other, promotes supportive listening, establishes positive relationships, and enhances interactional skills.

Problem-solving activity: Diagnoses and solutions

Another coursebook I am using titled *Technical English* (22nd edition) by Bonamy (2022) covers complex mathematical and scientific concepts from university science majors. One of the units covers diagnoses and solutions for computer-related problems and encourages learners to analyze problems by using such expressions as *may*, *must*, *may have...* and *must have* to refer to possible diagnoses and *I suggest you...*, *why not...?* and *perhaps you could...* to describe possible solutions. The activity sounds useful to science majors, but some of the problems presented are not realistic situations university students might encounter in their daily lives. To make the activity more realistic, relevant, and personally involving for university-level learners, I have revised and expanded the activity to include problems these students are likely to encounter in their lives based on my survey of students at different universities to elicit problems and solutions from them. Here is the activity sheet I created, with sample answers. Please note that for economy of space, several problems have been omitted.

Problem-Solving Activity: Diagnoses and Solutions

Instructions

First, read about each problem people your own age are likely to encounter in their daily lives and think about a possible diagnosis as well as a possible solution for each problem for 20 minutes. As you describe your diagnosis, use expressions such as:

...must be...
...may be...

As you explain possible solutions, use expressions such as:

I suggest you...
Perhaps you could...

Then form pairs and take turns reporting your diagnoses and solutions to each other for 15 minutes.

Later, you will be asked to present the diagnoses and solutions you and your partner came up with. As you report your ideas, use some of the following sentence structures:

Let me tell you the diagnoses we came up with.
...could be...
...must be...

One possible diagnosis is that...

When introducing possible solutions, use expressions such as:

We suggest you...
Why not...?
Perhaps you could...

Problem 1

When I want to show my PowerPoint slides by connecting my laptop to the projector, it doesn't show the slides, only the home screen. What should I do?

Sample diagnosis

Display settings **must be** set to "Extended Mode" by default when connecting a projector. This means that the projector acts as a separate screen, and the slideshow **may** not appear on both displays. Also, loose or faulty HDMI or VGA cables **may** prevent the projector from receiving the correct signal.

Sample solution

I **suggest you** change your display settings to "Duplicate Mode." Try right-clicking on the desktop, open "Display Settings," select "Duplicate" or "Mirror"? If you are a Mac user, try pressing the "Command" and "F1" keys at the same time. Also make sure the

cables are tightly connected to the computer and the projector. If this doesn't solve the problem, I **suggest** you get help from the university IT staff.

Problem 2

I take an English class in university. I like the class very much because it incorporates communicative activities like discussions and presentations. However, every time I present in class, there's no positive response from my teacher or classmates. What should I do?

Sample diagnosis

Your presentations **may be** difficult to understand. One possible reason is that you **may** pause when you are out of breath, or **perhaps** you make pronunciation errors in key words.

Sample solution

I **suggest you** talk to your teacher and ask what is wrong with your presentation and how you could improve it. Alternatively, **perhaps you could** ask your classmates how you can improve your performance. Additionally, **why not** use AI to evaluate your pronunciation and speaking performance?

Reading with discussion using an inspirational story

As I discussed above, reading materials in coursebooks and textbooks in general aim to cater to a wide variety of learners, with very different needs, expectations, and cultural backgrounds. They cannot therefore reflect the language used in such a variety of contexts, or get the learners to immerse themselves in connecting the content of the reading materials to their lives. Because for human beings, the most important factor in learning is affect (Farrell, 2018; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021), this means that learners may not improve their reading skills as much as they could (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021). This argument legitimizes the development and adoption of humanistic teaching materials and tasks in L2 teaching.

Instructions

Form pairs, read the text individually and silently paragraph by paragraph, note the specific points marked by the teacher, and discuss the main point and the principal character's feelings in English. Continue this process until the end of the text, discuss your opinion of the main issue, and fill in each blank in the way that best expresses the feeling suggested by the context.

The Pleasure of Being a Teacher and a Learner

Paragraph 1

Sakae taught an undergraduate English teaching methodology course at a university in Japan. His students had post-intermediate English skills and wanted to be secondary school English teachers after graduation. They were good students but not confident about teaching or interacting in English.

Pair discussion: Sample questions

- How good are your post-intermediate English skills as measured by TOEIC or TOEFL?
- Do you understand students who are at post-intermediate English level but can't speak English fluently?

Paragraph 2

One day, Makoto and Masaya, who had learned applied linguistics through the CLIL approach at universities in English-speaking countries, wanted to join Sakae's course. While he was excited to have such motivated students in his class, he had misgivings and feared that the course might not come up to their expectations and discourage their intellectual curiosity. Sakae also worried that with their higher academic critical thinking and interactional skills, Makoto and Masaya would intimidate the class and dominate discussions.

Pair discussion and sample questions

- How would you respond to Makoto and Masaya if you were Sakae?
- Do you think these two students might intimidate the class and discussions? Why or why not?
- Have you had any experience of highly proficient students dominating a class or group discussions? If so, how did you feel about it?

Paragraph 3

But his fears were groundless. Makoto and Masaya made the most of class meetings and became model proactive learners. They enjoyed his teaching style, in which he invited solutions to pedagogical problems and encouraged students to play devil's advocate and generate alternative ideas through discussions. Both students helped him involve the class in deeper learning by stimulating other students to analyze pedagogical issues from multiple perspectives. Eventually, all students broadened their horizons and felt truly connected. On the last day, they said to him;

1. "_____ " Hearing this, Sakae thought,

2. "_____ " and experienced the real enjoyment of being a teacher.

Pair discussion and sample questions

- What kinds of learners were Makoto and Masaya like?
- Can you describe their personalities using adjectives?
- What did Makoto and Masaya do to play devil's advocate?
- What ideas were generated: better ideas or worse ideas or both?
- Can you imagine what the students said here: "On the last day, they said to him; "_____ " _____"

Possible completions

- This is the best class I've ever taken. I want to take this class again next semester.
- This is the most rewarding class I've ever taken.
- Can you offer another class next year?
- You are a great teacher; I've learned a lot.

What did Sakae say in response?

Possible completions

- You made my day!
- What a great experience!
- Great students! Nothing makes me happier than to hear you say this.
- It's been great getting to know you.

Using an inspirational story based on a situation relevant to the students results in them feeling motivated to read and imagine what was happening. Through repeated discussions, they try to interpret the situations and feelings of the characters who appear in the story and are emotionally involved in the story and the feelings of the characters. With affective interpretations embedded in reading the story, learners are encouraged to process the information and related language more deeply (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2021) making it more likely to be stored in their memory (Farrell, 2018) and thus be readily usable for productive use, thereby contributing to interactional skills development (Onoda, 2022).

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed only a portion of activities designed to supplement the main texts by humanizing

the teaching materials. I have implemented all these activities with university students irrespective of their majors, whether English, business administration, or science, and their feedback is very positive, and reveals the following:

1. Emotions and social connections

Personalized interactions with emotions embedded encourage learners to deeply process the information and related language and build social connections between them.

2. Intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy

Meaningful pairwork helps learners maintain their intrinsic motivation throughout the activity, feel a sense of achievement, and experience enhanced self-efficacy.

3. Peer positive feedback and support

During personally relevant pair discussions, learners demonstrate supportive listening, engage in exchanging opinions, and give positive feedback to one another. This creates a lively, vibrant, supportive atmosphere conducive to active interactions.

4. Authentic interactions and collaborative learning

Meaningful pair discussions offer learners plenty of opportunities to interact with their partner by asking questions and providing supportive listening. This process promotes collaborative learning.

5. Responsibility, ownership, and autonomy enhancement

Humanizing pair discussions allows learners to contribute their strengths or expertise to classroom learning and enhance their autonomy in language learning and use.

6. Deep thinking and multiple perspectives

Personally involving pair work provides learners with opportunities to consider a problem thoughtfully from multiple perspectives, including different individual experiences and views.

7. Humanizing interactions and deep processing

Interactions with emotions embedded encourage learners to become deeply involved in exchanging opinions and emotions, deeply processing the ideas, information, and experience.

Thus, humanizing teaching materials and tasks generates situations conducive to language learning and use; it motivates learners to engage in language learning deeply and affectively because with such resources, they can relax, feel intrinsically motivated and independent, and interact with other learners and users of the language with ease and confidence, consequently improving their interactional skills and heightening their self-efficacy.

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BOOK REVIEW

Exploring Creativity Through Writing: A Handbook for Teachers

Alan Maley and Sharoon Sunny

*ISBN 9781032827957 (Paperback), ISBN 9781032702469 (Hardback),
ISBN 9781003506263 (ebook)*

Reviewed by Rachel Mackenzie

The Foreword of this handbook states that the book 'believes in the ability of everyone to be creative and derive pleasure and a sense of self-value from doing so'. And although the book is primarily aimed at teachers who wish to promote creative writing in the language classroom, its reach extends beyond this. It is not a creative writing course handbook *per se*, but a book aiming to promote creative writing in language programmes - but the authors hope that students and teacher-trainers will also find it useful to inspire their students.

The discussions and rationales outlined at the start set a solid foundation for the chapters that follow, pointing out that creativity promotes learning and development in students beyond the writing process itself. It looks at evidence and theories behind this, noting that one of the major benefits creative writing can bring to the language classroom is 'to counter the currently prevailing so-called "scientific" approach to language learning with its focus on objectives'. Through use of the book the authors aim to discard this narrow approach and illustrate that creativity, both as process or product, is a key part of true education.

The second chapter of Part 1 discusses the 'what', 'who', 'why' and 'how' of creativity, discussing theorists and theory, and then goes on to talk about the role of creativity in education in general. This rationale references a variety of theories and theorists such as Maslow and Koestler, discussing the importance of creativity in learning, and goes on to note the role and importance of play in the classroom. It also discusses the different practices around language learning, noting that although many theorists and practitioners are in favour of creativity in the classroom, in practice it is still too often discouraged.

Maley and Sunny point out that creativity broadens

students' minds through building up their tolerance of ambiguity and questioning. This axiom around creativity is presented in Box 1.5 (page 12) whilst above it, in Box 1.4 (same page) the benefits of creativity are clearly listed. The point is made that creativity is for everyone (in 'axiom', Box 1.5), with its benefits (given in Box 1.4) including 'becoming more aware of our interdependence'.

Further, the authors emphasise the importance of establishing a classroom which is varied but also, importantly, fosters tolerance, with the teacher establishing a safe classroom where criticism is possible without causing offence. Pointers on how this can be established are noted in Box 2.2 (page 32) where there is advice such as establishing a framework of support with regular feedback sessions and making sure that both reading and writing are included in the process. Once this foundation is laid, the fun can begin and the handbook used. Its structure is succinct and easy to follow. It gives rationales and aims which are followed by clear and varied activities in each chapter.

Chapter 2 discusses what creative writing is, looking at the influence around ideas of creative writing: why it should be included in the language classroom, and how it can be applied, not just in the classroom, but as a habit for the individual.

In Part 2, after a brief introduction to poetry (Chapter 3) the book's fourth chapter gives some form-based activities. Each activity is broken down into 'aim', 'before the activity', 'during the activity', 'after the activity', 'variations' and 'comments'. As a whole, Part 2 focuses on poetry and language play within that.

The focus on poetry starts with looking at and using poetic form and has some great short activities such as the use of haikus and the use and benefits

of constraints. The constraints suggested come in different forms such as the length of the poem - for example the two-line poem in activity 4.1 (page 40) or the syllabic/length constraint of a haiku in 4.2 (page 41). These will inevitably lead students to think hard about words as the aims in activity 4.3 (page 44) make clear. It is a pleasure to come across so many different poetry ideas, both in terms of form and the selection used for illustration; this adds flexibility to its teaching in the mixed ability and multi-cultural classroom. The style of poetry ranges from Western forms such as a cinquain (activity 4.3) which is a 5-line poem with 2-4-6-8-2 syllable per line; and triolets (activity 4.5, page 50) which have a complex rhyme and repetition scheme. There are also examples of ghazals (4.6, page 52) which have 5-10 couplets and repetition in specific lines and the ruba'i (4.7, page 54) both of which come from Asia, with one of the most well-known of the latter quoted in the book (page 55) clearly showing its rhyme scheme:

*The moving finger writes, and having writ,
Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.*

Chapter 5 focuses on language-based activities which encourage students to play with language both on their own and in pairs and/or small groups. Some activities have specific aims, such as activity 5.5 on the use of metaphor (page 71), whilst others are looser such as the aim of manipulating language as stated in activity 5.4 (page 70).

Chapter 6 is all about working with models as a framework for students' work. It helps students to develop 'creative interpretations of common objects' (activity 6.2, page 95) aiming to encourage students to look at things in new ways. The authors give a few examples such as ten ways of looking at a motorbike which include their own ideas such as: 'A teenage seducer' and 'A dream of distance'. Also in this chapter there are some more very specific language tasks on offer such as 'Prefixes and Prayers' (6.4 page 99) where the teacher has to prepare a list of prefixes to be focused on and then prepare what they term 'prayer model templates'. But whatever the aims of the activities, whether closely structured or looser, they offer variety and aim to be inclusive, reinforcing Maley and Sunny's belief in the ability of all to be creative.

Free-expression activities (Chapter 7) lead the classroom into open-ended activities where sometimes only fragments or sometimes just words of either a poem or some prose are offered and students have to engage deeply with language and form. As Maley and Sunny state, some of these may not be suitable for beginner level learners, but others (such as 7.8 'initial consonant clusters' page 126) are open to all and fun to do.

The 'Reflections' in Chapter 8 are quotes from teachers'

experience of using creative writing in the classroom, and are followed at the end of the book in Chapter 18 by students' discussion of what they gained from such a classroom. The reflection by one French teacher noted that 'The freedom that comes from writing floats into any and every area, whether if it be learning ...or looking at trees' (page 140). The use of creative writing thus affects the teacher as well as the students, as noted by Maley and Sunny earlier in the book, by keeping the teacher's own language fresh, as teachers must also participate in the creativity explored in this book.

The third part of the book explores short stories and starts with Chapter 9 briefly re-stating the rationale and aims, then outlining the structure of the chapters which follow. The structure of the activities used in this section is very similar to that used in the poetry section: each exercise is divided into 'aims', 'preparation', 'procedure', 'follow-up' and 'variations'. Some of the procedures do offer time constraints but the majority do not, whilst the variations bring out the flexibility of the tasks.

Warming up through free writing (Chapter 10) has a strong rationale and there are a large variety of ideas within one exercise. For example, in the free writing exercise of 10.2 (page 151) there are different options in the procedure section. Once this warm-up has been completed the students are encouraged to work out how a very short story is developed, to think about and discuss the elements that go into a story, and this is what the following chapters explore.

The use of visuals as an aid, which have also been used in the poetry section (in 6.8, page 109), is used well again here in the variations of activity 10.2, where the warm-up offers a pictorial element. Pictures and images encourage fuller participation by those who may be less advanced in their language, or shy, and is to be welcomed into the classroom. This is also true with the use of texts and extracts from a variety of genres and cultures. All this leads to an opening up of minds and a breaking down of barriers in the classroom and, one hopes, beyond.

'Plot' (Chapter 11) focuses on the momentum which keeps readers engaged and discusses how different plots are shaped and devised. Writing a short story is a huge task for most students, so by breaking it down into key stages (11.1, page 160) and outlining 'setting', 'development', 'crisis' and 'resolution', a basic structure can be more easily understood, analysed and developed in the classroom.

This is followed by tasks such as 'One-sentence stories' (11.4, page 162) and then seven- and six-word stories (11.5 and 11.7, pages 162-3) which reflects back to the shortness of haikus in the poetry section. In the same way, these tasks will challenge students to condense ideas and think carefully about every word chosen.

There is room for all abilities to take part in most of the exercises here, as there is throughout this handbook, through the use of variation in either activity or material or both. For example, in 11.9 the 'variations' suggests how a teacher can adapt this activity for lower level students. Offering work for mixed levels is sometimes done explicitly, usually under the 'variations' heading, but also implicitly through the use of group and pair work where students of mixed ability can be encouraged to work together, as well as through peer feedback.

The 'Setting' chapter (12) discusses and emphasises the importance of setting. It is an ambitious chapter which has many ideas to raise students' awareness of the role that setting can play within a story. The bullet list under 12.1 (page 169) is very comprehensive, noting that visual description alone is far from the only way to set a scene, and the points and ideas that could flow from the list should be a source of much fruitful discussion and fun in the classroom.

The exercises here and throughout are diverse and consist of not just writing; there is reading, speaking aloud, peer review, teacher review, full class and small group discussion, reflection, and general and personal analysis. This enables a diversity of pace even within one lesson. It also allows time for real absorption of learning to take place. This can be further consolidated by the 'follow-up' suggestions, some of which include homework.

Chapter 13 on character, brings in films and TV, as examples that are often easier and quicker to recognise and discuss as an introduction to the subject of character. The tasks then put forward are sometimes quite challenging, for example the emotional mapping in 13.5 (page 186). By using examples, however, the aim is that students clearly understand the task and can then enjoy filling in a grid in pairs. Here, the five rows list scenes: *introduction*, *conflict*, *climax*, *resolution* and *conclusions*, with three columns for *action/detail*, *emotions*, and *description/notes*. This is a sophisticated exercise where the preparation of choosing a scene from a story to illustrate the stages is vital. More straightforward but equally powerful is the use of visual art which is again suggested in 13.9 (page 192) where the use of pictures aims to stimulate students' imaginations in building up character in their own writing.

'Dialogue' (Chapter 14) discusses the use of speech in a story and encourages the writing of it by starting from a three-word dialogue (14.1) to a more sophisticated and challenging 'Dialogue re-write' (14.3). With

teacher and peer support, it is hoped all students would be able at this stage to complete the exercise. Certainly enjoyment can be had also - in the Jane Austen idea of 14.3 for example, and the 'Inner and outer dialogue' of 14.4 - and fun and laughter always help draw those more reticent students in.

The final three chapters - 'Point of View', 'Time' and 'Twist in the Tale' - are the embellishment of this course, reinforcing the skills which have been learnt, and giving more ideas on how creativity can be taught and learnt in the class. In Chapter 17 many of the activities are collaborative which fits well for the end of a course, as it brings the class together, cementing learning and the personal relationships that will have been built.

So does this handbook fulfil its aims of demystifying literature through activities, and promoting creative writing in the classroom? Indeed it does. Its structure is succinct and easy to follow. It gives rationales and aims which are followed by clear and varied activities in each chapter. The handbook can be used from cover to cover as a creative writing handbook for teachers in the language classroom and teacher-trainers who wish to stimulate this practice in classrooms. It could be used as the basis for a creative writing course. It could fruitfully be used to dip in and out of by students who wish to improve their writing through the use of creative writing. It may be used as a dip-in for teachers who wish to improve their students' writing. Finally, writers themselves who want ideas and exercises to boost weaker areas of their work could use this handbook.

Through its structure and content, the book lends excellent support to teachers in its developed but flexible tasks, many of which can be expanded and built upon. Most importantly of all, it encourages creativity within a language classroom setting through enjoyable and motivating ideas and activities. I am sure those that use it will learn and have fun doing so.

About the reviewer:

Rachel Mackenzie has an MA (Literacy) from the University of London's Institute of Education, and taught literacy and then EFL for 20 years in a wide variety of settings. Her later years were focused on teaching new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. She still does this in a voluntary capacity both on Zoom and in the classroom, focusing particularly on allowing student-led language development.

BOOK REVIEW

Developing Materials for Language Teaching, 3rd edition

Edited by Brian Tomlinson

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Reviewed by Persis Dineen Rodrigues

This book has been widely anticipated by scholars and practitioners engaged in materials development for language teaching. The edited book covers a broad range of important topics that provide updated insights and relevant academic literature to the language teaching field. The book presents both language teaching theory and application that are ideal for readers to explore current and predicted future trends in materials development. The book brings together a wide selection of writers, publishers, researchers and teachers who examine diverse perspectives on materials development for specific learner groups and material types, supported by relevant principles and adaptation strategies.

The introductory chapter, by the editor, Brian Tomlinson, offers an in-depth overview of key concepts in materials development including definitions, historical evolution, ongoing challenges, the selection of appropriate contributors, and the authenticity of materials. One of the most compelling aspects that caught my attention is the editor's discussion on authenticity of text in language learning. The editor highlights a thought-provoking argument that authenticity does not necessarily facilitate language acquisition but authentic texts often pose greater challenges for learners. This claim further prompts the need for adaptation in materials development, particularly focusing on inclusivity for both teachers and learners across the globe.

The book addresses a wide range of key topics in materials development making it a valuable resource for academics, teachers, and even students in the same field of study. The book contains four parts with a

total number of 26 chapters. It begins with evaluating and adapting materials (Part 1), and it continues with integrating relevant frameworks and guidelines for developing materials (Part 2), customising materials for target groups (Part 3), and finally, it ends with developing specific types of materials (Part 4) for teaching the four language skills, incorporating multimodal discourse, raising intercultural awareness and emphasising communicative ability. At the end of each chapter, readers' tasks, further reading, notes and references are provided for readers to enhance understanding, encourage deeper engagement with the content and ensure academic integrity. A commentary section provided by the editor at the end of each part is a good idea because it allows the readers to analyse and summarise the chapters.

For this book review, I focus on one chapter from each part to provide an overview of the diverse perspectives.

Part 1: Evaluation and Adaptation of Materials

Chapter 1. Materials evaluation by *Brian Tomlinson*

This first chapter is very important as it explains the theories behind materials evaluation with relevant and current literature reviews (include SLA theories), elaborates the stages of materials evaluation, and suggests criteria for evaluation. Tomlinson emphasises that 'an evaluation is not the same as an analysis' (p. 26). These two terms are clearly defined when the author asserts that an evaluation usually focuses on the users of the materials while an analysis focuses

on the structure of the materials. Examples of the two different terms are given, and the examples are worth their weight in gold. For instance, 'Does it provide a transcript of the listening texts?' is an example of an analysis question which then can be answered as either 'Yes' or 'No'.

Tomlinson's years of experience in materials evaluation has bridged both theory and practice to be more holistic and meaning-focused. For instance, the author conducted an analysis of ten lower-level coursebooks and found the books were more focused on low-level skills (e.g. pronunciation of words) than high-level skills (e.g. inferencing). As far as materials development is concerned, the author goes beyond learning theory (especially SLA) and provides other variables such as cultural awareness and sensitivity, experiential learning, personalisation, self-assessment of learning, and opportunities for learners' feedback.

Towards the end of this chapter, Tomlinson gathers some common themes and literature from various research studies that provide the basis of criteria for developing materials. To make this introductory chapter more readable, a set of guiding questions or criteria is provided to encourage deeper reflection among the target readers. Despite the differences between a global and local context, the author concludes the chapter on a positive note by stating: 'My great hope is that one day the mismatches between theory and practice will diminish and learners, teachers, and publishers around the world will gain' (p. 51).

Part 2: Principles and Procedures of Materials Development

Chapter 9. Developing digital language learning materials by *Thom Kiddle and Chris Farrell*

This chapter comprehensively explores the adoption of technological tools, pedagogies, platforms and principles for digital materials (the authors note it was written before the most recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) especially Generative AI tools). The authors review the evolution of digital language learning materials including during the Covid-19 pandemic, and recognise those phases (p. 208) that possibly provide great prospects for localisation of the content in the materials developed by teachers (as mentioned in Tomlinson's Chapter 5 on *Humanizing the Coursebook*, pp. 128-144). On the other hand, Kiddle and Farrell acknowledge that digital language learning materials have their challenges when it comes to the implementation of the tools, teachers' accessibility to the digital materials and even technical competence (p.208). The authors also set out a clear overview of frameworks being used in digital

language learning materials, and relate the frameworks to Popovski's (2016) *Principles for Materials Writing* and Mavridi's (2020) *Digital Literacies Framework*, and they argue that the transformation of digital language learning materials is also challenged by SLA theory.

To support the development of digital language learning materials, the writers propose three important aspects: publisher-created materials, teacher-created materials and student-generated materials. Each aspect focuses on areas that each group prioritises in ensuring the digital materials are accessible, connected, integrated and self-directed. For instance, publishers need to ensure that instructors are able to collect submissions of learner-produced content within the materials, and ensure adaptation is carried out within the context as well. Teachers play more significant roles in embedding digital competencies, multimodal design knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, linguistic knowledge, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines, and affordable tools. Despite the diverse roles, the authors point out that there is no clear emphasis on whether the teachers should focus on pedagogical approach or digital technological skills in the digital materials. Kiddle and Farrell emphasise that the integration of technology in the materials is important for students to self-learn the content independently through mobile learning (mLearning) and/or a flipped classroom approach that allow both instructor and students to participate in the feedback activity.

The chapter highlights how AI can influence writers, teachers, and students at all levels through a combination of corpus linguistics, computational linguistics, and learning analytics, and the role of AI in education (e.g. the ethical framework for AI in education). I think the term the authors use - 'disruptive technologies' - is very convincing in implying that technology challenges traditional language learning methods. The chapter ends with considerations such as the authors' predictions on the quality of digital materials, teachers' future challenges on workload planning, and the uptake or rejection of hybrid learning models.

Part 3: Developing Materials for Target Group

Chapter 14: Materials for adults resilience in the face of adversity: Inspiring and motivating L2 adult learners of beginner's Spanish by *Rosa-Maria Cives-Enriquez*

Cives-Enriquez begins the chapter by acknowledging the use of technology in teaching L2 adult learners of beginner's Spanish. To motivate her L2 learners, the author emphasises that her pedagogy has always been authentic as it is influenced by natural language

acquisition, Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, the concept of multiple intelligences, and other relevant theories. Looking at this teaching approach, Cives-Enriquez considers the wellbeing of her L2 learners and to what extent the learning materials can sustain their learning motivation especially when using online platforms.

Being a linguist and mental health practitioner, the author values emotional wellbeing among her L2 learners. She strongly feels that the use of language stimulus needs to be right for her learners to be connected with the language. Cives-Enriquez feels it is necessary to 'humanise' her classroom context by engaging her learners with the materials. To elaborate her 'humanising' approach, the author proposes seven steps to engage with her learners: 1) getting to know their own learning styles; 2) providing basic classroom instructions in Spanish; 3) explaining her teaching and learning approaches; 4) creating a 'safe space' for learning; 5) providing flexibility for her learners to choose the online learning tools; 6) using visual, auditory and kinaesthetic mediums when introducing new topics; and 7) using group work to engage in virtual breakout rooms.

One part of the chapter I found extremely interesting was about the way the author deals with language learning motivation (pp. 301–310) and how she adopts this framework in her online lessons. For example, she believes in establishing healthy boundaries with the learners which leads to use of the concept of the Johari Window, creating a safe learning environment for feedback sessions, including cultural concepts, promoting self-regulated learning and personalising the process of learning with clear goals.

The author concludes the chapter by reinforcing that constructivism and motivation are the keys to creating motivational materials. She also suggests that balancing the learning process is crucial (i.e. 're-charge' and 're-calibrate').

Part 4: Developing Specific Types of Materials

Chapter 24: Towards intercultural competence: Materials for raising intercultural awareness by *Freda Mishan*

I chose this chapter because it provides rich insights into theoretical frameworks of intercultural awareness and the influence of technology on the intercultural environment. The importance of raising intercultural awareness in developing materials is evident in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a list of conceptual frameworks that collectively bring out the definitions of intercultural awareness and intercultural competence. Mishan

further elaborates the complexity of the language-and-culture relationship, influenced by globalisation that includes virtual multiculturalism, which can then lead to issues of, for instance, personal identity.

The author quotes Byram's (2021) definition of critical cultural awareness (CCA) and compares it with Fantini's model (2009) with respect to the dimensions of intercultural competence. As a result of these discussions, Mishan feels that CCA seems to be appropriate as a pedagogic goal (p. 495). To implement CCA in developing materials, the author highlights concepts such as a 'grammar of culture' that focuses on 'small cultures', laying the groundwork for 'counter-normalising' and thus 'interculturality'. Under the implementation section, Mishan summarises the principles for intercultural awareness-raising materials which are helpful for teachers, content developers and publishers to create practical activities (p. 498).

My favourite part of this chapter is where the author explains how intercultural awareness can be fostered through activities in a physical classroom or an online learning platform. One of the most fundamental elements, the author reiterates, is the importance of respecting students' voices and background as part of gauging the cultural appropriateness of classroom activities. This section includes practical and insightful ideas on how to handle intercultural group interactions sensitively, such as intercultural zooming, small cultures, story exchange, I DIVE (a reflective activity), comboculture, and interpreting visuals. The author provides the rationale/theory and procedure for each activity which helps readers connect the concept and application.

Even though the selection of materials is a small sample, the connection between the theoretical framework and implementation opens up more opportunities for teachers and even publishers to explore in developing intercultural learning materials.

Conclusion

Overall, the book is comprehensive with different recurring themes that help readers connect the theories and applications accordingly. The four major parts of this book are well structured to illustrate the flow of content (i.e. starting from evaluation of materials to developing specific types of materials). I notice most of the authors across the four parts of the book, call for more current empirical research and even professional development training for teachers in the use of language learning materials. Such a requirement can be more demanding now that Generative AI tools are available for all parties at this present time.

In my opinion, the book stands out as a stimulating and well-rounded collection, benefiting greatly from the diverse perspectives of its authors. The readers' tasks help consolidate each chapter of the book

promoting deeper thinking among the readers. Lastly, I truly appreciate the commentaries at the end of each part because they summarise its key points and highlight both agreements and disagreements.

Persis Rodrigues has been teaching English for 20 years. At present, she is teaching Academic English modules at the Centre for English Language Studies, Sunway University, Malaysia. Persis is also a certified trainer by the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF), Malaysia. She has developed and conducted various workshops and programmes for corporate employees. Currently, Persis has been appointed as an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Champion of Sunway University, to support the development of academics through training sessions. Upon completion of her Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (International) from Lancaster University, Rodrigues is conferred Fellow Member of the Higher Education Academic of UK. Research wise, Rodrigues has published papers in language learning strategies, project-based learning, e-Learning, and Generative AI tools. She is a Life Member of QRAM (Qualitative Research Association of Malaysia).

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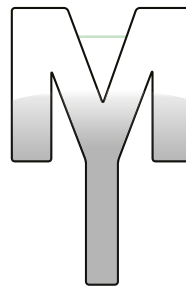
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