Teaching and Learning English: From No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners?

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Dear Readers,

The contributions to this issue have been developed from talks and workshops presented at the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, held in collaboration with Paisii Hilendarsky University in Plovdiv between the 3rd and 5th of June 2016. They offer different perspectives on the conference theme *Teaching and Learning English: From No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners?* – some of them focus on the learner and learning, others on the teacher.

We begin with an article in which Siyana Harizanova argues for an early start of the development of self-motivation and control, among other soft skills, and suggests ways to nurture soft skills while teaching English to young learners.

The motivation thread continues with the next two articles suggesting different approaches to helping learners build up their language skills, but also reflect on learning experiences and evaluate achievements – activities that have been repeatedly linked to enhancing learners’ constructive thinking, self-regulation and motivation control. Marina Samalieva discusses the use of portfolio work and self-assessment in essay writing, whereas Violeta Karastateva shares her experience in developing her students’ translation competence as a means of furthering their English language proficiency. The topic of foreign language writing skills is continued by Iлина Doykova, whoexplores structuring paragraphs in research articles.
Still with the learners in mind, Mariana Gotseva views the process of learning English from a different angle – she considers the role of language input in the attainment of implicit and explicit knowledge, and language proficiency.

The last three contributions shift the focus more towards teachers: Maya Kyulevchieva discusses the motivational power of virtual learning environments, eTwinning in particular, and Carmelina Maurizio describes a programme for foreign language development and methodology training of primary teachers in Italy. Finally, you can read a report on the conference forum To motivate learners, you need motivated teachers.

The issue concludes with information about the 26th BETA-IATEFL Conference, which will host the 1st FIPLV East-European Regional Congress in 2017.

Happy reading!

Zarina Markova (main issue editor) and Sylvia Velikova (associate editor)
Using the English classroom for developing soft skills in children

Siyana Harizanova

Introduction

When is the best time to start developing the so-called ‘soft skills’? Where is the best place – at home, at school, in the street, in a virtual environment?

This paper describes a conference talk that addresses the need for looking at social emotional learning as an integral part of the curriculum so as to help youngsters today grow into happier, better and more successful people tomorrow. How can the English classroom contribute to the process? This is the question we shall try to answer and illustrate with practical suggestions.

Structurally, the talk was organised along the following lines:

- reaching a common understanding of what is meant by soft skills;
- relating the concept of soft skills to child development and education;
- identifying reasons for incorporating the development of soft skills in teaching English to children;
- looking at practical suggestions for ways of teaching soft skills in the English classroom.
What is meant by soft skills?

While the concept of soft skills has gained worldwide recognition over the last decades and is more and more frequently mentioned as a key issue in career development and education, it is still lacking a precise, universally accepted definition, and allows for a somewhat broad understanding and interpretation. In fact, one may find the term used synonymously with other related terms like *interpersonal skills, people skills, life skills, 21st-century skills*, etc. It does therefore seem important, for the purposes of this paper, to establish a shared understanding of what is meant by *soft skills*.

Let us look at a few definitions first, borrowed from some of the most popular and accessible sources. The Wikipedia article on soft skills describes them as ‘a term often associated with a person's EQ (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), which is the cluster of personality traits that characterize one's relationships with other people’. According to [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com), soft skills are ‘personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people’, whereas [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) defines them as ‘desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude’.

It is easily noticeable that the first two definitions look at soft skills in a broader and more general sense, with a focus on their humanistic aspect, while the third one directly relates them to the world of employment. As a matter of fact, it is exactly in relation to employability and career development that soft skills have traditionally been considered and analysed. They are usually seen as an important
complement to hard skills – the specific knowledge or abilities required for a job, e.g. computer literacy, physics, statistical analysis, singing, operating machines, etc. Nowadays, however, soft skills acquire bigger and bigger significance and, in professional context, seem to be valued by both employers and executives as equally if not more important than hard skills. The reason why this is so is a matter of another discussion. What we are interested in establishing in this paper is the link between soft skills as a vital tool for success in today’s world, on the one hand, and child development and education, on the other hand.

The list of qualities most frequently mentioned to illustrate the concept of soft skills is usually topped by communication skills followed by some others in an alternating order, e.g.:

- communication skills;
- decision making;
- self-motivation;
- leadership skills;
- team work;
- creativity and problem-solving;
- critical thinking;
- time management and ability to work under pressure, etc.

**Soft skills in child development and education**

It is not hard to imagine what a valuable asset to any organisation would a person with these qualities be; especially, in a dynamic, competitive environment where challenging pressures are to be handled on a daily basis. Many colleges and universities have therefore recognised the need to incorporate soft skills training
in their programmes in order to help college graduates prepare for workplace success. Soft skills, however, should not be linked exclusively to improved chances of employment and productivity across sectors. They are applicable in a much wider context and are believed to enhance an individual’s successful and effective functioning in society in general. Personality traits such as:

- common sense;
- a sense of humor;
- good manners;
- self-control;
- optimism;
- empathy;
- the ability to be assertive without being aggressive;
- the ability to be kind and respectful even when there are disagreements, etc.

are equally important and desirable qualities that constitute an integral part of the soft skills list. Acquiring and developing them is a process that begins in childhood and can take a lifetime to accomplish. So there is no excuse to wait until a later age to start working in this direction. Of course, the way this happens with preschool children would vary from the situations with teenagers or university students. What should not be forgotten, though, is that soft skills cannot be forced upon an individual. They should be nurtured, devotedly and patiently, and supported through hands-on experience in real situations. Undoubtedly, the role of parents in this respect could not be exaggerated – one can easily predict that the effect of the efforts would double if school and home acted in unison. In this paper, however, we will deliberately restrict ourselves to school environment
only, and will focus more specifically on the potential of the EFL classroom for developing soft skills in children.

**Soft skills development in teaching English to children**

Why the English classroom? Well, why not? There are at least several reasons why this is actually a very good idea.

When children attend kindergarten and pre-school, they are explicitly taught some basic rules of socialising and communication as they need to be helped out of their individualistic, rather egocentric behavior (inherently typical of that age group, sometimes additionally heightened by the family environment). When they move to primary school, however, it often so happens that much too soon, the emphasis is shifted to academics. Students’ conceptual development and ability to apply knowledge in maths, science, geography, etc. is given priority at the expense of further instruction and practice in social skills. As a result, children find themselves insufficiently equipped with such vital skills as developing a positive self-esteem, developing self-control, treating people with kindness and respect, etc., which, in its turn, may affect negatively their success in school, in the community, and in life in general. It is right here that the exceptional role of the foreign language classroom (the English classroom in our case) should be identified and recognised as a place where, given the chance, the above deficit can be compensated for. Primary English teachers are not just language teachers – they are educators. An English lesson can incorporate activities that can have a strong impact on a child’s social and emotional development. To illustrate the point, we shall look at some specific activities in more detail below.
Another argument for using the English classroom in children’s soft skills education is that, on the one hand, English teachers’ overall aim is to develop the students’ communicative skills in English, and, on the other hand, communication stands out as a key soft skill itself. Therefore, it should not be difficult for teachers, when planning classroom activities that stimulate communication, to also provide opportunities for raising children’s awareness of what promotes and what hinders the communicative process.

One more reason to teach the soft skill in the English primary classroom is that communication is very often culture-specific, so it seems worthwhile to help children even at a relatively early age to realise what is appropriate and what is not in Culture 1 and Culture 2.

In the National Curriculum in England, published on 11 September 2013, we can read the following description of the Purpose of study concerning language learning: ‘Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils’ curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world’. The text goes on to point out that language education should ‘provide opportunities for pupils to communicate for practical purposes’ as well as ‘learn new ways of thinking’.

**Practical suggestions**

Obviously, there is a lot to be gained from integrating English language learning with teaching values, positivism, empathy, teamwork, creativity and many other soft skills. These should help children become more aware of their own
personality and nature, and at the same time develop a better understanding of their own potential as members of society and citizens of our shared home.

The beauty of this approach is that it is through simple, everyday actions that we can achieve valuable results. For reasons discussed further above, the English classroom provides numerous opportunities for this. Here are some suggestions the teacher may want to consider:

- **Model manners** – model the activity or behavior you expect from children and then have them practice it. Repeat if necessary. Discuss if necessary.
- **Assign classroom jobs** – it is a perfect simple way of showing children that everybody’s contribution is needed and appreciated in the shared classroom. Examples of primary classroom jobs may include: a Plant Caretaker (waters and maintains plants), a Paper Handler (passes out and/or collects class work, homework, blank paper, and so forth), a Housekeeper (checks floors and cleans tables), etc.
- **Hold class meetings** in which students negotiate rules of conduct, plan activities, and solve problems.
- **Play games** that involve give and take.
- **Introduce a Buddies scheme** – older students become buddies to younger ones and in groups or on a one-on-one basis work together on academic tasks and other kinds of activities.
- **Work on a ‘thinking story’** – one that raises moral, personal or philosophical issues (friendship, fairness, freedom, etc.).
- **Ask questions** that provoke alternative responses, e.g. *Is it OK to lie? When would it be OK to lie? Think of a good reason to reveal somebody’s secret.*
Link a textbook topic to a practical task, e.g. choosing a birthday present according to someone’s likes/dislikes, planning shopping within a certain budget, etc.

Incorporate role-play situations followed or preceded by classroom discussions. Situations might include bullying, cheating at tests, etc.

Plan and carry out explicit instruction.

Organise a discussion on what makes a good friend and invite children to write their ideas on specially cutout cardboard or paper keys (the keys to being a good friend). Later they can stick them onto a class poster to be displayed on the walls of the room. Alternatively, they can think of friendship ‘recipes’ and write lists of ingredients for a Friendship Omelette or a Friendship Cake, etc.

**Conclusion**

Whichever way we decide to go about developing soft skills in the primary classroom, we need to

- take into consideration the children’s age, level and overall development;
- integrate smoothly and naturally soft skills with the other aspects of learning;
- select /design activities that allow active, experiential, hands-on learning.

The idea is to combine language learning, which typically involves various ways of practising the four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, with putting the students in situations where they will practise roles and will work through challenges that they are likely to face in their future life.
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Implementation of portfolio and self-assessment in EFL writing courses

Marina Samalieva

Theoretical description

The traditional teaching of writing has been the predominant approach in many classrooms around Bulgaria. English foreign language (EFL) students’ writing attempts have usually been assessed by means of a single final exam as the main criterion representative of their writing skills. Recently, previously unfamiliar terms for writing assessment, such as authentic assessment and alternative assessment, have become a part of the established vocabulary in educational publications. The main goals of the classroom assessment process appear to be changing – a stronger interest now lies in collecting data that focus on students’ development over a period of time rather than on comparing students with each other. An increasing amount of emphasis is also being placed on assessing the process by which students solve problems as opposed to evaluating only the final result. The shift in priority from teacher-centred toward student-centred pedagogy has raised questions concerning the evaluation processes that would be best suited for this new approach.

Portfolio assessment. One type of authentic assessment is portfolio assessment. Portfolio in the field of writing can be defined as ‘a collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time’ (Hamp-Lyons&Condon 2000: 261).
Part of the appeal for using writing portfolios is the component of reflection which helps students think about what they have achieved throughout the process of writing individual pieces as well as the overall portfolio construction (Hamp-Lyons & Condon 2000; Weigle 2002; Yancey & Weiser 1997).

**Self-assessment.** O’Malley and Chamot (1990) indicated that a key element of portfolios is student self-assessment. Ross states that one of the tendencies in the changing world of language assessment has been promoting learners’ self-assessment, which can be facilitated by the explicit descriptive criteria within the curriculum standards (Ross 1998). Claxton defined self-assessment as ‘the ability to recognise good work as such and to correct one’s performance so that better work is produced’ (Claxton 1995: 339). It is essential to include self-assessment in the portfolio process as students may gain a deeper understanding not only of the drafts they have written, but also the strategies that they employed to write them (Murphy 1999). Cumming (1995) pointed out that self-assessment could encourage students to take greater charge of their writing skills. In this regard, students are more likely to get a wider perspective about different aspects of writing such as content, organisation, mechanics, and rhetoric when they self-evaluate their portfolio entries. In addition, self-assessment, as stated by Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), can help students better understand what they are expected to compose as well as explore their own strengths and weaknesses in writing in order to make further improvement.

**Portfolio assessment, self-assessment, writing skills and autonomy.** Portfolios must demonstrate some features which are to be considered as good examples of alternative assessment. Among these features, students’ reflection has been highlighted (Lynch & Shaw 2005). Self-assessment included in the process of
selecting, reading, and feedback can foster learners’ reflection on their activities compiled in portfolios. Including self-assessment in the process of portfolio assessment will cover the lack of constructive feedback, which is observable in traditional achievement tests. ‘To encourage deep learning, teachers should give students an opportunity to engage in reflective dialogue and self-assessment’ (Kathpalia & Heah 2008). Fink (2004) states that this type of reflection provided by self-assessment will make students more capable and more aware of their own learning, especially of the how and what of their learning. This task should be made more applicable by means of a criterion-referenced plan such as preliminary organised self-assessment (Kohonen 2000). Pointing that self-assessment promotes learner autonomy, Little argues that students should rate their portfolios with the help of a checklist as a guide to the portfolio process from the beginning (Little 2005). The author takes account of three reasons for engaging learners in self-assessment. Firstly, it involves students in the process of curriculum evaluation. Secondly, in learner-centred pedagogy, it shapes the processes in which learner autonomy develops. Thirdly, it provides learners with opportunities to use their knowledge beyond the classroom.

My experience as a teacher engaged in writing classes with EFL students at Plovdiv University suggests that organised criterion-oriented self-assessment integrated with portfolio assessment improves the writing skills of the students, and leads them towards autonomous learning.
Implementing portfolio and self-assessment in the EFL writing class

I believe that self-assessment along with portfolio use might be suitable for intermediate and advanced proficiency levels as well. In this case, the self-assessment rubric can be modified. The key to the successful implementation of integrated self- and portfolio assessment is not with which proficiency level it is used, but rather explicit planning and practice step by step.

Usually, the EFL students are not used to the idea of evaluating their own writing work. One way to overcome this potential problem is to provide a self-assessment instrument with clear guidelines that students can follow (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

A completed portfolio contains at least three essays (of student’s choice) of the six untimed essays that a student writes throughout the academic year. It must include the original outlines, drafts, teacher’s comments, revised versions, final versions, and a cover essay.

The rubric of self-assessment includes three main sections: content, organisation, and language. The content and organisation sections of the rubric are in the form of a checklist to facilitate the process. The language section is in the form of a table.
Implementation guidelines

1. **In the first part of the course (about four / five sessions):**
   - The teacher discusses with the students the different sections of the writing portfolio (different essays with two drafts, and a cover letter) and the self-assessment form.
   - The teacher introduces the self-assessment in portfolio work gradually into your class and integrate it with your other techniques for teaching writing.
   - The teacher uses the self-assessment rubric with two sample essays.
   - The students do the inside task and use the checklist self-assessment. The teacher helps if necessary.
   - The students do the outside task and use the checklist for self-assessment.
   - The teacher applies teacher-student feedback for an additional explanation of the checklist.
   - The students are required to rewrite their essay drafts after applying the rubric.

2. **In the second part of the course:**
   - The students do the inside and outside tasks using the checklist self-assessment.
   - The teacher gives constructive feedback on students’ drafts and completed self-assessment rubrics.
   - The students rewrite their essays, and add the tasks to the portfolio.
   - The essays in the portfolio are required to be in descending order;
   - The students write a cover essay during the last session, and add it to the portfolio.
References


Appendix A

Portfolio description

As part of the course students are expected to produce a portfolio of their work during the semester. The portfolio will consist of four pieces of written work: a cover letter and three essays. The aim is to give students a chance to show the progress they have made during the semester.

Cover essay: a timed essay which introduces the portfolio and the essays in it to the portfolio reader. The topic is My portfolio shows my progress as a learner. In an organised essay, students describe how their portfolios show who they are. In addition to the justification of their choice of essays, students may also comment on the strengths and weaknesses of each piece and any other information they believe is relevant.

The purpose of the cover essay is to allow students to reflect upon their writing processes in general, and to justify the inclusion of the papers which they have selected as representative of their best work.
**Three pieces of work:** The remaining three more essays (student’s choice of topics) of the six untimed essays that students write throughout the academic year are required for the completed portfolios. To show the writing process, they must include the original outlines, revised drafts, teacher comments, self-assessment sheets, and the final versions. The essays are arranged in descending order, starting with the most successful one.
Appendix B

Self-Assessment Sheet for Argumentative Essays

Name: 
Essay Topic: 
Date: 
Score: 24

Directions
I. Use the following key to score your essay, and circle the answer that best corresponds to your writing then.
II. The code to score your essay as following:
   Marks 2 for each answer ‘Yes’
   Marks 1 for each answer ‘To some extent’
   Marks 0 for each answer ‘No’

Main body

Idea/Content

1. My essay includes appropriate argumentative strategy used.
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
2. The essence of my essay is the relevant content and consistent unity.
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
3. The main focus of my essay is the well-founded premises on which the thesis is based.
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
4. My essay encompasses strong evidence and effective explanation of evidence (warrant).
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No

Organisation

5. My essay contains a thesis statement (argumentative, complete, well-placed).
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
6. The paragraph structure of my essay shows (a topic sentence, body, conclusion, proper size).
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
7. My essay demonstrates good ‘flow’ (use of logic/coherent content - incl. transitions).
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No
8. My essay includes a conclusion (inference from the main essay body for the reader).
   a. Yes          b. To some extent     c. No

Total:

Language Use Section*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Component</th>
<th>More than 5 mistakes</th>
<th>From 3–4 mistakes</th>
<th>From 1–2 mistakes</th>
<th>No mistakes</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vocabulary</td>
<td>Mark 0.5</td>
<td>Mark 1</td>
<td>Mark 1.5</td>
<td>Mark 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Sentence structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Spelling and punctuation</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total:

*For each of the following language components, choose the category that you find applicable to your essay. Then assign a score out of two in the column on the right. Finally, add up your marks and write the total out of 8 in the space left at the end

Total Score:

Additional mistakes not mentioned: ____________________________________________________________
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Technical translation in second language acquisition

Violeta Karastateva

Introduction

The role of translation in second language acquisition (SLA) has been subjected to debate over the last decades, and even undeservedly neglected at the expense of the communicative approach. However, educationalists have recently been trying to make up for this injustice by raising the issue of re-establishing translation as an essential part of modern second/foreign language teaching and learning.

In the context of the above debate the author shares her long-term experience in teaching technical translation skills to PhD students at the Technical University – Varna (TU). Under the constraints of the foreign language syllabus at the TU-Varna translation practice is viewed as the shortcut to mastering linguistic competence. Therefore, all bachelor’s and master’s degree syllabuses at the TU-Varna are designed to build up translation competence which is further enhanced during the technical translation module at PhD level. Developing translation competence for engineering students, PhD students in particular, is a means and an end of furthering proficiency and achieving communicative competence in a professional environment.
For and against translation in language teaching

At present, translating is viewed as a ‘major aim and means of language learning, and a major measure of success’ in language teaching (Cook, 2010: XV). Unfortunately, the ELT tradition established in the past century ignored its role of an aid in language acquisition. Without serious research or argument, translation has been claimed to be either dull and demotivating, or hindering language learning, as well as considered a useless activity for the real world.

At the same time, its importance at university level has been preserved as a norm (Malkjær, 2004, in Cook, 2010: XV). The division between monolingual and bilingual language teaching has not been a dilemma for the ESP teachers since introducing terminology and specialised vocabulary is inevitably connected with translation, paying special attention to the notions of adequacy and equivalence. In this sense, the global issue of rehabilitation and reassessing the role of translation in language teaching is not so relevant for the higher education practice. Discussing pedagogic advantages, we should draw on Cook’s evaluation of translation as ‘a stimulus and an aid in the cognitively demanding task of acquiring a new language’ (Cook, 2010: XVI). It develops language awareness and use, raises pedagogic effectiveness and, last but not least, answers students’ needs in a globalised world. Translation is not more perceived as an overly academic activity associated with ‘accuracy rather than fluency, writing rather than speech, and invented rather than practical language use’ (Cook, 2010: 112). It has proved to be a practical skill for successful and effective communication in a professional environment.
Translation competence

The notion of translation competence (TC) plays a vital role in the theory and practice of translation training. It is a relatively new term which has many definitions, but generally stands for ‘the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate’ (PACTE, 2002: 3). According to the PACTE research group, linguistic competence has the following sub-components: 1) communicative competence including linguistic, discourse and sociolinguistic competence; 2) extra-linguistic competence composed of general world knowledge and specialist knowledge; 3) instrumental-professional competence; 4) psycholinguistic competence; 4) transfer competence, 5) strategic competence. Although the above sub-components are considered an integral whole, it is expected that at PhD level learners should have sufficient communicative competence, as well as extra-linguistic and professional competences. The psycholinguistic and strategic competences are not explicitly taught. The stress is put on the transfer competence (being central competence, which integrates all the others) since students should master their ability to transfer information from the source text to the target text. Depending on the nature of the translation task and on the nature of the translator, the sub-competences defined by the PACTE group are restructured and regrouped, thus giving priority to different aspects of TC acquisition. Another approach (Seböková, 2010) suggests that the sub-competences work as a system and are fostered by experience and further theoretical input.

Other authors list translation sub-competences similarly: linguistic, cultural, textual, subject, research, transfer competences (Schäffner, 2000), or suggest four basic parameters of translation competence: knowledge of the languages,
knowledge of the cultures, domain-specific knowledge, transfer competence (Gerding-Salas, 2000).

Despite the variety in terminology and the abstract nature of translation, didactic purposes have necessitated the formulation of clear criteria for assessing translation competence. The Chartered Institute of Linguists in UK sets the following requirements: 1) accuracy in the transfer of information; 2) the appropriate choice of vocabulary idioms, terminology and register; 3) cohesion, coherence and organisation; 4) accuracy in the technical aspects of punctuation.

A standardised definition of TC could enable teachers to design their courses considering the respective teaching/learning situation, to develop and evaluate the competences and sub-competences of the translation learners. Assessing TC varies from institution to institution and depends on the individual teaching styles of university lecturers. Every teacher is in a way a pioneer since TC acquisition is defined and measured differently, and it is difficult to talk about a tradition or uniformity in evaluating TC. Educationalists come up with multiple parameters, criteria, requirements, but generally with the skills of philology students in mind rather than those of engineering/technical students. A common model of building technical translation competences (Winkler in Dollerup, 1992: 99) includes three components: engineering, language proficiency and language information technology (from word processing to machine translation and desk-top publishing). The educational context at the TU-Varna is highly relevant to another, more precise model, devised by Peter Katsberg (Katsberg, 2007: 104):

1. General language competence L1 +L2;
2. Language-for-specific-purposes (LSP) competence L1+L2;
3. Knowledge of the relevant domain;
4. LSP translation competence L1<->L2;
5. Cultural competence L1+L2.

The cultural component of TC influences technical and academic genres, but experience has proved that it is generally underestimated or skipped due to syllabus restrictions.

The reality of the professional market often differs from the theoretical activities of the academic environment. Learners should be prepared to face specialised texts of various topics and text types, and some authors insist on evaluation criteria regarding the ‘functionality of the target text in relation to its purpose in the target culture and less on its correspondence with the source text’ (McAlister in Schäffner, 2000: 234). To them, referring to professional practice and employing real-life situations is invaluable. Both quality and speed should be fostered for the achievement of professional TC. The process of TC development is considered as important as the outcomes of the final examination.

Taking into consideration the complexity of the matter and the existing multi-componential theoretical models of TC, the teacher of technical translation should decide to what extent to apply the common models or to devise his/her own models, and what approach to take in terms of the evaluation of students’ translation competences.
The role of technical translation at the TU-Varna

At the Technical University of Varna translation has been traditionally taught and tested as an integral part of ESP/EAP language instruction at all levels of higher education – bachelor’s, master’s and PhD degrees. Technical translation is considered as a core activity and skill for engineering students. Therefore, translation competence is perceived as a manifestation of learners’ professional communicative competence.

At present the PhD students at the TU-Varna are offered an English language course divided into four modules. A total of 120 academic hours, 30 academic hours per module, gives the opportunity to raise students’ awareness of the essentials of academic communication. Module 1 is devoted to Grammar Revision; Module 2 introduces the specificity of Scientific and Technical Texts, where technical translation techniques are demonstrated and practiced. Academic Writing conventions are in the focus of Module 3. English language instruction for PhD students finishes with Module 4, Oral Presentation Skills.

The overall evaluation of the English Language Syllabus for PhD Students is beyond the scope of the present paper. Its focus is Module 2, Scientific and Technical Texts, which aims for developing skills for dealing with technical texts of different genres and styles. Throughout the module, problems of English-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English translation are identified. The course content is outlined as follows:

1. Scientific text specifics: genre and style;
2. Constructions and lexical items typical of the scientific style and technical literature: passive voice; impersonal sentences; absolute construction; conditional sentences; expressing cause-effect relations; defining an object; description of general arrangements, classification and principle of operation; terms, clichés and abbreviations common in scientific style and technical documents;


With regard to the underlying philosophy of transferable skills, Module 2, Scientific and Technical Texts, is designed so as to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired during the first module. On the other hand, it prepares the learners for the subsequent modules. Raising the issues of equivalence and adequacy in the translation of the most typical grammatical and syntactical constructions, specialised and academic vocabulary, creates the conditions for enhancing students’ productive skills throughout the next two modules.

At PhD level, the basics of translation theory are introduced, as well as academic and technical style peculiarities are discussed. The focus is on the translation of academic and technical texts through equivalent and adequate linguistic devices. Learners review common grammatical (e.g. passive, impersonal, emphatic constructions, etc.) and syntactical (e.g. complex sentences, inversion, etc.) structures in terms of acquiring different translation strategies. General technical lexis, academic vocabulary, specialised terminology and clichés are mastered through various translation exercises. Reference and linking words are also studied in terms of raising awareness of paragraph organisation, and thus avoiding literal translation. Students become aware of the multiple translation levels, and
thus start communicating meaning more effectively. All the above exercises recycle the general English grammar at a higher level and help learners go into the details of the professional language use in the respective field of studies.

Since the PhD syllabus is designed to be flexible enough and to correspond to the needs of the particular group of students, the lecturers have the freedom and choice to compile sets of tailor-made teaching materials. The author has compiled her own set of teaching materials including: 1) theoretical input - related academic literature, articles, internet resources, etc.; 2) practical exercises – exercises dealing with the problems of theory and practice of translation selected from grammar books, handbooks on technical translation, online resources, university websites, etc.; 3) handouts for classroom use and further reference (e.g. A List of FAQs on Translation, An English-Bulgarian Glossary of Translation Terminology, A Table of Prefixes of International Origin; A List of Linking Words, etc.); 4) project work on specialised texts from their particular field of studies illustrating different genres: a chapter of an academic book; an academic article; an instruction/specification chapter, etc.; a diagram/ scheme.

The tailor-made set of teaching materials which are to be discussed below, is organised in the following way: theoretical input is selected, adapted and summarised by the teacher, and various graded exercises are provided for each of the key topics. The course contents raise students’ awareness of the specifics of the technical texts; vocabulary and grammar; translation strategies and equivalence and adequacy.
Common problems in developing students’ translation competence

Since the number of PhD students varies from year to year, it is not always possible to divide them into subgroups according to their general English language level as the original practice used to be. As a result, teachers have to deal with large or mixed-proficiency classes. Since the PhD students come from different faculties and specialities, their backgrounds should be considered when selecting the teaching/learning materials. The lecturers compile different sets of materials which should meet the syllabus requirements and students’ needs.

In recent years, the increased number of PhD students necessitated the division into groups according to their placement test results. Although it is expected that the general English level of candidates should be from intermediate to advanced, the teaching/learning situation has proved the dominance of mixed proficiency. Lower level students vary from beginners to pre-intermediate learners while the so called ‘advanced’ students are often at intermediate or upper-intermediate level. Hence, lecturers are faced with the need to constantly compromise and the challenge to balance between the EAP level of the course content and the general English entrance level of the PhD students.

In addition, PhD students’ EAP skills are still underdeveloped and the majority lack relevant experience in using and translating subject-related literature on a regular basis. Syllabus restrictions (only 30 academic hours per module) are an important factor. English language instruction is conducted within the first year of PhD
students’ studies and in a way precedes their academic experience and performance in the respective professional field, which is an additional hindrance.

Moreover, although translation is considered a core activity and skill in teaching ESP, and although all bachelor’s and master’s degree syllabuses at the TU-Varna highlight the importance of translation tasks for classroom work, self-study or project work, learners’ translation competence is varied and generally insufficient.

Therefore, the role of the English language lecturers is to improve PhD students’ translation competence through introducing relevant theoretical input and mastering different translation techniques and strategies. EAP vocabulary is activated and incorporated into the subject-specific ESP terminology through various exercises. The issues of terminology equivalence and word-building are raised by comparing and contrasting English and Bulgarian examples. To this end, every English language instructor relies on needs analysis and compiles a set of custom-made teaching materials in order to meet PhD students’ needs.

**Researching students’ translation errors**

What follows is a description of a small-scale research project which included four groups of PhD students who had their EAP instruction during the past four academic years 2012-2013 (language levels B1-B2), and 2013-2014/2014-2015/2015-2016 (language levels A1-A2). The description outlines common translation errors and suggests ways in which the same syllabus content can be applied to different language levels.
All groups of learners were given the same written test paper which they had to complete for 3 academic hours. The format of the final examination written test included the following tasks:

**Task I** Translation from English into Bulgarian of full sentences containing typical grammatical and syntactical constructions; translation from Bulgarian into English of sentences offering different tenses, -ing and infinitive verb forms, etc.;

**Task II** Translation of common academic vocabulary phrases and signals in context;

**Task III** Translation of a paragraph from a specialised text in the field of student’s subject (preliminary assigned as project work for home translation).

Accordingly, the conditions for the exam were different for the two levels but the same written examination paper was given experimentally. The advanced learners were not allowed to use any dictionaries or course materials during the written exam, while the lower-level students were encouraged to use English-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English general and technical English dictionaries, all course materials and various lists/appendices of discourse markers, clichés, common phrases, etc. In this way, it was expected that the lower-level groups would take the advantage and show results closer to those of the advanced group. Unfortunately, the exam results revealed that the general English language competence of the majority of the A1-A2 level students was not high enough, and half of them failed to meet the exam standards in spite of the opportunity to use dictionaries. They needed more time for completing the exam tasks since the learners felt unconfident despite the different reference and course materials at their disposal. In this situation, students’ translation competence could not go beyond the grammar sub-competence level. Some students left empty half of the sentences for English-Bulgarian translation, others did not dare translate the
Bulgarian-English examples. Even where the informants had made an attempt to translate the items, there were grammar errors showing low level of linguistic competence. At best, the learners had made minor mistakes in article/preposition use.

The results demonstrated that the majority could not take the advantage of the dictionaries due to their failure to differentiate contextual meaning and to select the suitable meaning out of the meanings listed under the dictionary entry. It has been observed that students are used to choosing the first dictionary entry without spending time and effort on vocabulary item selection. This weakness is partially connected with the overuse of digital dictionaries which readily give ‘correct’ answers. Nevertheless, it was a surprise for the lecturer since at this stage of post-graduate education students are expected to possess relevant dictionary and vocabulary skills.

It has been proved that the flexibility of the technical translation module and the attempts of the teacher to facilitate the work of the learners cannot make up for the lower level of trainees’ general English. With regard to this new teaching/learning situation, a discussion on rethinking the PhD syllabus and re-allocating the number of lessons per modules should be raised. The exam results clearly demonstrated that the technical translation written tasks successfully reveal the gaps in learners’ linguistic and communicative competence which often cannot be spotted during the oral examination at candidate-PhD level. Although this may be discouraging for some of the self-confident learners, practical experience and observations have confirmed that learning from mistakes has a remedial effect and aids raising the awareness of linguistic phenomena.
Some indicative examples of learners’ failure to transfer information from L1 to L2 are included in Table 1 below. They are restricted to the recurrent errors in translating common lexical items from task I and task II of the final examination written test discussed above. It should be pointed out that the opportunity to use dictionaries did not eliminate the errors, which was rather curious and surprising for the teacher. In some of the cases, the learners could not select the suitable contextual meaning, while in others they obviously improvised relying on the phonetic similarity with the Bulgarian language or even ‘invented’ non-existing components and meanings in the source language. A detailed study and analysis of learners’ errors applying a suitable translation competence model is worth discussing in a related paper. To this end, more data should be gathered and processed in the future.

**Table 1. Common learners’ information transfer errors.**

<p>| 1. to be subject to – | Because the packing rotates with the shaft, the shaft is not subjected to wear, and any wear that is caused by the rotation of the packing takes place on the surface of the housing. |
| &quot;...не е предназначен, зависим; намира се до предмета...&quot;; &quot;...тема/предмет на...&quot; – wrong contextual meaning/ literal translation | |
| 2. to take place – &quot;...заема място, се намира, се разполага; намиращ се...&quot; – literal translation. | |
| 3. by means of – &quot;...по отношение на...&quot; – inadequate | The blocks are raised by means of pulleys. Darwin’s theory of natural |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>contextual meaning.</th>
<th>selection is <strong>by no means</strong> a complete explanation of evolution.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. by no means</strong> – „...без/няма значение.../ няма предвид...”; „...без да има смисъл...” – inadequate contextual meaning.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Provided</strong> – „...осигурявам”; „...осигуряване...” – literal translation/ inadequate contextual meaning/ choice of a wrong part of speech.</td>
<td><strong>Provided</strong> one knows the rate of the emission, one can determine <strong>the range of</strong> the particles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. a range of</strong> – „...количеството/ подредба/ измерване/ броя на...” – incorrect contextual meaning/ stylistic mistakes.</td>
<td>These transitions of electrons may <strong>occur provided that</strong> sufficient energy is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. provided that</strong> – left empty in most student papers or translated the same way as <strong>5. provided</strong>; associated with the meaning of condition (“if”) only by advanced students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. to occur</strong> – „...бъдат...” – stylistic mistake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. in accordance with</strong> –</td>
<td><strong>In accordance with</strong> statistic data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. shortage – „...все по-малко...”, „...липсва...”; „...намаляваща...”; „...нужди...” – choice of a wrong word-formation equivalent.

11. the very fact that – „...неоспорим факт е, че...”; „...основният проблем...” – substituting the meaning of the intensifier ‘very’ with an adjective which is a student’s guess.


13. well below/above – „...добре описано по-горе...”; „...основно...”, „...най-вече...”; „...гореспоменатото...” – literal translation/ inadequate

nearly one third of the Earth’s population experiences freshwater shortages even today.

Still, the very fact that Slauter’s work raises such questions is a tribute to the range of issues he examines and the suggestiveness of his interpretations.

The rate of growth in these countries was well below the long-term underlying trend.
<p>| | | |</p>
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<th></th>
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</table>
| 14. **due** – „...значительно...” – | They treated the problem with **due**
|   |   |   |
|   |   | attention. |
| 15. **due to** – „...е необходимо...” – | The error is mainly **due to** the latter
|   |   | values. The system’s efficiency for
|   |   | large design is **due to** its use of
|   |   | hierarchy. |
| 16. **to be due to** – left | He is **due to** speak at the meeting. |
|   |   | unanswered in most of the
|   |   | student papers or inadequately
<p>|   |   | translated as in 14. <strong>due</strong> and 15. <strong>due to</strong> |
| 17. <strong>to result in</strong> – „...результат на...” – wrong choice of part of speech/ confused with the meaning of 18. <strong>to result from</strong>. | The application of the method <strong>results in</strong> the following formula. |
| 18. <strong>to result from</strong> – „...получен чрез...” – wrong choice of part of speech/ stylistic error / confused with the meaning of 17. <strong>to result</strong> | The change in velocity <strong>resulted from</strong> the force acting from outside. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>No.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Expression</strong></th>
<th><strong>Example</strong></th>
<th><strong>Translation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>along with – „...продължително...”; „...независимо...”</td>
<td>Arizona bans ethnic studies and, along with it, reason and justice.</td>
<td>literal translation/ inadequate contextual meaning/ often left unanswered or skipped in the sentence translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>with regard to – „...спрямо...”, „...предоставяйки...”; „...с връзка към...”</td>
<td>Each model offers a unique contribution with regard to growth and profitability.</td>
<td>inadequate translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>regardless of – „...вследствие на”, „базирайки се на...”, „...с изключение на...”</td>
<td>The approach, regardless of its complexity, is an appropriate way of implementing the development plan.</td>
<td>inadequate translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>in so far as – „...твърде далече...”, „...тъй като...”; „...до момента на разглеждане...”; „...отдавна откакто X е засегнат...”</td>
<td>In so far as this important problem is concerned, we will discuss it in detail.</td>
<td>literal or inadequate translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>to be concerned – „...е отчетен...”; „...обезпокоени...”</td>
<td></td>
<td>literal or inadequate translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Translation Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td><strong>under consideration</strong> – “под наблюдение...”; “при обмисляне...”; “разглеждани под въпрос...” – literal translation/ stylistic errors.</td>
<td>From now on it is assumed that the machines <strong>under consideration</strong> are strongly connected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td><strong>particularly</strong> – “частично...”; “да бъдеш практичен...” – inadequate translation/ wrong student’s guess based on phonetic similarity between L1 and L2 (similarity between L1 and L2).</td>
<td>To be <strong>particularly</strong> considered are the following reaction mechanisms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td><strong>the former... the latter...</strong> – “формалната.../ по-късната/ следващата...” – literal translation/ insufficient linguistic competence on reference words.</td>
<td>We conclude that the latter information value exceeds the <strong>former</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td><strong>one</strong> – “едно разглеждане на два проблема; един от два проблема...”- literal translation/ insufficient linguistic competence on reference words.</td>
<td>This leads <strong>one</strong> to regard two problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. As indicated – 
„Като индикация/обозначение...”; „Очевидно е, че...”; „В дополнение...”; „Като индицирането...” – choice of a wrong part of speech/ misuse of the loan word due to phonetic similarity between L1 and L2 / random student guess/ inadequate translation.

As indicated, these similarities and differences will be explored in some detail.

30. badly (needed) – 
„...особено/сильно/спешно необходима...” – adequate translation with some stylistic inadequacies.

Further work on this problem is badly needed.

Methodology solutions

With specialised tailor-made courses it is essential to start with needs analysis. Thus, the lecturer can optimise and adapt the existing syllabus, which is originally designed to be flexible enough in order to meet the needs of the particular group of PhD students. The common problems connected with this type of courses, mentioned earlier in the paper, are successfully solved during the tutorials which are part of the mode of instruction according to the PhD syllabus. Every student has the opportunity to individually trial the different translation strategies and techniques introduced during the lessons while preparing the specialised text in the field of their studies, preliminary assigned for home translation. Learners are
encouraged to look for examples of the different grammatical, lexical and syntactical items and to propose adequate translation equivalents. The time allowed for group work, error analysis and discussions gives the opportunity for detailed feedback. As a result, PhD students’ confidence is raised, their L1 and L2 skills for academic purposes are compared and contrasted in order to achieve the goals of the English language instruction at the academic level required.

Designing, updating, rethinking and evaluating EAP syllabuses and courses is an ongoing task for the educationalists at tertiary level. The author’s experience has led to the conclusion that with lower level groups it may be more reasonable to extend the Grammar Revision module into 60 academic hours, and only then to introduce Technical Translation and Oral Presentations in the respective modules. Leaving aside the Academic Writing module could be a solution with very low level groups.

At a technical university, students’ academic study skills, professional knowledge and language skills are interwoven and demonstrated through their translation competence. The latter is an abstract concept difficult to measure in definite parameters. Therefore, continuous practice and performance can lead to qualitative improvement of PhD students’ skills. With regard to those, all bachelor’s and master’s degree syllabuses at the TU-Varna should be designed to build-up translation competence, which can then be further enhanced during the Technical Translation module at PhD level. Unfortunately, the limited number of lessons for language instruction at the bachelor’s (60 academic hours on average) or master’s degree level (30 academic hours), as well as the total of 120 academic hours for the PhD course are restrictions taken for granted, under which the
lecturers do their best, and even the impossible, to improve their students’ academic and professional language skills.

More practical translation activities should be offered to the students to develop their linguistic and communicative skills, as well as their general academic study skills such as critical thinking, comparing and contrasting, etc. A relevant list of task types is suggested by Cook – 1) corrected close translation; 2) word-for-word translation; 3) teaching vocabulary; 4) discussion on translation problems; 5) ‘traditional’ focuses in a ‘communicative’ frame; 6) communicative translation; 7) ‘sandwiching’ as an aid to fluency (a technique ‘in which an unknown expression is quickly glossed by the teacher and then repeated’ (Cook 2010: 149).

Obviously, individual teachers are free to decide which of these activities would best suit their own students’ needs, or they could adapt them to suit their teaching context. What is essential is to confront and challenge learners with the notions of loose and tight interpretation; ‘free’ and ‘literal’ translation; to draw their attention to the difficult aspects of the new language through close translation. Commenting mistranslation, focusing on the suitability of word-for-word equivalents, minding the danger of grammatical inaccuracies, and discussing the degree of equivalence in different translations are also very productive. Provided the group is more advanced and motivated, additional exercises can be connected with the critical assessment of title translations, the comparison of different translations of the same text, reflection on translation dilemmas, dealing with the untranslatable, etc. The diagnostic and remedial role of these ‘traditional’ translation activities for the deficiencies or gaps in learners’ knowledge should be combined with the ‘communicative’ aspects. The balance between demonstrating
formal accuracy and achieving a communicative goal is the new measure of success in teaching translation.

Conclusions

Incorporating translation courses and developing translation competence for PhD students is a great challenge at tertiary level. In addition, it is an interdisciplinary field and a multi-tasking activity for technical students. It is essential for the ESP/EAP teachers to activate the different sub-competences, to provide supportive classroom environment, and to allow learners to try and experience multiple translation strategies with various academic and technical genres. Students, in turn, should take the risk to apply and experiment the different strategies and approaches offered in order to become self-confident and independent communicators and translators.

Despite the theoretical debates and controversial positions of educationalists over the last decades, translation has been a widespread practice in language teaching and learning at university level. Even with low-level students, or mixed ability groups, it is educationally desirable and pedagogically effective, since it facilitates the process of developing both language awareness and use (Cook 2010: 154). Under the restrictions of the ESP syllabuses at the TU-Varna it has proved to be an invaluable means of hands-on experience for developing students’ linguistic and communicative competence in a professional environment.

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Structuring paragraphs in scientific writing
(English for medical purposes)

Ilina Doykova

Research is reported in many written formats (the case report, the review article, the abstract, etc.), but the present study focuses on the research article paragraph writing. The specifics of academic writing are discussed by Swales and Feak (2004), by Huth (1990), Bell (1995) and Zeiger (2000) for the health professions. Concerning Bulgarian academic prose, Mavrodieva and Tisheva (2014) comment on the preference for complex sentences, the use of embedded clauses and impersonal structures instead of simple sentences with SVO word order arrangement and Vassileva (1997a) on hedging.

Scientific writing has three characteristics: difficult content, formal register, and document design. All research articles (RA) follow a writing pattern known as the IMRAD (Day & Gastel 2006) standard for publishing a paper in medical journals. The types of paragraphs are named Introduction, Methods and Materials, Results, Discussion, and Conclusions respectively. The Introduction paragraphs refer to the scope of the problem, the literature review, the hypothesis and the approach used in the study; the Methods and Materials paragraphs describe the procedure in detail; the Results paragraphs provide data of what was observed and established; the Discussion paragraphs relationships among previous studies and the present research, and the Conclusions paragraphs summarize the findings and highlight future trends.
A good and effective paragraph has cohesion and appropriate emphasis. The opening sentence tells the reader what it is about, the middle sentences expand that idea and the last sentence provides a summary. The beginning and the end of a paragraph are most emphatic. The careless extension of language such as disproportionate sentence and paragraph length, word choice, and the unexpected word order as the main ingredients of vague paragraphs are investigated in open access RA. The sample sentences are retrieved from ten research articles, published in BioMed Central Journal of outstanding research quality and are compared to a second group of ten RA texts written by Bulgarian researchers for Acta Medica Bulgaria. The two collections of RA cover medical issues written between 2010 and 2016 and are of equal size (approx. 50 000 running words each). The British RA samples are used as a standard reference in the comparative analysis. Applying the KWIC (Key words in context) and the Concord functions of the WordSmith software tool, key words are extracted according to their frequency and observed in context.

**Cohesion** means logical order, a smooth flow from one paragraph to the next, which is achieved by the use of linking devices, repetition of key words, and parallel structures. **Emphasis** within a paragraph is achieved by the manner ideas are expressed. The consistent point of view is maintained by the use of signaling words such as *first, second, third, next, last, one method, another method,* etc. The samples below show redundant repetition of lexical units:

1. Based on data accumulated during the last years, it can be stated that irrespectively of the type of diabetes, the *primary and probably the main* p-cell change could be identified in the increase of the pro-insulin levels and of PIR.
2. Also it is more acceptable than condition *anesthesia* and provides suitable *anesthesia* for endodontic treatment where the pulp of inferior molars is difficult to be anesthetized.

The frequency of the typical transition words and phrases for addition to the main idea (A), change from a previous idea (B) or summarizing and concluding (C) when structuring RA paragraphs in the texts of the Bulgarian researchers is given with a preference for the simplest units (in brackets):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>B.</th>
<th>C.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>alternatively</td>
<td>accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>although</td>
<td>consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as well</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>in conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>further</td>
<td>conversely</td>
<td>in summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furthermore</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likewise</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>in contrast</td>
<td>to conclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
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</table>

3. *However*, toxoplasmosis often manifests without symptoms.

4. *Therefore*, the aim of its treatment is to remove dental biofilm and calculus and to ensure biocompatible root surfaces.

5. *Although* more rarely, somatic mutations are also described, but with considerably lower frequency.

6. *Nevertheless*, that was not established in our research.

**Sentence length** in texts written in English by Bulgarian medical professionals is usually exceeded, and the sentences are overloaded with preliminaries,
generalizations and qualifications. Thus very long sentences (above 20 words) become weak, the main idea tends to get lost in modifying phrases and clauses, impairing readability. Concise sentences are formed by avoiding empty words and lengthy phrases in order to focus the reader’s attention on specific information. Single words, straightforward use of subjects and verbs replace verbose phrases like it has been shown that, it is known that, it was reported that, due to the fact that, etc., and important ideas form independent clauses with the use of positive, rather than negative forms:

7. Interesting is the fact that these mutations show certain population specificity and are not found or are found in a very low frequency in patients with breast cancer from certain populations [32].

8. Because of the fact that ATM is a sensor of double-strand breaks, which are caused mainly by ionizing radiation, when functioning normally in tumor cells good therapeutic response could be expected [31].

9. We deem it is necessary that for patients on hemodialysis the concentration of vitamin D, PHT, albuminuria, ACR, calcium and phosphorus should be monitored in advance in order to optimize the intake of vitamin D [35].

10. A lot of irregularities and roughness were observed on the surface of the plastic piercing unlike the surface of the metal one, which is not rough [27].

Paragraph length and complexity also influence the text readability to a great extent. The optimal length of a RA paragraph has been judged to be 150 words. The researcher’s aim is to simplify expressions, to avoid fillers and tautology in writing (optional choice, positive benefits):

Previous studies of relative pro-insulin levels in GDM have yielded conflicting results. Some earlier studies signaled the presence of increased pro-insulin and PIR
in gestational diabetes compared with the NGT controls [15]. Kautzky-Willer and et al. [15] found that both serum pro-insulin and PIR were significantly higher in GDM patients compared with control subjects. They also reported that after delivery the PIR remained elevated. Increased pro-insulin concentrations and a raised PIR are specific for GDM and might thus serve as its marker and potentially even identify subjects at high risk for the development of type 2 diabetes. In contrast, Hanson and et al. [10] did not support the hypothesis that an increased fasting PIR is a marker for later development of type 2 diabetes or impaired glucose tolerance in former GDM subjects. Swinn and et al [20] studied the relationship between abnormalities of glucose metabolism and the 32, 33 split pro-insulin. They reported elevated levels of such pro-insulin in GDM patients both fasting and 120-min versus pregnant nor-moglycemic control subjects. [170 words].

**Word choice** is precise and concise. Wrong choice, impersonal language and hedging make for weak texts and block the correct interpretation of the message. Qualifiers (*may, suggest, probably, possible, view, feel, suppose*), intensifiers (*very, really, actually*), vague (*important, interesting, good, poorly*) or confusing words (*while, as, since*) either introduce hedging or add little meaning and are a source of imprecision:

11. The scarring caused by toxoplasmosis will not clear up, but treatment *may prevent* it from getting worse.

12. In 125 cases the technique was *absolutely efficient*.

13. The cleaning is *very important* because it *may* cause intrusion of bacteria to the blood during injection which *may* lead to serious complications.

14. In order to achieve *good* results in the rehabilitation of patients with injured plexus brachialis, timely diagnosis, *good* medication therapy and early start of complex physiotherapy and rehabilitation program that includes electrotherapy,
electrostimulation, kinesiotherapy and ergo therapy, are of crucial importance, so that performance of daily living activities improves.

**Word order** in RA is standard, and reading and understanding depend on the Subject – Verb – Object arrangement of the words as an expected sequence. Passive constructions and impersonal clauses revert this arrangement, and slow down the time for comprehension:

15. In the first stage of brain atrophy it is possible microcephaly to occur.
16. In Table 3 there are shown the average cholesterol levels of the tested patients depending on their therapy regimen and the number and percentage of the patients with higher cholesterol levels.
17. Higher than the reference interval levels of ALT were found in 37.5% of the patients treated with Nevirapine.
18. If the infection keeps returning, antibiotics may be prescribed on a long-term basis.

The comparative analysis of RA paragraphs shows that certain aspects of grammar in relation to appropriate use of tenses, the potential of the subjunctive mood, and the non-finite constructions ([V-ing] forms, participial adjectives, and infinitives) that add variety to scientific writing and clarity of expression are not used effectively. Other areas of concern in written communication are the improvement of subject-verb agreement, avoiding biased language and group labels, and last but not least, punctuation and typographical emphasis (use of underlining, italicized or bold types).
The clear-cut scientific style requires competent use of lexical patterning, structural diversity, appropriate grammar and terminology provided by reference corpora and genre analysis to influence the style and grace of the Bulgarian researchers who write for international medical journals.

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Input as a factor in attainment of implicit and explicit knowledge and proficiency in EFL

Mariana Gotseva

Introduction

Input is probably among the most important factors in language acquisition as no one can learn either a first (L1) or a second language (L2) without some input. However, in instructed conditions, input may vary significantly. A comparison between the quality and quantity of input received by EFL learners in their own country, and those received by students learning English as a second or foreign language in a country where it is used as the main means for communication shows that the final outcomes of the language acquisition may also differ. Implicit learning is more likely to happen in an environment in which learners are exposed to the target language not only in the classroom but in their everyday life, whereas individuals who only have exposure to the language in the classroom tend to learn/acquire it mostly explicitly. Therefore, when aware of these differences, EFL teachers could enhance their methods of teaching and possibly, their own input, to enable their students to learn/acquire the language mostly implicitly.

Importance of input in language acquisition

Different second language acquisition (SLA) theories have characterised input differently. Gass (1997) successfully summarised the diverse models of SLA and
their way of conceptualising the role of input in learning L2. She focused on four major approaches to SLA which treat input slightly differently: the input-interaction position, the input hypothesis, the Universal Grammar (UG) approach and the information-processing perspective.

1. The input-interaction position
The main idea of the input-interaction perspective is that no learning can take place without understanding although understanding alone is not sufficient and it only sets the scene for potential learning. The functions of simplified input related to language learning and the interaction between simplified input and comprehension were given consideration by Parker and Chaudron (1987) and the conclusion showed that simplification and modification of the discourse structure rather than simplifications at linguistic level are more likely to result in comprehension. Yano, Long and Ross (1994,) however, argued that elaboration of input supplies learners with the information necessary for comprehension. By negotiating meaning, learners obtain additional information about language, and focus attention on certain parts of the language. This attention primes language for integration into a developing interlinguistic system (Yano, Long & Ross, 1994: 214).

2. Krashen’s monitor model
In Krashen’s model (Krashen, 1980, 1982, 1985), comprehensible input plays a major role. Krashen’s monitor model (1977) used to be one of the most influential models for learning a second language in the 1980s. Later on, though, serious theoretical concerns were raised (Barasch & James, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Greg, 1984, 1986; McLaughlin, 1987; White, 1987), and it lost its significance. However, it is worth looking into the way it treats input as a factor affecting SLA.
The Input Hypothesis is central for Krashen’s characterisation of acquisition and supplementary to the Natural Order Hypothesis. A second language is acquired ‘by understanding messages, or by receiving comprehensible input’ (Krashen, 1985: 2). Krashen defines comprehensible input as this bit of language which is heard or read, and is slightly beyond the current ability of learner’s comprehension. If the language (heard or read) contains familiar structures, it serves no purpose in language acquisition. On the other hand, structures which are far beyond current learner’s knowledge are not useful, either. Therefore, he concludes that input should be at the  $i+l$ level in order to serve acquisition. In Krashen’s view, comprehensible input and a low affective filter are the necessary and sufficient conditions for language acquisition.

3. The UG approach to input
The UG framework focuses on the innate structure of language and claims that it should be investigated in isolation, apart from the influence of external and social factors. This is hardly the case, and the opposing position claims that language acquisition cannot be fully understood separately from the context in which it occurs as it is interconnected with social interaction, and that both linguistic and cognitive abilities are embedded in context (Gass, 1997).

4. The information-processing theory
The information processing perspective on the significance of the input in the process of learning an L2 comes from psycholinguistics. McLaughlin (1990) looked into two types of processing important for understanding how language is processed: automatic and controlled processing. The automatic processing is described as involving ‘the activation of certain nodes in memory every time the appropriate inputs are present’ (McLaughlin, 1987: 134). The consistent mapping
of the same input to the same pattern of activation creates over time a ‘permanent set of associative connections in long-term storage’, difficult to suppress or alter once learned. Controlled processing, on the other hand, is just ‘a temporary activation of nodes in a sequence’ (McLaughlin, 1987: 135). What differs it from the automatic one is the fact that controlled processing occurs under the attentional control of the learner, it is tightly capacity-limited, and it can easily be set up, altered, and applied to novel situations. Learners can move from controlled processing to automatic processing through repeated performance.

Another psycholinguistic model, the competition model, is based on the firm belief that ‘the forms of natural languages are created, governed, constrained, acquired and used in the service of communicative functions’ (Bates & McWhinney, 1989: 3), and it is mostly concerned with language use. In the framework of the competition model, acquisition is seen as driven by cues some of which are related to corelations between form and function. The model consists of a two-level structure: a functional level and a formal level. The former refers to meaning, whereas the latter to surface forms. Direct mapping between these two levels occurs in language use. Language processing involves competition between different cues all of which contribute to a sentence interpretation (Gass, 1997). Without going into the technicality of the process, we can conclude that in case no innate mechanism is employed in language acquisition, the input gets a major role as it enables language learners to establish the form-function relations, cue validity, and cue strength.

In summary, Gass (1997) concludes that input has been attributed a major role by different approaches to SLA, but none of these approaches gives a complete, thorough picture of the input function in the process of L2 learning. The input-
interaction framework does not differentiate between linguistic features. Krashen’s model does not say how we can determine which input is ‘comprehensible’ and of value. The UG position only sees input as a trigger for innate properties. In the information-processing perspective, input is attributed significant importance in the process of automatising controlled knowledge and in providing information for restructuring, which is more an issue of quantity of input rather than quality. What is not taken into account by any of these perspectives is the individual characteristics which do not operate independently of the learner but include his / her active participation in the selection of input.

5. Selection of input
An interesting point of view was expressed by Beebe (1985), who argued that L2 learners should not be seen merely as ‘passive recepients of comprehensible or incomprehensible input from native speakers, but as active participants in choosing the target language models they prefer’ (Beebe, 1985: 404). She is one of the first researchers who paid attention to the kind of people who are providing the input: native speakers (NSs) or non-native speakers (NNSs); teachers or peers; high-prestige groups or low-prestige groups; one social group or another social group. It was pointed out that all these are very important for understanding what input is attended to. Although these sociolinguistic factors deal more with the output and the whole idea is antithetical to the UG framework, they do deserve attention as it is the type of input which triggers linguistic changes or grammatical modifications. What is more, is it not the output, the final product of the process of learning, which matters most? The level of proficiency of L2 learners is measured by evidence from their oral and written input. Therefore, these extra-linguistic (social or external) factors should be given significant consideration. After all, they would probably explain some of the individual differences in the
final attainment of L2 among learners exposed to one type of input versus learners exposed to a different type of input.

**Naturalistic vs instructed learning**

Researchers noticed as early as 1960s and 1970s that ‘natural exposure to a new language triggers the subconscious acquisition of communication skills in that language’, as summarised by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). Carroll (1967), Saegert, Scott, Perkins and Tucker (1974), Lambert and Tucker (1972), relying on empirical studies, demonstrated the beneficial effects of the exposure to natural communication in the target language and came to the interesting conclusion that immersion programmes resulted in acquisition of impressive amounts of second language and high levels of competence, especially if the subjects were children. On the other hand, formal language instruction, no matter how lengthy it was, and despite the fact that academic subjects were taught in the target second language, did not lead to steady improvement in proficiency.

Formal language environment, where L2 is taught through formal instructions, was characterised by the same authors as ‘severely limited in its potential to produce speakers who are able to communicate naturally and effectively’ (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 15 - 17). The most serious limitation of formal instruction was seen in the very small role that the conscious knowledge of rules can play in either the acquisition or the use of language for communication. Very little research has acknowledged the significant differences between naturalistic and classroom learning environment or the differences (in quantity and quality) of the type of input learners receive (Rothman & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2010).
An often neglected topic in the research of the effects of age in second language acquisition is the type of learning context related to the ultimate attainment of the L2 in question. As Muñoz (2008) noticed, ‘research findings from naturalistic learning contexts have been hastily generalised to formal (classroom) learning contexts’. Based on observed differences, she claims that ‘the amount and quality of input have a significant bearing on the effects that age of initial learning has on second language learning’ (2008: 578).

The distinction between naturalistic L2 learning and foreign L2 learning is ignored in discussions of maturational constraints in second language acquisition. It is the naturalistic second language learning, or learning through immersion in the L2 environment, which is usually taken into account, though the majority of people learning a second language actually start learning it in a completely different context – in a foreign language learning classroom. Is it liable then, to generalise the findings of research on naturalistic, immersion learning context and impose them onto the learning process taking place in a completely different context? Contrary to the naturalistic learning context, a typical foreign language learning situation in most countries around the world can be characterised by limited instruction of L2 – two to five sessions a week of approximately 45-50 min each; limited exposure to sources of the target language – mainly the teacher and recorded materials (CDs, tapes for listening comprehension tasks); different quantity and quality of the target language to which learners are exposed – a lot of teachers do not use the target language as the language of instructions or communication in the classroom. On most occasions, teachers themselves are non-native speakers (NNSs), so there is a great variability in their own oral fluency and general proficiency. Normally, the target language is not the language of communication between peers in the classroom, and it is rarely, or not spoken at
It is a well-known fact that in foreign language learning settings, the amount of input received by learners is considerably less compared to naturalistic learners. What is more, the quality of input also differs significantly. In instructed foreign language conditions, most of the teachers are L2 learners themselves, so the input is definitely not native-like, irrespectively of their efforts to provide some authentic native materials. Since even very advanced L2 learners make mistakes, instructed L2 learners receive qualitatively different input compared to the one received in naturalistic immersion conditions (Rothman & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2010).

Recently, research in the field of neurolinguistics has reinforced the vital importance of intensity / length of exposure to L2 as native for the final attainment and proficiency in L2 (Perani et al, 2003). What is meant by ‘length of exposure’ is the length of time of residence in a country where the target language is spoken as native between the initial starting age of learning L2 and the testing time. In foreign language learning studies, the same term might mean the number of hours of instruction or a course of instruction although accepting the two situations as equivalent would be a gross generalisation.

**Factors in attainment of implicit and explicit knowledge and proficiency in EFL**

Having concluded that L2 learners in foreign learning (classroom) settings receive a different type of input, in terms of quantity and quality, and have a much more limited exposure to the target language, I have attempted to analyse the outcomes of the L2 learning process which takes place in such conditions through
the perspective of the implicit/explicit learning and implicit/explicit knowledge dichotomy. It seems justified by the fact that the conditions in which L2 learning happens in a foreign language classroom do not resemble, even remotely, the naturalistic learning in immersion environment. The former presupposes mostly explicit learning and acquisition of explicit knowledge, which, depending on the length of learning and exposure to L2, might or might not turn into implicit knowledge, whereas the latter presupposes implicit (L1 children-like) learning and acquisition of implicit knowledge although it might be supplemented by explicit knowledge as a result of education in formal environment. Before developing this hypothesis further, we should define the dichotomy.

**Implicit and explicit learning**

Implicit learning is considered to be the acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply, and without conscious operations or efforts. L1 is acquired implicitly, but at an older age a native speaker can develop self-awareness of explicit representations (Bialystok, 1982). Explicit learning, on the other hand, is the conscious process of learning ‘about’ a phenomenon by gathering information about it. It can also be influenced by pedagogical rules or explicit instruction. How much do explicit learning and explicit instruction influence implicit learning and how much can this impact be optimised?

6. Some findings of my research on the topic

In a research on factors influencing the acquisition of EFL, input included, a sample of 103 participants were tested on a battery of tests, tapping onto implicit and explicit knowledge, to find out the correlation between the different factors and
the type of knowledge acquired. Descriptive statistics and factor analyses were used to explore the relationship between the test performance (PT) and the constructs of explicit and implicit knowledge. Cluster analysis was also applied to reveal the relationship between aspects of learning experience and the impact of contextual factors, and L2 implicit / explicit knowledge.

Information about the learners’ backgrounds concerning the starting age of learning, length of learning, type of input, etc. was collected by means of a Background Questionnaire. Native speakers’ scores on the same tests have been used as a benchmark for comparison.

The battery of tests targeting 17 grammatical structures reported to be problematic for learners consisted of: a Timed Grammaticality Judgement Test (TGJT); an Untimed Grammaticality Judgement Test (UGJT); an Oral Imitation Test (OIT); a Metalinguistic Knowledge Test (MLT) and a Background Questionnaire. The participants were made up of 81 learners of English from countries where it is used as a second formal language (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana); 10 learners of English from countries where it is learned as a foreign language (China, Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Spain and France) and 12 native speakers from London.

The sample data was divided into three groups, according to the country of origin: an English speaking country (UK), a country where English is used as a second formal language, and a country where English is learned as a foreign language. A number of factors, self-reported in the Background Questionnaire, were explored through descriptive statistics and compared for each group: the starting age of
learning; length of learning; type of input (naturalistic or instructed); the length of exposure to the target language in the UK (or another L1 country); and the age.

The findings of this research show that the most significant factors which have an impact on learners’ performance on tests measuring implicit knowledge (TGJT and OIT) tend to be the length of exposure to L2 in environment where it is used as native and the starting age of learning, followed by the length of learning and the type of input, which were also found statistically significant. Learners who perform better on tests measuring implicit knowledge also demonstrate higher levels of proficiency, which points to the fact that an L2 is best learned through acquiring implicit knowledge.

The most significant factors correlating to tests measuring explicit knowledge (UGJT and MLT) demonstrated weak correlation with UGJT results and even weaker significance of correlation with MLT. According to Pearson’s coefficient of correlation with MLT results, the only factor which was found to be important is Country of Origin (r = .49 so Rsq = .24, p < .001, N= 103).

![Test results clusters according to country of origin](image-url)
The bar chart above demonstrates the results on the five tests, TGJT, OIT, PT, UGJT and MLT, clustered according to the subjects’ country of origin.

It can clearly be seen that the cluster of Country where English is spoken as a foreign language (CEFL) demonstrates higher scores on all the tests, compared to the cluster of Country where English is used as a second formal language (CEUSL). Native speakers’ scores, on the other hand, are much higher, except for the MLT results, which are lower. This was confirmed by the mean and standard deviation values, calculated for all the tests according to the participants’ country of origin, shown in the table below. For the native speakers the mean values are highest for all the tests except for the metalinguistic test, whose values are the lowest. From the other two groups, the scores of the subjects studying English as a foreign language show closer similarity to the scores of native speakers on all the tests, except for the metalinguistic test, whose values are the highest.

Compared to the previous two groups, the participants from countries where English is used as a second formal language have achieved scores of closer similarity to the second group (countries where English is studied as a foreign language) rather than to the native speakers’ ones on all tests without exception.
As for the L2 learners in a foreign language instructed environment, the comparatively high results demonstrated on the battery of tests showed that, depending on the length of learning and the length of exposure, subjects who have learned English as a foreign language can actually attain considerably high levels of proficiency.

Whether this is as a result of their explicit knowledge gradually turning into implicit knowledge thanks to the target language exposure, or it shows that the majority of the written tests actually measure explicit knowledge is a question worth investigating.

### Conclusions

Based on learners’ attainment on the battery of tests and the data collected through the Background Questionnaire, the study found the length of exposure and the starting age of learning to be the most significant factors which have an impact on students’ attainment on implicit and explicit knowledge tests, and their level of proficiency. It also found the length of learning and the instruction type statistically significant.
On a methodological level, the methods used to collect primary data might have had some effect on the findings of the research. The measuring tools (the battery of tests and the proficiency test) should further be improved in terms of validity. The background questionnaire appeared to be limited in scope and could not elicit significant information about the type of instruction received in formal (classroom) environment. In order to elicit sufficient data about students’ learning experiences, questions should be more detailed and followed by an individual interview.

The results also indicated a correlation between the attainment on tests measuring implicit knowledge (TGJT and OIT) and learners’ proficiency test results. Higher scores on the former correlated with a better level of proficiency. This means that implicit learning or gaining implicit knowledge would lead to a better ultimate proficiency attainment.

To summarise, the macro-contextual factors affecting L2 acquisition are worth researching further as they do have a significant impact on learners’ attainment and proficiency level, as the current research has found. Research on SLA in instructed conditions deserves further attention and study as these are the conditions in which the majority of people around the globe learn a foreign language. Needless to say, the implications can be of significant benefit not only to the better understanding of the process of SLA, but also to the teaching methodology and to the improvement of L2 learners’ ultimate attainment.
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ETools, eTwinning and Erasmus +:
Using various tools in class inspired by
eTwinning projects

Maya Kyulevchieva

Every teacher knows how quickly students get bored. And how quickly the standard exercises become so routine that students do not make effort to do them carefully any more.

Today, when young people literally live in the virtual reality, using the latest technology in class is almost a must. As a language teacher, I try to keep being informed about the most modern tools and to apply some of them not only to make the lessons more interesting and to attract students’ attention, but also to facilitate my own work.

One of the best learning platforms to meet all my requirements is Socrative (www.socrative.com). With its variety of options, it provides teachers with powerful tools to test, to get feedback, to check students’ understanding of the lesson, to evaluate the lesson as well as to offer competitions for students. It is a free platform, and only the teacher has to sign up, thus receiving a constant room number. Students only enter this room number to take part in the exercises, tests or the competitions. Tests are easy to create. The platform is suitable not only for language teachers but for almost all subject teachers – Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, etc. Another attractive feature is the option to share the
quizzes or to use shared ones if they suit your needs. The quizzes are downloadable, which is still another plus in case of technical problems. Last but not least, the teacher can receive results automatically, again with several options to choose among, which, for me, is the best feature of the platform.

Unfortunately, not many teachers in Bulgaria are willing or able to apply ICT tools in their lessons. I am sure, though, that once they get to know the advantages of Socrative and similar platforms, they will change their methods of teaching forever and for better. I often hear the question: How could I know about such tools? The answer is simple – eTwinning!

ETwinning is the biggest community of European teachers willing to teach in a modern way. It is the place for students aged from 4 to 19 to collaborate with European peers, to create and share experiences, to celebrate different holidays together. It is also the place for teachers’ professional development. It is a real educational academy for teachers to boost their ICT, language and communication skills.

The projects the national or international teams create are Internet-based, and the environment is absolutely safe. Teachers are free to decide on all the project parameters – topic, length, tools used, the number of participants, etc., but they can be awarded for their good work.

The projects are not financed although eTwinning is a part of Erasmus+ programme of EC (2014 – 2020). However, the participation in all events organised by the National eTwinning Support Services or the Central Support Service is free for the teachers who are members of eTwinning: seminars, online
events, events, national and international professional development workshops, annual conferences.

Starting in 2005 with only a bit more than 11 thousand registered teachers, today, 11 years later, this community has grown up to almost 400 000 users of more than 162 800 schools.

So, why not join eTwinning? It is worth a try.

**Editor’s note:** The slides of Maya’s presentation are available at http://www.slideshare.net/mayakyul/eee-etools-etwinning-and-erasmus

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Teaching English: the case of primary teachers in Italy

Carmelina Maurizio

Introduction

The teaching of English in the Italian primary school began with some experiments in the school year 1975/76, with ILSSE project - Teaching foreign languages in elementary schools - which was born in four pilot cities (Turin, Milan, Rome and Naples) and ended about ten years later, with the engagement of almost 50 Italian cities, just when the foreign language in the curriculum was officially introduced. The method used in those years, which is mentioned here, was based on the communicative functional approach, involving the use of games, gestures, songs, cards and audio cassettes for listening to dialogues. The language teacher was the class teacher, to optimise the pre-existing affective relationship with children (Curatolo 2000), and English was taught for about 20 minutes a day. The aim of the project was to contribute to the overall development of the child by raising his/her awareness of different cultures and another linguistic code (Curatolo, 2000: 4). In 1989, the PSLS – Special Project Foreign Languages – included thousands of foreign languages teachers who learned to use new methods, thus ensuring professionalism and quality of service (Pantaleoni 1994: 32). The Italian schools were therefore among the first, both in terms of scientific research and learning, to experience the introduction of a foreign language in the primary school curriculum, seizing the directions of the Council of Europe, which for
decades had spread the concept of the threshold level. In 1998, finally the project Languages in 2000 came, and found widespread support, which introduced the teaching / learning of at least one foreign language from the nursery school to the end of the first grade of secondary education (Law 440/97). In 2005, the plan for language development and methodology training of primary English teachers, Plan for primary school teachers, Piano per la formazione linguistica e metodologica in lingua inglese per la i docenti della scuola primaria, was ready.

The plan for language development and methodology training

One of the main contributions of the Lisbon strategy was the focus on the objective of the European Union's transition to an economy and a society based on knowledge. It recognised the essential role of education and training policies. The interim report on the achievements in the first three years of the trial, Education and Training 2010 (European Commission 2007), drawn up jointly in 2004 by the Council and the Commission, highlighted the paucity of the work up to then, and urged European countries to do more by investing in in-service teacher training of primary teachers, since on their motivation and quality the achievement of the targets set for 2010 depended. Some decades before the French Nuffied Pilot Scheme, a teaching foreign languages experiment conducted in Britain (Field 2000), highlighted the importance of the skills of the foreign language teachers; then the need to design policies at the national level involving the teachers throughout their whole life emerged. These were constantly monitored and fully confined within the European framework. In the Italian DPR 275/99 they also emphasised that the concept of lifelong learning was deeply
associated with that of organisational autonomy, teaching, research and development.

In this context, with the Service Communication 1446/05, the plan for language development and methodology training of primary English teachers was born. It evolved, in a diachronic line, out of previous routes that were revised and improved. This multi-year plan, given the complexity and ambition for providing a quality education of the so-called ‘generalists’, which could enable them to tackle the teaching of English in their classes, provided strong synergies with the experts of the sector, the local university departments, agencies and professional associations in the field of foreign language teaching. The Minister of Education, Fioroni, established a scientific technical national committee in 2007, which promoted the launch of a research project on primary school teachers’ profile, and on assessing their language skills.

The Plan was characterised by initial training, specifically for the primary teachers who did not have any English language skills. Until the first years of the 21st century, the primary teachers in Italy were not expected to teach English; the situation changed in 2003, when the Riforma Moratti introduced English as a subject from the first year of the primary level onwards. Therefore, the primary school teachers who previously did not need to have a degree in foreign languages were involved in three-year English language courses, both face to face and online.

The training project, which involved thousands of teachers (an estimated 15 000 teachers per school year at national level), and also training and academic
agencies, can definitely be considered the biggest project of teacher reorientation in Italy.

Here is a summary of its main features:

- The provided communicative/linguistic content and the methodological/ didactic one ultimately led the primary teachers to achieve B1 language level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR);
- The training was carried out online and face-to-face, with a varying number of hours depending on teachers’ language level;
- The courses were divided into three levels: 0 - A1, A1 - A2, and A2 - B1;
- The transition to a more advanced course was possible after passing a test administered by the tutors conducting face-to-face lessons and coordinate the online activities;
- The final exam was held at the CLA – the Language Centres of the Universities with which the Ministry of Education had signed an agreement;
- The language and methodology tutors were chosen by the Regional School Offices according to the applicants’ certificates and previous teaching experiences.

The profile of the English teacher in the Italian primary school

According to the guidelines of CEFR, the profile covers the entire range of receptive and productive skills, with particular attention to the needs of the primary school teacher. The following documents cover all aspects of the profile and skills of the future primary school English teachers:
• Quale profilo e quali competenze per l’inglese del docente di scuola primaria, 2007, Agenzia Scuola, Indire (profile and skills in English of the primary school teacher)
• Guidelines prepared by an expert.

Some significant aspects of the training project were:
• Gradually approaching the foreign language teachers in the kindergarten, primary and secondary levels, especially those who do not possess the basic level of the linguistic-communicative competencies required for adequate teaching of foreign languages in nursery schools, and at primary and secondary levels;
• Creating effective paths for quality output;
• Encouraging blended modes of training (Platform Learn and Teach, INDIRE - National Institute for Educational Research and Innovation Documentation);
• Promoting teacher training opportunities abroad;
• Promoting the certification of the acquired language and methodology skills.

The primary English language teacher profile is intended to identify the core methodology knowledge for primary English teachers, and the language skills needed for effective teaching, as well as to delineate additional areas of professional development. The methodology knowledge profile is one of the tools to inform the trainers about their work towards achieving the project goals, to help them plan training tasks and possible guided internship activities, to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme in place. The linguistic profile aims to provide retrainee teachers with awareness of the skills they need to acquire throughout their training, and in this sense it may represent, together with other instruments, a great tool to activate self-assessment. The need to delineate the relevant skills for a teaching profession has led to the development of an
integrated profile which takes account of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The identified areas are classroom language, language for professional development, and language awareness, understood as the development of meta-linguistic knowledge.

All these tools provide a plurality of educational opportunities customising the different needs of the teachers (AA.VV. 2007). The blended teacher training model, in line with the European guidelines on training, enables flexible and effective organisation of the courses in order to gradually reach high numbers of linguistically and methodologically qualified primary English teachers.

**Conclusion**

So far, the plan for language development and methodology training has partially achieved its aims: English has been taught at primary level for about 10 years, which has been beneficial to a number of students. On the other hand, there are still primary teachers whose English needs improvement. There have been pioneers who developed and shared best practice through their own blogs and websites, but having in mind the big number of teachers who have taken part in the project (up to now about 120,000 all around Italy), those whose profile matches the one outlined in the Plan could be considered a minority. Still, with the efforts of all stakeholders, the future of the Plan remains optimistic.
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To motivate learners, you need motivated teachers:

What motivates you?

Zarina Markova and Irina Ivanova

The forum ‘To motivate learners, you need motivated teachers: What motivates you?’ took place on Saturday, 04 June 2016, as a part of the 25th Jubilee BETA-IATEFL Conference Teaching and Learning English: From No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners. The rationale of combining the topics of student and teacher motivation is not difficult to see as: there are few cases, if any, when the former flourishes in isolation from the latter. At the same time, Bulgarian teachers today seem to face unprecedented levels of stress and job dissatisfaction, with an inevitably negative impact on the quality of their work. So, we were hoping that such a forum would provide space for shared reflection on the values in teachers’ lives and strategies to cope with disenchantment, and would thus give the inspirational shot in the arm that each of us periodically needs. In order to involve as many participants as possible, a roundtable approach was adopted, and everybody’s opinion was welcomed and acknowledged.

The forum started with a group activity in which we explored our understanding of motivation. Despite the given choice of expression, the linguistic mode prevailed, and succinct language appeared to be characteristic to the shared definitions in which motivation blended nicely with components of the affective and cognitive...
domains. Samples of such definitions include power (a motivated teacher feels powerful and believes she can work wonders with her students); love (a motivated teacher goes to work as elated as if she goes on a date; motivation gives meaning to one’s life in the same way love does); pride (a motivated teacher respects herself and expects respect from others); inspiration (a motivated teacher is able to create and shape her environment); a mutual exchange of energy, experience and meaning.

We proceeded with creating a motivation continuum where each group had to place themselves somewhere between the two ends – highly motivated and unmotivated. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we ended up with responses dotted in the upper part of the continuum, ranging from slightly more than moderately to highly motivated. The activity continued with compiling a list of reasons for being motivated among which recognition, students’ well-being and success, students’ reciprocation, change, and self-improvement were typical suggestions.

This was followed by a discussion of the causes of burnout, with spoilt plans and failure, lack of positive stimuli, red tape, work overload being commonly referred to, and also the lack of the motivational factors mentioned in the previous activity. As for the strategies for overcoming burnout, the change was again frequently present in the answers: the change of the boss, the job, even the students, but, predominantly, of attitude. Other responses included building a supportive haven, joining a teacher association, continuous professional development, avoiding red tape as much as possible.
What is our self-support system for working at our best? Following Sonia Nieto (2003), a framework of several teaching metaphors was suggested – teaching as: evolution; autobiography; love; hope and possibility; anger and desperation; intellectual work; democratic practice; shaping futures.

Finally, on a Post-it note, each of us wrote a single piece of advice on how to stay motivated. The notes were then stuck on the board for the participants to read and share. There are two general strands within the motivational strategies produced – they are outward and inward oriented.

The outward-oriented strategies include:
- Communication with and support by like-minded people
- Love for the job (which allows us to shape / inspire / motivate young minds and help them find their way)
- Love for the students
- Sharing of ideas, practices, problems
- Joining a professional organization
- Revisiting reasons for becoming a teacher

The inward-oriented strategies link motivation to:
- Learning and personal growth
- Realistic expectations
- Finding one’s own source of inspiration and energy
- Positive attitude
- Persistence
Finally, Bill Templer’s comments on psychological, material and professional factors that (de)motivate teachers were handed out. You can access them in Appendix A. Appendix B gives the unabridged version of participants’ advice on how to stay motivated.

We would like to thank all the attendees for their active participation and the positive feedback. Thanks go as well to Bill Templer for the initial idea of this forum. Also, we would like to hear more from you, our reader. How do you avoid burnout? What keeps you going? We are looking forward to reading your personal stories! Please send them to beta.iateflbg@gmail.com so that the discussion on teacher motivation can continue on the pages of this newsletter.

References

Appendix A

*What (de)motivates teachers is a mix of psychological, material and professional factors, many negative in BG 2016. To counter burnout,*

- raise *low morale levels*
  - far greater RESPECT for teachers among learners, parents and in the broader society!
  - quiet attentive classrooms with democratic discipline, much more *fun & games* – alleviate massive *work stress*; and halt mounting *violence* against BG teachers! (http://goo.gl/pY8YL4)
  - naturally, more eager & motivated students, esp. among the *less privileged* – socioeconomic class and ethnic background, ‘class in the classroom’, plays a huge role: http://goo.gl/kMDLrx
  - much greater *job security for all teachers*, even adjunct, in private & public education, end precarity!
  - far smaller classes + lots more *trainee-teachers* - **REALITY:** now only 3% of teachers under age 30, by 2026 45,000 teachers will retire [!] - Educ. students down ca. 25% since 2011: http://goo.gl/GRYHm5 http://goo.gl/x7DnJ0
  - work near one’s *home* or *Xtra travel pay!* Some teachers commute 2+ ‘unpaid’ hours a day.
a truly balanced work load, more time to think//create, do action research (http://goo.gl/dCZ72H)

- competent school directors & ‘inspectors’, sensitive to the real problems teachers face
- recruit more active school psychologists//counselors who creatively do the job (& to whom disruptive learners can be sent -- now rare); see http://goo.gl/3EL349 + http://goo.gl/lqZEHQ
- make ‘teacher voice’ heard loud & clear, upping ↑‘self-empowerment’: innovateelt.com
- less admin. surveillance, more freedom to experiment -- policy from the grassroots up ↑!
- less time-consuming ‘accountability’ paperwork-- or demand Xtra pay for such paperwork!
- spur colleague inter↔action, ‘T-solidarity’ – work for more deeply democratic schools within Continuing Cooperative Development (Julian Edge, https://goo.gl/2Wg93j) – ‘synergy’ to replace the morass of яд + завист, ревност endemic in many BG teaching ecologies
- an inventive localized CTD framework, spearheaded in part by BETA, EdMin and BC
- school / local libraries chock full of picturebooks, graded readers in sets, the basis for robust Ext. Reading; cf. S. Mourãu on picturebooks: http://goo.gl/00TWzg & http://goo.gl/YeLupn
- ready access to Internet in every classroom, with an LED projector.
youtube every day!

- ORGANIZE: Change isn’t going to come until we bring it - revitalise syndicat “образование”! goo.gl/o3dT64 -- forge local teacher micro-unions (http://goo.gl/SVsA0z), à la IWW www.iww.org -- like the IWW 620 Education Workers Industrial Union in the UK: https://iww.org.uk/education/ ➔ In BG?

- membership for all in a teacher association such as BETA 😊 (and ♦IATefl♦) – this needs hands-on 'incentivizing' from the EdMin, making such subsidized formal membership a recognized even required component in CTD scaffolding. Build local BETA mini-chapters!

- To speak about MOTIVATION among knackered teachers is to explore those “edges where teachers—the bodies that dance across classrooms, performing the pedagogical rituals required of them—try to achieve some kind of balance and grace”, see Paul Walsh & Theresa Gorman (eds.), Teacher Stories: Stories from the Edges of Language Teaching (2015), p. 5: https://goo.gl/EptUDs ; see also Bill Templer, “Lives of Teachers as a Focus for Research and Sharing in Bulgaria ELT”, BETA E-Newsletter, #17, 7-30: http://goo.gl/GdmaQq cf. likewise TaWSIG (Teachers as Workers) https://twitter.com/taw_sig You can join! TaWSIG core aims: https://goo.gl/6TgwMu https://goo.gl/7paiA4 See also P. Walsh (2016): http://goo.gl/8rZmo2, Bowen’s (2013) diss., highly relevant: https://goo.gl/lbLIGQ -Bill T., гр. Шумен
Appendix B

Forum participants’ advice on how to stay motivated

1. Try to find people who you could communicate with freely. By having a channel to discuss things, you will feel validated in yourself and understand how to move forward.
2. The ‘Hitchhiker’s Guide’ has the words DON’Т PANICK written in friendly script on its cover. I suggest you do the same 😊.
3. Remember why you became a teacher.
4. Love your job and your students. Do your best to meet your students’ needs and feel satisfied with your work at the end of the school day.
5. Find the thing that inspires you and stick to it.
6. Be realistic in your expectations both of your students and of yourself!
7. Personal growth leads to success and motivation in every aspect of life. Try to find a way to raise your personal energy and vibration and that will lead to more balance in your life. (M. Angelova)
8. Shine or leave!
9. I feel motivated when I learn about a new idea/method and when good practice is shared.
10. You have the privilege to shape, inspire, motivate young minds and help them find their way.
11. Make new friendships with nice students/teachers.
12. Problem sharing.
13. Talk to experienced teachers who know exactly what is to be an English teacher.
14. Children are a great source of love, creativity, joy, knowledge, passion – just take from it and change yourself. (Vanya Karamanova)
15. Self-learning and training to strengthen your career. Thanks. (Yousry Efhadidy Yefhadidy56@gmail.com)
16. Try to reassert yourself, abilities, achievements ... be global, network with those who may listen to you and be impressed by your creative thoughts 😊. (Hanaa M. Khamis, Egypt)
17. Build a support network.
19. Take a break and come back fresh! 😊
20. Join a group of professionals like you! Share what works with others. (written in a beautiful heart)
21. Think of your students as future geniuses.
22. Revisit your reasons for becoming a teacher.
23. Take a break.
24. Hang it there! If you love your job, it’s worth keeping it up!
25. Don’t worry, be happy! 😊
26. Keep trying until you see the click in their eyes!
27. Get started from the beginning.
28. Think globally, act locally! You are the person to trigger changes and influence society. (Kristina)
29. Be strong!
30. Never give up trying!
31. Keep away from the administrative people!
32. Find people to support you.
33. Be positive!
34. Be positive!

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SAVE THE DATE!

The 1st FIPLV East-European Regional Congress
The 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference

The 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress
The 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference

will take place between

22nd – 25th June 2017

at the Department for Information, Qualification and Lifelong Learning in Varna

For more information, visit:

http://www.beta-iatefl.org/annual-conference/conference-call/
Writing for the BETA E-Newsletter

Have you ever wondered if you should write an article for the E-Newsletter of BETA?

- Please DO! Your contribution may act as a springboard for discussions, inspiration for colleagues or facilitate the work of fellow teachers!

What exactly do you have to do?

If you feel you have something you would like to share:

- Send us your article in MS Word format.
- Send us a photo of you (in jpeg format) and short biographical information (about 50 words) which will accompany your article.
- You will receive feedback from us within 10 days of your submission.
- Please, check the deadlines and the topics of the forthcoming issues. Note that the topics announced are just illustrative; if you would like to submit an article on a different topic, please do. It will be considered for publishing.
- We are looking forward to your contributions.

For further information contact: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com
Notes for Contributors

- Your article must have not been previously published and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- The length of your article may vary - short contributions of 300 – 800 words are as good as long ones.
- Electronic submission of your article is preferred to the following e-mail address: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com
- Text of the article: Calibri, 14 points, with 1.5 spacing.
- Headings and subheading: Calibri, 24 points, bold, centred; first letter capitalized.
- Author names and title as well as contact details should be submitted in a separate file accompanying the article.
- About 50 words of biographical data should be included.
- New paragraphs – to be indicated with one separate line.
- Referencing should follow the APA referencing style.
- References in the text should be ordered alphabetically and contain the name of the author and the year of publication, e.g. (Benson, 1993; Hudson, 2008).
- Quotations have to include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Peters, 2006, p.76).
- Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered accordingly and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory caption.
- The editors will not return any material submitted, but they reserve the right to make editorial changes.
Established 1991 in Sofia, BETA seeks to build a network of ELT professionals on a national and regional (Southeast Europe) level and establish the association as a recognised mediator between educators and state bodies, public and other organisations.

BETA members are English teaching professionals from all educational sectors in Bulgaria – primary, secondary and tertiary, both state and private. BETA activities include organising annual conferences, regional seminars and workshops; information dissemination; networking with other teachers’ associations and NGOs in Bulgaria and abroad; exchange of representatives with teachers’ associations from abroad.

We are on the web:

http://www.beta-iatefl.org/

Thank you for your support!

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