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Edited by: Anthony Mollica

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The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field.
— Peter Heffernan

Christine Besnard

Individual Differences in L2 Learning, and the Good Language Teacher

In order to understand fully today's issues such as individual differences in L2 learning, it is important to start by setting them within an historical framework.

Thirty years ago, L2 teaching was definitely more traditional, teacher-centered and unidirectional. Indeed, in those days, teachers were the sole owners of knowledge that they would share with their audience, and they considered that it was the full responsibility of the students to find the best way to learn, no matter how interesting, well organized and clear their presentations were.

The outcome was quite disappointing as students would drop out of L2 classes, little learning would happen, and even if they would know the grammar rules taught, they were unable to communicate in the L2 properly.

The sixties are also the time when both Europe and North America started to rethink the way L2 were taught mainly for political reasons.

In the linguistic spheres of the seventies, Chomsky severely criticized the central principles of the audio-lingual method which was based on Structuralism and Behaviorism which he considered as being flawed. Then the American anthropologist Hymes who believed in an ethnographic vision of communication started to criticize Chomsky's theory which, he found, was too removed from social reality, and to underline the importance of the acquisition of a socially based communicative competence.

In the education spheres of the eighties, researchers and practitioners started to become more interested in the learners and in the way they learn L2. The specialists in L2 learning and teaching started to distance themselves from a model where the teacher was a semi-god, and they rallied around Comenius' theory based on the central principle that:

> "Teaching is an art which consists of making sure that students are able to learn what their master already knows" (Germain, 1993: 88).

The researchers turned themselves towards the learners in an attempt to understand better the way they learn in order to help them become more efficient, and maximize their learning.

In doing so, L2 teaching and research became more learner-centered as more attention was being paid to the individual factors and differences which could explain why certain learners learn L2 with ease and why others have great difficulty doing so. It is the time when a number of individual differences were identified, and what's interesting about them is that they all account for an easy L2 learning or for an arduous one. They also fall into 2 categories:

- the ones which escape the influence of the learners and the teachers as they are intrinsic (age, gender, personality, self-esteem, anxiety, intelligence, and abilities),

- and the ones which are extrinsic (motivation, attitude, learning styles) and which can be positively influenced and slightly modified by either the learners or the teachers.

We firmly believe that the present research on individual differences is all the more essential as it provides an eye-opener to teachers who need to be fully aware of the different kinds of circumstances that profoundly impact on their students' motivation and attitude towards L2 learning. Indeed, only the teachers who are aware of individual differences between students will be able to become non-judgmental towards the ones who succeed the least as they will be adequately equipped to better understand them, and answer their particular needs in order to give them a chance to be successful in their learning an L2.

1. Age

It is widely believed that children have a strong advantage over the adults as far as L2 learning is concerned. But in fact, this belief should be measured. Indeed, as Ritchie and Bhatia (1996:127) write,

> "adults are more cognitively advanced than children thus have a wider set of problem-solving skills available to them than children do"

and these "tools" help them to be more efficient in the L2 learning. Adults know and understand the world better, they know their L1 and therefore have a more mature and thorough understanding of the workings of their language. They already know the grammar, the lexicon and the syntax of their L1. They are better able to apply abstract knowledge to their learning, they are more able to abstractly conceive, generalize and classify rules so that they are more efficient and they learn faster than children.

As Ellis (1985:354) puts it, the effect of age on L2 learning still needs to be fully understood because as he insists, it is important to make a distinction between the effects of age on

> "the route towards the acquisition of an L2, [...] the speed of the acquisition of an L2 [...] and the ultimate attainment of the L2 learning".

And as Ellis summarizes it (1985: 354), even though "age doesn't affect the route of acquisition" it does have an impact on the speed of acquisition and on the final results.

Concerning the speed of acquisition of grammar and vocabulary, teenagers are faster than adults and children, and adults are faster than children. But in the long run, as Lightbown and Spada write (2006:48-49), even though at first, adults and teenagers are more efficient and learn faster in the early stages of the L2 learning, later then, they are caught up by children (who do better with their pronunciation, oral comprehension and oral communication) if those are immersed in the L2. Confirmed by Bialystok and Hakuta (1994:80),

> "Older learners and adults make more rapid progress than younger learners, but, overtime, the older learners reach a plateau earlier and are overtaken by younger learners."

As for the final results, researchers like Ellis (1985:106) agree that they are greatly influenced by the age you start learning an L2, and the number of years you are exposed to the L2. Indeed, the number of years you have been exposed to the L2 deeply influences the communication fluency, and the age you have started learning the L2 influences your level of proficiency and especially your pronunciation and how native-like you sound (Ellis:106). Not surprisingly, all this

has to do with Lenneberg's "critical period" or "optimal period" as we prefer to call it today, and that so many researchers are still researching on.

Still, as Lightbown and Spada (2006) stress it, it is widely accepted now that the children of immigrants who were born in the country usually communicate like natives while their parents even if they are fluent, keep their accent, and their choice of words and expressions remain different from those of the natives. This could be partly explained by the fact that, as Brown and Gonzo put it (1995:82), adults

> "don't have the cultural identification with the host country necessary to become fluent [...]."

This difference in proficiency is not only due to the age they started learning the L2 at but also to the conditions they have learnt the L2; indeed, the young learners end up spending much more time than the adults being exposed to and immersed in the L2. Bialystok and Hakuta argue (1994:52) that

> "if children are better language learners than adults, the reason may have nothing to do with their brains. It may just be that children have more opportunity to learn and practice the second language than adults."

That is why researchers now agree that the age you arrive in a country is the most important factor that will determine the level of proficiency one will arrive at.

Another major difference between children and adults is that the young learners are not expected to be perfect right at the start whereas adults are expected to be good with the L2 from the moment they start using it. They therefore feel self-conscious and confused and uncomfortable, and they will not take as many risks as children when learning the L2.

Finally, another major differen-

ce in L2 learning between adults and children are the cognitive processes used by both groups. Indeed, as Dekeyser (2000:499) points out:

> "While children rely on language-specific mechanisms of implicit learning", "adults have largely lost the ability to learn a language without reflecting on its structure, and have to use alternative mechanisms, drawing especially on their problem-solving capacities, to learn a second language";

in other words, their learning style is more explicit as opposed to the children's which is more implicit.

But despite all these differences between children and adults, one must remember, as Scovel indicates (1988:66) that

> "biological constraints on language learning do not impede ultimate achievement in any linguistic skill except native like phonological fluency."

And Bialystok and Hakuta (1994: 86) to add:

> "There is no evidence at all to assign greater word learning power to children. Syntax [...] remains accessible throughout life."

Whether or not children attain higher levels of proficiency than adults, we mustn't forget that ultimately,

> "[...] the amazing human ability to learn grammar remains with us as long as we remain human" (Bialystok and Hakuta (1994:75).

And little by little, researchers reached the conclusion that there was not a single critical period but that there were multiple critical periods also called "sensitive periods" for phonology, morphology, syntax and semantic.

2. Gender

A number of research show that females are more sociable than males, and that they enjoy group activities much more than males who tend to be more

individualistic. They tend to communicate and interact with their classmates more readily and more actively than male students who prefer working independently and individually. The fact that L2 classes are attended by a vast majority of female students clearly reflects a gender difference between female and male L2 students.

But as far as success is concerned, both female and male students can succeed despite their different learning styles. They all need to be given language activities which suit best their way of learning whether social or more individualistic.

3. Personality

Among the L2 student population, the two personality traits that are the most striking are

- the extroverts and
- the introverts.

While the extroverts enjoy working in groups, expressing themselves, sharing their ideas and opinions with peers, meeting with natives, the introverts prefer working individually and independently without having to interact and cooperate with others.

One area where personality plays an important role is in relation with anxiety. Indeed, according to Gregersen and Horwitz (2002:566), perfectionists, especially when they talk, feel constantly judged by their teachers and their peers, and therefore feel very anxious.

"With respect to language learning, perfectionist students would not be satisfied with merely communicating in their target language – they would want to speak flawlessly, with no grammatical or pronunciation errors, and as easily as a native speaker." (2002:563)

But Lightbown and Spada (2006) still stress the fact that even

today, research is not able to show a direct link between personality and second-language acquisition.

And so, once more, the responsibility of the good language teacher is to make sure that all types of personalities present in the L2 classroom are given a chance not only to fully participate in all the L2 activities but also to succeed in all language activities whether oral or written, individualistic or in groups.

4. Self-esteem

Self-esteem has a profound influence on the quality of L2 learning. Indeed, the learners with a good self-esteem and who are used to being successful are more active, more engaged and more ready to take risks when they learn an L2.

On the other hand, the learners who fail repeatedly lack self-esteem and self-confidence, and therefore tend to be more passive; they display signs of self-helplessness as they have become discouraged by constantly failing in their attempts to learn the L2 to the point that they do not want to try anymore because they are convinced they will fail again.

Once more, the good language teacher has a big responsibility in trying to help students strengthen their self-esteem as we know it is crucial to a solid L2 acquisition. And the best way to do so is by making sure that all students, whether good or weak, have a chance, once in a while, to succeed in their attempts to learn an L2. Therefore, the good language teacher has to present students reasonable and attainable challenges which are neither too easy as they may bore them nor too difficult as they may discourage them.

And if the good language teachers are aware that one of the main strategies good language learners use in order to succeed is

taking risks, they will ascertain that they give their students ample opportunities to take risks with the L2 without fearing to be penalized. And in doing so, they will also help their students to strengthen their self-esteem and self-confidence.

5. Anxiety

Research clearly shows that the L2 classroom is a place that tends to generate a lot of anxiety that directly impacts on students' motivation and success or failure.

Interesting research on anxiety by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) started to clearly show that the 3 most common types of anxiety are oral anxiety, test or exam anxiety, and class anxiety. Oral anxiety is generated by the fact that the learners want to express intelligent ideas as in L1, but are greatly frustrated by their being deprived of a normal mode of communication. Class anxiety is constantly felt by students as it pervades all class activities; indeed, they feel judged, all the time, by their teachers and their peers. And tests/exams generate a lot of anxiety; whereas for the good students, this type of anxiety can stimulate them to achieve their best, for the weak students, it usually will interfere with and weaken their performances.

But still nowadays, no research has been able to show if it is anxiety that lowers the abilities of the students or if it is because their abilities are low that their performance is weak. In fact, studies still do not agree on the impact of anxiety on the learning of L2.

An interesting study by Verma and Nijhavan showed that there is a link between IQ and anxiety: "Higher states of anxiety facilitate learning at upper levels of intelligence, whereas they are associated with poorer performance at lower IQ levels." (Scovel, 1978:136)

Some researchers like Scovel (1978:139) said that there are two kinds of anxiety: a facilitating one which helps the learner to learn, and a debilitating anxiety that makes learning difficult. A few years later, Ely (1986:7) stated that quite often, students who want good marks will tend to participate much more than their counterparts in the L2 class, and will not let anxiety interfere with their progress.

Among all language activities, the oral ones are the ones which generate the biggest amount of anxiety as the students feel embarrassed to make mistakes in front of their peers and their teacher. This will then impact on their willingness to take risks as they want to avoid embarrassing themselves in front of the class.

In fact, researchers are now convinced that the quality of the learning experience which is strongly influenced by the different feelings learners experience when they study an L2 is as important as the methodology and the language materials used by the teachers. And that is why researchers like Scovel (1978) have been encouraging L2 students to write personal journals that enable them to identify the personal factors that strongly influence L2 learning.

For example, through the writing of her own journal, Bailey was able to discover that competitiveness ("Competitiveness being the desire to excel in comparison to others." Bailey, 1995:199) between students in L2 classes play a significant role in the quality of the learning and the degree of the motivation felt by students. In fact, thanks to this kind of personal journals, researchers have realized that there is a "complex relationship between competitiveness and anxiety" (Bailey, 1995:199), and then between "anxiety and

language learning".

According to Bailey (1995:200), it seems that language classroom anxiety can be lessened if the learner views himself/herself as more proficient than his/her classmates, but anxiety is aggravated when he/she sees himself/herself as less proficient as his/her classmates. Therefore, it clearly appears that there is "a cyclic relationship between anxiety and negative competitiveness" (Bailey, 1995:200).

Age seems to also have a deep impact on the level of anxiety that the learners feel. As Gardner and McIntyre state (1989:94-95): "[…] the few studies that have been done on pre-adolescents seem to show that foreign language anxiety is more relevant to language learning among adults." So it seems that the older the students, the more anxious they feel, as the greater the gap between what they want to say and what they can say is, the more frustrated and anxious they feel (Gardner and McIntyre, 1989:96). While in the language classrooms, young L2 learners are allowed not to speak if they do not feel ready for it, teachers expect older learners to talk, and this kind of pressure and expectations definitely raise their level of anxiety. It is also important to keep in mind that while children feel free to take risks and make mistakes, adolescents feel constantly judged by their classmates, and they therefore tend to feel self-conscious about their performance in L2.

Anxiety is clearly an area where the good language teachers must rally their best skills in order to ensure that they create an atmosphere of cooperation and respect in their classes. It is also an area where they must ensure that they correct and evaluate their students in the least disruptive and degrading way by correcting them constructively. It is paramount

that they keep in mind that every student needs to have a chance to succeed in the eyes of his/her classmates.

6. Intelligence

Everybody wonders if one needs to be intelligent to learn an L2. But if you ask people how they define intelligence, they all come up with many different definitions as it is still a concept that is unclear and divisive.

Whereas today, the school system continues to favor through the kinds of programs it offers, two traditional types of intelligence (the verbal/linguistic and the logico/mathematical), during the last twenty years researchers such as Gardner and his team of Harvard researchers (1996) have shown that there are other types of intelligences that should be recognized and taken into consideration in our teaching practices.

And indeed, in our language classes, we have different kinds of learners with different kinds of intelligences (verbal/linguistic, logico/mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, musical/rythmic, and natural); and so, if we want to give all of them a better chance to maximize their learning and succeed, we have to do a better job at answering their needs and interests, by presenting them with a wide variety of language tasks and activities better geared to their types of intelligence.

7. Abilities

As our societies are becoming more and more inclusive, it is all too normal to wonder whether it is possible and desirable to include in our L2 classes students with different abilities ranging from the gifted to what is commonly called the LD students with learning difficulties who quite often show

signs of language and communication impairments.

If we take the case of the province of Ontario (Canada), it is quite interesting to observe that the only subject LD students are automatically allowed not to take is French as an L2! It is quite perplexing as more and more research shows that the learning of an L2 can have a number of positive results not only on their L2 but also on their L1 proficiency, and also on their cognitive, social, cultural and psychological development. Indeed, succeeding in the learning of an L2 can positively boost their self-image and their self-confidence. It also gives them a better chance to becoming not only citizens of the world if they want to travel, but also to having a better chance to find a job if they live in one of the many countries, like Canada, which have several official languages.

8. Motivation

Researchers consider now that motivation is the most important factor for success, and yet, it is the biggest challenge that teachers face in their language classrooms. Indeed, can they motivate the students even if they do not want to learn the L2, and are not motivated?

For Tardif (1997), motivation at school greatly depends on the students' perception of the importance and the usefulness of the language tasks teachers present them; indeed, students who do not understand why they are asked to learn certain grammar rules, vocabulary or functions of the L2 will not put the effort into it. Their motivation also depends on their perception of the demands and the difficulty of the tasks; indeed, if it is too easy, they will be bored, and if it is too hard, they will be discouraged as in order to be motivated, interested and involved, they need to be

presented with challenges, but challenges which are reasonable. Finally, according to Tardif (1997), their motivation will also depend on their perception of the controllability of the task; in other words, they need to feel that they are in control, and that, ultimately, they will be able to do it.

As early as the seventies, a study by Gardner and Lambert (1972) demonstrated that there were 2 major kinds of motivation: the instrumental and the integrative. The instrumental one motivates you to learn an L2 in order to reach a practical goal such as obtaining a job, traveling, attending a conference, etc. Whereas the instrumental motivation is short term, the integrative one is long term as it is triggered by a positive attitude of the L2 learner towards the target language community and culture, and a desire on his/her part to know and understand that community better, and to be part of it. And if you want to become an active and full member of it, you will be motivated and you will work hard in order to get a good command and a good accent of its language. As Ritchie and Bhatia stress it (1996:272), the learner's motivation and ultimate success depend a lot on his/her attitude towards the community and culture he/she is immersed in. In fact, research have shown that when learners want to establish and keep a great distance between them and the rest of the community they live in for all kinds of reasons whether personal, political, economic or social, they will not acquire a good accent and a good command of the L2. Indeed, research shows (Ritchie and Bhatia, 1996:271-272), the accent serves as a "powerful symbol of ethnicity", and depending on his/her accent, the learner will be more or less accepted by his/her community. Furthermore, it is important to point out that the learners' motivation also depends on their

empathy to the other members of the target language community as well as to its culture. Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration as it strongly impacts on the learners' motivation to learn an L2 is their self-esteem, the "flexibility of (their) ego-boundaries" (Ritchie and Bhatia, 272) as to whether or not they fear they will lose their own language, culture and identity if they show interest in another one; in other words, do they feel threatened by the L2 language and culture?

An interesting study by Gardner and McIntyre (1991) emphasized that students who were instrumentally and integratively motivated learned much more than the others. It also clearly demonstrated that the integrative motivation has a long-term influence on the learners whereas the instrumental motivation stops as soon as the learners have reached their goals.

Keeping these principles in mind when considering the school children, it becomes clear that the L2 teachers have a number of powerful tools (internet, e-mail, films, videos, trips, films, music, exchange, etc.) provided by the new technologies as well as the communicative approach, and the globalization of our world that can adequately equip them to succeed in motivating their L2 students better than ever.

9. Attitude

As mentioned previously, repeated failures without ever being given a chance to succeed can only have detrimental effects on the students' self-esteem. Indeed, those who never succeed are discouraged, and become more and more passive overtime. Since they keep failing, they give up on trying again as they are convinced that they will fail again; they will not take risks and they fall into a state of self-helplessness as

cogniticians like Tardif (1997:97) and Wenden (1991:57) point out. And the only way they can change their attitude to the better is to have teachers who understand that they have to give them a chance to be successful.

The teachers' expectations also have a strong impact on their students' attitude as studies by Tardif (1997), Brien (1990) and Bogaards (1988) have demonstrated. But it is important to stress the fact that these expectations need to be neither too high as they may discourage the learners, nor too low as they may bore them, but just reasonable to trigger the right attitude towards learning.

It is also paramount to stress that the L2 learners' attitude is deeply influenced by the socio-political situation of a country. If we take the case of Canada, we've been able to clearly see a major shift of attitude towards the learning of the country's second official language, French, over the last 30 years. Whereas during the Trudeau era, we could observe a real interest and motivation towards the learning of French throughout the country, the three Quebec referenda as well as the change in the immigrant population have dramatically altered the general attitude towards the learning of FSL. In the West of the country for example, where the economic and social relations are more North-South than West-East, the learning of French by the school children is more and more often questioned by families. In Canada which is regularly faced with the issue of the uniqueness and the distinctiveness of Quebec as well as its special status, families may develop a negative attitude towards French which they will pass on to their children who, at school, will display disinterest towards the learning of this language. Therefore today, many FSL teachers complain about spending much time and energy struggling with their students' lack of motivation and negative attitude towards French instead of teaching them the language.

As very briefly mentioned above, to fully understand how powerfully demotivating a negative attitude towards an L2 and its culture can be, one should have present in mind the very interesting study done in the late seventies by Schumann (1976). He studied a Costa Rican immigrant of 33 years by the name of Alberto whose economic and social status was considerably lower than that of the community he lived in, who tried to learn ESL while working in the United-States, and who failed to do so. He was first tested to make sure that he was not cognitively impaired and that he had a normal IQ. But despite the ESL courses he took over a period of one year, he made very little gains and only used a pidgin of English. In fact, it was clear in his case that his pidginization of English was his way of refusing to become a full member of the target language community he lived in for fear of losing his own identity, his own culture and his own language; by using a pidgin of English, he clearly established a social and psychological distance between him and the target language group he rejected, and feared to be assimilated in.

Schumann's study clearly points to the powerfully positive or, in this case, negative effects of motivation and attitude of a learner on the great or poor quality of his/her learning. To put it differently, the study shows that the more distant an L2 learner is from the community he/she is learning the language of, the more incomplete his/her L2 learning will be.

And so, in countries where there are many different linguistic and cultural groups, L2 teachers have to be aware of the many societal and psychological factors that impact on their students' attitude towards the target language, and have to try to use new strategies to counteract their negative effects.

10. Learning styles

Since the last 30 years when L2 teaching became more and more learner-centered, researchers have been particularly interested in the ways L2 students learn, so that they have managed to identify a number of different learning styles among the student population. Nunan (1989:52), for example, classified L2 learners into 4 categories : the concrete learners who love action, games, group work, and contacts with the natives, as opposed to the analytic learners who like to study grammar, to read, and to study on their own. He also opposed the communicative learners who like to use the L2 with their classmates and their teachers as well as with the natives, and who enjoy hearing it on TV, radio and CD, to those who like being in a structured L2 classroom, following their teachers' instructions, and who do their homework; in other words, the teachers' pets!

A few years later, Felder and Henriques (1995) offered a slightly more complex categorization of the students which we think is great as they identified 5 pairs of learning styles: the actives and the reflectives, the sensing and the intuitives, the visuals and the auditives/verbals, the serialists and the globals, the inductives and the deductives. To this taxonomy, Cyr (1996) and others added the extroverts and the introverts as well as the field dependents and the field independents, the reflectives and the impulsives. There are also a number of minutely detailed taxonomies with tens of different learning styles that were identified, but we

favor the above taxonomies as they are not too complex and have identified the most common learning styles that all L2 teachers encounter in their language classrooms.

And as Besnard (1995) argues, these taxonomies offer precious tools to the good language teachers as they help them remain aware that learners do not learn the same way, and that they have to present them with a wide variety of language tasks and activities that will give a chance to every learning style and every student to succeed in his/her learning.

11. The good language learner

Another individual difference is that some language learners are naturally good and some others are not so good at learning an L2.

In 1978, when a wide scale research was done on the good language learner by a team of researchers (Naiman, Frolich, Stern and Todesco) at OISE (Toronto, Canada), it was clearly established that some language learners learn languages easily while others experience many more difficulties.

Indeed, the good language learners seem to naturally be using about 7 good language strategies that enable them to become efficient in their L2 learning. As the study shows, they are actively involved in their learning, and they take advantage of every opportunity, in and out of the classroom, to use the L2 as they understand that such practice will facilitate their learning; they behave like detectives who look for the mistakes in their own written and oral productions, and they do not hesitate to ask teachers and the natives of the L2 to correct them; in other words, they do not shy away from making mistakes as they use them as learning tools towards a solid command of the

language; they also manage to develop on their own strategies to improve their accent, their vocabulary and their grammar skills.

Since the time this major study was conducted that made language teachers aware of the efficient strategies good language learners use, we have also come to realize that these strategies can be taught to less effective language learners in order to improve their learning skills.

Furthermore, it has been shown (Besnard, 1995) how the good language teachers, by developing appropriate language tasks and activities, can firstly expose their students to these strategies, and secondly, can make them use these new learning tools in order to improve and maximize their learning. Indeed, the good language teachers should develop language exercises that make the poor language learners use the strategies described above in the hope that progressively and through proper practice, they will use them more naturally and readily so that they will become better language learners.

In the perspective of individual differences, the other essential insight the Naiman's study provided the L2 teachers with is that successful language learning is not achieved in a single way. Indeed, it was demonstrated that among the good language learners observed, some liked studying grammar while others hated it, some would memorize lists of vocabulary and grammar rules while others would hate doing that and would learn the L2 in a more intuitive and holistic way, some would seek the natives' company to practice the L2 while others would rather study with books. And consequently, the teaching community became aware that there is not a unique path to learning an L2, and that

they have to accommodate the variety of needs of the students who take these different paths.

But despite these differences among the good language learners, the ingredients that all of them share were that they were all highly motivated, they were all actively involved in the L2 learning, and they all shared a positive attitude towards the L2, its culture and its people. And these are also qualities that good language teachers have to make all of their students, whether good or poor, become fully aware of in order to properly equip them in their learning.

12. Conclusion

Besides being fully aware of the individual differences that make each student unique, and of the need for a greater variety of teaching strategies, there is one more step that the good language teachers need to take in order to be able to maximize their students' learning. Indeed, they have to realize that their teaching style is directly influenced by their learning style, and that unconsciously, they tend to teach the way they like to learn.

They therefore need to analyze their own learning style and teaching style, and let themselves be inspired by the newest developments in the field of individual differences in order to then succeed in opening themselves up to new ways of teaching languages.

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Christine Besnard is an associate professor at Glendon College, York University (Toronto) where she teaches French applied linguistic and psycholinguistic applied to the learning of second languages at the undergraduate and graduate level. She has written and co-written a number of articles and French language books, and has also given papers in Canada, France, USA and Cuba. When she first started her career, her research focused on unconventional L2 methodology and on the contributions of cognitive psychology to L2 learning. She is now specializing in L2 learning by at-risk students, and especially, by dyslexic and Asperger Syndrom (or high functioning autistic) students.

Barbara Spinelli and Roberto Dolci

Developing a Multilevel Language Learning in a Powerful Environment: A Case Study

Learning a foreign language should not simply be reduced to a matter of acquiring basic skills but calls for a broader literacy that it is essential to preparing future generations who will have to live in a complex society characterized by increased "internationalization" and "interculturalization". Technology can play such a crucial role. Computer-based collaboration tools, enabling students to work together in groups, greatly increase the contexts of meta-reflection on what it means to became "literate" or an "educated citizen."

Introduction

The implementation of CMC in language teaching has expanded over the last few years. Several teaching experiences following Cultural Project (Fustenberg 2001, Beltz 2000) have created different learning environments and collaborative intercultural contexts. These experiences have achieved different results related to the environments, group collaboration strategies, language acquisition theories, and goal setting. This article is a description of a specific project based on a complex environment, which includes classrooms and various CMC implementations. More specifically, the study analyzes the reciprocal influence that can occur between learning environment and learning process in terms of social behavior and actions related to the Ecological Approach (van Lier 1996, 2002; Kramsch 1994, 2002; Bakthin 1981, Vygotsky 1986), and the language acquisition theory according to van Lier's AAA (Awareness, Authenticity, Autonomy). A number of benefits for students have been reported:

a) awareness of learning strategies and cultural issues,

b) awareness of linguistic and social skills,

c) autonomy and authenticity of learning because it is a student-centered process.

Learners became independent by monitoring their identity repertory (Kramsch 2002, Scollon 2002) and multilingual repertory (Lemke 2002).

The *Incontro* project

The teaching experiences in CMC mentioned above indicate that studying a foreign language does not simply mean the acquisition of basic skills but calls for broader literacy that is essential to prepare future generations who will have to live in a complex society characterized by increased "internationalization" and "interculturalization". This is where technology plays such a crucial role. Computer-based collaboration tools, enabling students to work together in groups, greatly increase the scope of meta-reflection on what it means to become "literate" or an "educated citizen." Thus the main aim of the Incontro Project was to create an intercultural ground where the interaction of different worldviews can evaluate and minimize differences in socio-cultural behavior, ideologies, and the ways of communicating concepts. To this purpose an online connection was established between the Advanced Italian Language students of Smith College in the Usa and the University of Venice's Computer-Assisted Learning Language and Teaching course students in Italy. Participants were asked to choose a specific socio-cultural subject (*e.g.,* immigration/racism, gender studies, educational systems, etc). and then they had to produce a final project. They worked in groups of four (two Italians and two Americans). Each group analyzed a different topic and designed a website on it by interacting and by sharing information from two different cultural perspectives – Italian students examined the subject in the United States, while American students examined it in Italy. The final websites were the result of this negotiation of cultural identities which did not represent the American or the Italian community's perspective but the shared cultural knowledge built in the common space, the idioculture (Smagorinsky and O'Donnel-Allen, 2000) of every single micro-community identified by the name each group gave itself. The Virtual Learning Environment laid the foundation for an intensive and articulated interaction using and adapting open resource tools (forums, bulletin board, email, etc.) The first phase focused mainly on what Riel called "the getting ready phase" (1992), adapted, in this new context, to the students' knowledge of collaborative and learning processes. They discussed group dynamics and the learning process in a virtual environment, analyzing literature provided by the teachers. During the project constant evaluation was carried out through online and classroom meetings, self and group evaluation questionnaires and final

questionnaires, focused on relational dynamics between participants in an electronic environment. The data collected and a final plenary discussion through videoconference stressed the importance of the participants' critical cultural awareness (Candlin 1987, Byram 1997) which the project had enhanced. More importantly, it gave Italian students, trained to be teachers, a crucial opportunity to experiment with this virtual environment and to reflect on new ways to improve teaching and learning in electronic communities.

a) getting ready,

b) opening the circle,

c) project planning,

d) exchanging the work,

e) creating the publication and

f) closing the circle.

This process oriented students from a personal to a more complex social exchange and collaborative work in a multiple space. Each phase occurred in a specific environment: the classroom, specific forums, a videoconference. As mentioned above, phase (a) was a preparatory stage. During phase (b) students got to know each other through communicative activities. Afterwards they selected topics for their final project, phase (c), and they divided into specific work groups. To accomplish their final project they planned tasks and exchanged materials on the selected subject, phase (d). The conclusion of this work consisted of the construction of an intercultural website, phase (e), and a shared metareflection on their learning process through a videoconference, phase (f). Figure 1 illustrates the multiple level of the model of language learning approach which this pedagogical path is based on.

The multidimensional learning environment and the activities-based projects involved multiple worlds inside and outside the institution (multi scale process) requiring a personalization of cultural and linguistic experiences and integrating their different learning styles (multimodal learning). Most importantly, this complex environment offered learners an opportunity to experiment with multilingual exchanges through different social tasks.

The Multidimensional Environment

Over the last fifteen years a large amount of research in learning has been devoted to the definition of effective and powerful learning environments (Jonassen and Land 2000, De Corte, Verschaffel, Entwistle and van Merriënboer 2003, Wenger 1998, Lave and Wenger 1991).

New approaches to learning such as constructivist approach and the socio-cultural theory, (Land and Hannifin 2000:3), point out that the main goal of this process has to be the construction of shared knowledge through collaboration and dialogue. In order to support these new perspectives there is the need of building an appropriate environment, a student-centered learning environment. This new setting should facilitate a collaborative, active and reflective work through meaningful tasks (Jonassen 1999).

According to Land and Hannafin (2000:6) learning environment, in order to be powerful, has to support

"individuals or groups as they attempt to negotiate multiple rather than singular points of view, reconcile competing and conflicting perspectives and beliefs and construct personally relevant meaning."

The effectiveness of such environment is also determined by the integration of different contexts which includes classroom, the outside world, virtual spaces, etc.

To this purpose, technology can offer a great support if we consider it as a space where we

"move from learners interaction
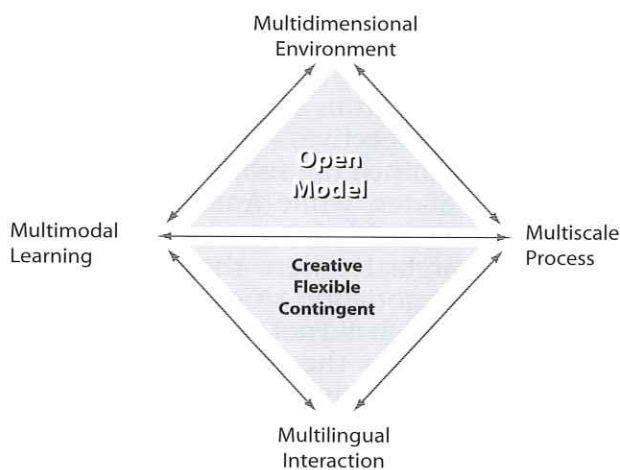
Figure 1

Language Acquisition: An Open Model

The complex environment created for this project is based on a theoretical model of acquisition which is open, creative, flexible and contingent. Participants organized their individual learning process. They adapted the syllabus *(flexibility)* to their unexpected needs *(contingency)* and added tasks to accomplish their goals and final project *(creativity)*.

Learners explored new social behavior patterns through activity-based projects following six phases that Riel defines (1992: 16,18,27):

with computer to interaction with other humans via computer" (Warschauer 2000).
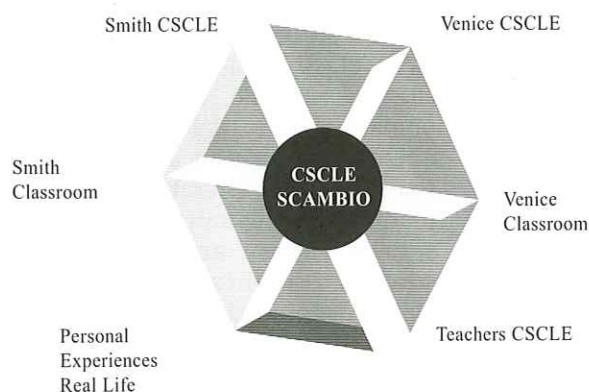
Figure 2

The *Incontro* project environment has been developed according to this new perspective. It is multidimensional since it includes different environments in which learners can accomplish different learning tasks.

Classroom Smith and Classroom Venice (Fig. 2) represent "traditional" classrooms where students and teacher meet.

These two classes had two different goals: American students should enhance their linguistic and intercultural competence while Computer Assisted Language Teaching students should experiment the use of technology as a training to teach languages with this tool. They did not focus on the English language and culture learning but rather on theories and practices of CALL methodology.

CSCLE Smith has the structure and the tools of a typical VLE, with asynchronous discussion forums. Teacher used this environment to collect syllabus, resources and materials related to the course, to communicate with her students and to supervise their wok.

CSCLE Venice consists of an asynchronous discussion forum in which the Italian teacher and students shared opinions, found so-

lutions for the project main tasks, and defined strategies to improve group work and to solve conflicts.

In this environment they reflected upon their future as teachers and their behavior as students in this specific learning context.

CSCLE Teachers mainly is composed of asynchronous email exchanges and meeting phone calls between the two teachers/supervisors. In this environment, teachers made decisions to enhance their project.

External environment includes all the involved contexts beyond the Incontro environment such as home, multimedia rooms, libraries, and other resources useful to gather information for students' work, for instance friends, experts, organizations, etc.

CSCLE Scambio is the environment in which students accomplished the main task: the organization and the construction of their website.

This environment is in itself a multilevel CSCL (Fig. 3).

It includes *Presentiamoci* and *Bar caffè,* asynchronous forums built to enhance the social interaction. In these forums students meet off task, and talk about their lives and
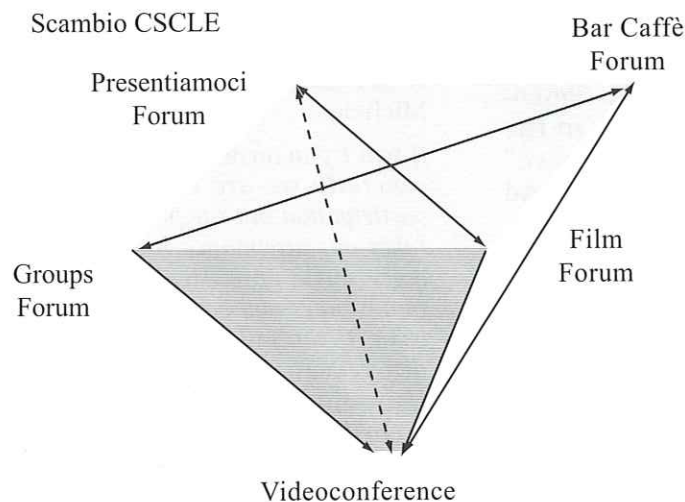
interests.

In CSCL open dialogue and social interaction are essential to enable cognitive processes which allow the collaborative building of knowledge (Wegerif 1998). This is particularly important when, in a CSCL, there is the encounter of learners from heterogeneous cultures, as in the Incontro project. Tools for the illusion of social presence have been only partially developed. Students could use their photos as icons which appear on each message they sent, but few of them used this tool, while others use different avatars to identify themselves.

The forums Gruppi are the on-task forums, where the students, divided into small groups of four or five, worked on the website. Each forum dealt with a topic: immigration, young generations, education, politics. Only students belonging to the group were allowed to write in their forums, but everyone could enter and read the discussions.

The forum Film is an on-task forum in which students discussed movies showed during the course. Movies were related to the topics chosen by groups, and they represented an additional source of information for their websites.

The videoconference is a synchronous environment planned at the end of this project. In this context students were able to reflect upon their learning experience in this specific environment.

All these environments were integrated. For instance, some students used the forum *Presentiamoci* to submit a questionnaire and to do a survey which

Figure 3

was useful for their group; the forum film discussions were useful to exchange ideas on the main subject of different website; the external world was useful to contact expert, to ask for technical help, and to gather information for surveys; private e-mails were fruitful to correct language mistakes and to revise website materials, etc.

Multiple identities

According to Kramsch,

"language learners develop multiple scale identities through the lower and higher scale-level responses they engage in with their environment" (2002:6).

The adaptive response to this multiple social context, which manipulates the structure of a standard classroom, asks learners to refer to their wide range of social identities with their values, beliefs, and practices (Lemke 2002). The dialogical and symmetric communication among participants led them to play a variety of roles such as novice or expert, insider or outsider of a cultural community, educator or educated, friend or colleague etc. Learner identity can thus be considered as work-in-progress (Lemke 2002:73) and as a result of this process students could experiment with – and gradually be more conscious of – their potential identity repertory (Lemke 2002:76). At the beginning of their work, students of *Incontro* project played specific roles required by the particular environment (in the forum *Presentiamoci* they were "friends", in the Forums gruppi they were "novice" regarding the foreign culture and "expert" of target culture, etc.). Once they became more sensitive to the dynamics of the social system and tested a variety of interactional structures, they became more and more aware of their identity repertory and played different roles even within the same message.

The following examples show a dynamic switching of roles:

Delle domande e chiaraficazione: Per le classi italiane, l'esame e la valutazione unico? Non c'è temi, voti per partecipazione, ecc? C'è un limite per la numero di volti uno studente può dare un esame?Tutti gli esami sono orali, o avete gli esame scritti per dei soggetti? Grazie! Lavorerò sulle mie pagine questa settimana. Se avete altre domane, me li domandate! Mary

(I would like to ask you some questions and clarifications: is there only one exam and a final grade? Are there other criteria of assessment like participation, etc.? Do you have just oral exams or do you also have written exams for specific topics? Thank you! I am working on my pages this week, if you have other questions ask me! Mary)

Proverò a rispondere brevemente alle tue domande: – In genere non viene dato un voto per la partecipazione (ma spesso durante l'esame l'insegnante tiene conto della partecipazione di uno studente a lezione) – Il numero di volte in cui si può ripetere un esame è stabilito dalle singole università e ci sono molte differenze. Ad esempio a Lingue a Venezia un esame può essere ripetuto solo 3 volte, mentre a Lingue a Padova 6 volte. Questo non è affatto giusto! – Gli esami sono prevalentemente orali, però con la riforma molti professori preferiscono fare anche esami scritti (multiple-choice or student-produced responses) Invece come si svolgono gli esami in USA? Michele

(I will try to answer your questions: generally we are not graded on participation but the professor often takes our attendance into account, every single university decides how many times you can take the same exam if you fail. There are a lot of differences. For instance, at the University of Venice you can take an exam three times, at Padua six times. This is unfair!Generally we have oral exams but with the reform many

professors prefer to submit written exams. What happens in the USA? Michele)

Thank you for the information!In the US the grading system varies from class to class. A language class, for example, usually is graded on participation, daily homework, quizzes, and written assignments. Classes such as litterature and philosophy are usually graded on several papers, and sometimes student presentations. Science classes are graded on the mid-term exam, the final, quizzes, and lab reports.

There are almost no oral exams here – our "finals" (exams at the end of the semester) are either written exams or long papers. Mary

Thank you,Mary! As usual you're a good informant!: D Have you any other questions about Italian system of evaluation? If so, write them to me! Ciao! Michele

In these exchanges learners played their roles as novices, asking questions about a system they do not know and experts, providing information related to their personal life and cultural experience. They also represented the "direct voices" of their culture; the use of different languages defines the roles of outsider ("I speak your language when I ask questions about your cultural system") and insider ("I speak my language when I talk about my cultural system"). Participants not only changed roles but they recognized and selected them ("you're a good informant!").

Supporting each other in this role exchange, learners became aware of their cultural and linguistic knowledge and how this knowledge could be useful for their peers. The following is an example of tutoring in linguistic issues:

Oh, yesterday I learnt other things while watching "Il dottor T e le donne" (not such a good movie...): to say "lo sistemo io" you can say "I'll fix him", doesn't it sound

good?! And then instead of saying "I'm sure" the main character kept on saying "I'm positive"!!! Isn't it weird? Am I right, American girls? Are the two expressions synonyms? Michele

Haaa Michele you are AWESOME. I can't stand Richard Gere. He' a terrible actor isn't he?

Yes "I'm sure" and "I'm positive" are synonyms UNLESS the person using "I'm sure" was saying it in a sarcastic tone. In that case saying "I'm sure" is saying that you do not believe that person because you don't trust them.

For example:

Girl 1: Why did you light my house on fire?
Girl 2: I thought you wanted me to light your house on fire.
Girl 1: I'm sure!
Very sarcastic.
ciao ciao,
Claire

This student' s e-mail shows how learners started to adopt teaching strategies such as giving explanations, using examples in context, etc. They realized they could contribute to the shared learning process even through the active role of *educator*.

Multimodal learning

As mentioned previously, an open model of acquisition is non-linear and depends on the multi-levels of interaction, which occur between language, learner, and environment. This complex context of different communities, interactions, and exchanges makes different ways of learning possible and, consequently, the acquisition of new learning behavior through simulation and repetition. It represents the "scaffolding" defined by Bruner (1983:60). The activities were determined by the learners themselves to accomplish their tasks. They became problem solvers and they helped each other to reach their goal, which was the final project. In the process they discovered their peers' learning styles. The following examples demonstrate that from initial group work managed by a single leader, learners gradually moved to collaborative work through a symmetrical participation simulating their leader's behavior.

Care ragazze,

è giunto il momento di considerare tutto il materiale che abbiamo e decidere come organizzarlo.

Innanzitutto: siamo tutte soddisfatte di quello che abbiamo oppure sarebbe meglio avere più materiale?

Esprimiamo tutte la nostra opinione a riguardo per avere entro la fine della settimana un panorama completo.

Buon lavoro!!!E' impegnativo, ma ce la stiamo cavando bene...che ne dite?

Daniela

(Hi girls, now we need to consider all our material and we need to decide how to organize it. First of all: are we all satified about what we have done or it would be better to collect more materials? Let's give all our opionion about it in order to have the whole picture by the end of thsi week.This work is hard but we are handling it very well... what do you think? Daniela)

Ciao tutti!

What do you think of organizing all of our information so we create a link for each group? Then we can list the links at the first page, and show perhaps the Italian and American flags? We could also divide the different parts of the WebPages so each person can create their own site?

Sarah

Hallo!!!

I tell you my ideas:

We could divide the website in three parts (as the groups)- each part could consist of a brief introduction (perhaps with some pictures too) and a series of links to the website we found.

I think the groups should decide what to include in their part of the work.

What do you think?

Bye

Alberta

ciao ragazze!

abbiamo trovato tanto informazione...adesso dobbiamo organizare. Mi piace l'idea ad avere la prima pagina diviso con tre sotto titole (nostri gruppi), possiamo mettere anche un descrizione dei links, e alcuni foto.

Alexandra

(Hi girls! We have a lot of information ... now we need to organize it. I like the idea of having the first page with three subtitles, our groups, we can also put a descriptions of some links and some pictures. Alexandra)

Ciao a tutti!

Penso che dividere i gruppo con ogni "link" sia un buon'idea. Forse, tutti sono responsabili per la prima pagina e, come Alberta ed Alexandra hanno detto, ogni gruppo puo creare il site per ogni topico.

Sarah

(Hi all! I think that spliting every group with a link is a good idea. We all might be responsible for thr first page and, as Alberta and Alexandra said, each group can create a site for every topic. Sarah)

Cara Sarah,

sono d'accordo con te sulla divisione dei gruppi per ogni argomento e sulla collaborazione per la prima pagina.

(Dear Sarah, I agree with you. We can split our groups'work and we can collaborate for the first page).

In the first page we could include a brief introduction on immigration (citing the arguments we chose for our groups), followed by or with the links to other three pages which will include the arguments and links of the three

groups...Spero di essere stata chiara, sono stanca e ho ancora molto da lavorare! (I hope to make it clear, I am tired and I still have a lot of work to do!)

ciao a tutte!

Alberta

ciao ciao!

okay....oggi sarah and I siamo andati a lavorare con Indra sul nostro sito....OH: grazie indra e sarah, la vostra aiuto e stato molto affetivo! Indra ha lavorato bene sul sito di politica, e soggiorno ecc. Sara ha cominciato fare un bel sito dei steriotipi di Italiani come un link...ed io ho cominciato una pagina

*(Hi sarah and I met Indra to work together for our site ...Oh: thanks Indra and Sarah, your help was really effective! Indra has worked very well on her site on immigration. Sarah started to do a good site on Italian stetereotypes with a link... and I have started to do one page ...)*of the influences of Italy on american and vice versa. Okay....avete any other ideas??? non siamo molti sicuri on our progects but they other coming out good the same... alberta: cosa sta facendo, non capivamo bene come abbiamo diviso il lavoro *(Alberta: what are you doing? Maybe we did not understand what we were supposed to do and how to divide our work...)* So sara and I read your messages and tried our best to understand and follow them... if you have ideas and/or suggestions let us know because we are meeting again tomorrow to finish everything and send you the sites!

thanks!

alex

Care ragazze,

vi chiedo scusa se il mio contributo è stato piuttosto scarso ultimamente...

Alberta...per la home page mi sembra che le tue idee siano come sempre ottime!

Che ne dite di inserire le bandiere italiana ed americana? In merito ad un'introduzione all'immigrazione, che taglio vorreste darle?

Daniela

(Hi girls, I apologize. My work was very little ...Alberta for the Homepage your ideas are great as usual! What about inserting Italian and American flags?How would you organize the introduction to the immigration topic?)

Ciaooo a tutti!

Sono d'accordo con Daniela, dobbiamo avere le bandiere italiana e americano, "it's appropriate" per il nostro topico. Anche, Alexandra grazie per le tue idee, penso che siano buoni per il nostro web site. Oh, grazie Indra e Alexandra per il vostro aiuto! Allora, come possiamo tutte le pagine insieme?

So, have we agreed to make a page according to Alberta's suggestions? Come vogliamo dividere il lavoro? Posso cercare le bandiere e delle foto per la prima pagina? Forse, ogni gruppo "provides a link" to their websites anche? Che ne pensate?

Sarah

(Hi all, I agree with Daniela, we need the Italian and American flag, "it's appropriate" to our topic. Also, thanks Alexandra for your ideas. I think they are good for our website. Oh, thanks Indra and Alexandra for your help! Well, how could we put all pages together? So, have we agreed to make a page according to Alberta's suggestions? How would we divide our work? Can I look for some images for our first page? May each group provide a link to their website, as well? What do you think? Sarah)

Learners developed an independent control of their learning process, switching topics as needed, from academic to everyday life, integrating off-task and on-task activities, and intentionally choosing what was relevant for them to study or to learn, as the following example shows:

Grazie per i siti Rossella! Tu sei meraviglioso a me! Dopo io parla di domande io leggerò tutto.

(Thanks for the sites Rossella!! You are great! Once I have naswered your questions I will read all of them.)

Eeeek! I have bad Italian don't I?

Domanda 1: In general there are three different degrees in America: an undergraduate degree (often called a bachelor's degree), a graduate degree (often called a Master's) and a PhD.

Currently in America, in order to be able to get an adequately paying job you have to have an undergraduate degree. There are many options for jobs after completing this degree, however often those jobs hinge on how well the economy is doing at the time.

After a master's degree in a particular field, there is more of a possibility of getting an upper level position in the work force. This is because you are considered a skilled-worker.

If someone decides to get a PhD. it can be assumed that they want to work in academia because PhD's allow you to teach in universities and colleges. These answers are brief and general, I know, but they should give you somewhat of a better idea of how it works.

Domanda 2: In order to get a post-doctorate you do HAVE TO have a doctorate degree. Post-doctorates are for those people who want to continue some project or research before they look for a permanent job at a college or university.

Most people apply for post-doctorates with the professors they want to work with. The professor does get to choose whether or not he or she wants to take on that post-doctorate applicant.

Come sta il tuo ragazzo? Il tuo naso? Calcio, mamma mia. Io giocava calcio a high school. Dunque, ero molto molto male. Io sono il più peggiore (come si dice "the worst"?) a correrendo.

(How is your boyfriend? His nose?Soccer, my goodness. I used to play soccer at the High School. But I was really really bad. I am "il più

peggiore", how do you say "the worst", running.)

S - L - O - W. Sooooo slow.

Ciao ciao, Claire

Ciao Claire,

grazie mille per le tue risposte, mi sono state davvero utili per capire di più il sistema americano.Leggi i siti che ti ho inviato e chiedimi pure se ci sono parti che non sono chiare. Sono pronta a risponderti!

Se trovi altri siti sull'educazione post-doctoral in the U.s., me li scrivi per favore? Grazie.

Il tuo italiano si capisce bene, non ti preoccupare e non essere troppo pessimista.

Per quanto riguarda il calcio... il mio ragazzo sta meglio per fortuna.

Anche tu giocavi a calcio? Non penso che tu fossi la peggiore (the worst) come hai scritto!

A presto Rossella

(Hi Claire, thaks a lot for your answers, they were very useful to better understand the American system. Read the sites I sent you and feel free to ask me if you have any doubts. I am ready to answer! If you find other sites on post-doctoral education in US, could you please send them to me?Thanks. You Italian is comprehensible, do not worry and don't be so pessimist. For what it concerns the soccer...fortunately my boyfriend is getting better.Do you use to play soccer, as well? I do not think you were the worst as you said! Take care, Rossella)

In this exchange participants switch reciprocally from an on-task subject to an off-task dialogue related to the personal experience of a member. This communication also includes tutorial behavior focused on a grammar issue and an indirect correction of a linguistic mistake ("Non penso che tu fossi la peggiore". *I do not think you were the worst*).

Multilingual interaction

In a collaborative community the negotiation of meaning and of social identities occurs when we use language. According to Lemke (2002: 84), during a language learning process, this use has to be included in a long-term goal, which leads learners to practice multilingual behavior in a community. Lemke maintains that a language-learning context should develop an "affective sensibility of language use that we must better articulate in order to orient language learners to what language, first or second, is fully capable of" (Lemke 2002:83). Thus, a collaborative activity is most efficient when members can use their multilingual repertoire. The *Incontro* complex environment of acquisition required a whole range of social engagements and interpersonal relationships which affected the learner's linguistic behavior. Participants were allowed to choose L1, L2 or both, and different registers (formal or informal, task based or off task based, youth language, colloquial language, etc.), as they wished. This choice led students towards bilingual or plurilingual utterances employing different languages in the same message, which included peculiar elements of electronic text:

Ciao a tutti,
Il mio sito è come questo:
"I film Italiani Politici"
una regista:
i film
un altra regista:
i film
etc.

Posso mettere il address qui se volete. Could you look at it and help me edit my grammar mistakes? (I know there are plenty!) Ma devo finire una cosa piccola prima.

Becca

(Hi all, my site will be like the following: "Italian movies on politics"... a director:.. movies: ... another director: ... movies…etc. I can put the address if you like. Could you look at it and help me edit my grammar mistakes? I know there are plenty! But first I need to do a small thing. Becca)

In the following message a student shows her doubts through visual and verbal codes using both L1 and L2. She uses L2 to ask for or give information to the other members and L1 to reassure them of her participation in the group work or to ask for help. Every group gradually developed its peculiar and shared community speech. Some words and electronic codes became symbolic and recurred in the language interactions of every single community. Thus through this multilingual repertoire, participants could add new dimensions of their Selves (Lemke 2002: 84) and could expand their voices. In addition, they could identify themselves as a "community". Scollon (2000: 130) defines an idiolect as

"...one in which extensive exchanges with the environment are characteristic, and which is highly adaptable in terms of that environment".

Scollon adds that an idiolect should include all the performances of a person depending on "a community-wide structures of social interaction". Each participant in this multiple community found his/her personal "voice", his/her idiolect determined by multiple languages:

Vi comunico con sommo piacere che HO FINITO LE MIE TRE PAGINE WEB!!!!

Mancano solo gli ultimi ritocchi (cioè i link tra le pagine e coi siti esterni!!!)

Lo ammetto sono una frana... domani mi farò spiegare per l'ennesima volta come si fanno.

L'indice è:

(I am very glad to let you know that I HAVE DONE MY THREE WEBPAGES!!!! I need just to finalize last things, which means the links among pages and with exter-

nal links!!!. I need to say that "sono una frana" I am a disaster" ... tomorrow I will try to have someone to explain me again how to make them.

The index is:)
MUSIC AND POLITICS:
1.Where has American protest song gone?
2.Voices of Protest(/Dissent?)
– Steve Earle
– Ani DiFranco
Mandi!
(Bye,)

This message is an example of personal linguistic strategies, which includes: a) the use of icons to express feelings or to replace a verbal code for greetings; b) L1 and L2 focusing on on-task activity; c) the use of metaphors in a colloquial register ("sono una frana", I am a disaster) and the Italian dialect of Friuli ("mandi", Bye).

Through their idiolect participants identify their own selves among the other selves but they also identify the community they belong to among the other communities. The result of this interaction is a "melting pot" of linguistic behaviors, which can be defined as an idiolect community. The following examples show the use of colloquial and idiomatic expressions in both L1 and L2 which became, through the interactional process, shared linguistic resources recognized by the members of a specific group/community.

Siamo stati grandi! *(We were great!)*

We rocked!!!!

Ciao Rossella

Ho appena trovato questo messaggio - Povero Michele! Voglio dire che leggo Enrico IV di Pirandello per la mia classe del teatro italiano - non e facile, ma mi piace un sacco! L'hai letto?

Ciao Gretchen

(I have just found this message. Poor Michele! I `d like to say that I read the Pirandello's EnricIV for my class of Italian theatre. It is not easy but I like it "un sacco" a lot! Have you read it? Ciao Gretchen)

Learners simulated linguistic behavior used by native speakers (we rocked used by Italian students and un sacco used by American students) and included it in a "new" multiple code of this shared space.

Multi scale process

Learning a language has to be conceived as a long-term process. Lemke (2002:75) maintains that

"the classroom is exactly like the rest of that social word in that it contributes to the formation of identities and habits of action that are formed across the longer timescales we also spend in other places."

In this statement, Lemke points out that a continuum should occur between the classroom and the other multiple social worlds connected to the classroom through the individual experiences of its members. The multiple environments of this project promoted the interaction with different social communities and the articulation of learning itself: learning as belonging to a community, learning as doing through practice, learning as experience, which should be meaningful for learners, and learning as affirmation of social identity in a community (Wenger 1998:5).

Students felt this process was a relevant experience in their outside lives and an investment for their future. Following their own particular interests, they found multiple connections with the external world and they involved the other communities they belonged to in it.

Dear Eliza, if you can find tomorrow evening I'll meet with some boys and girls (scouts) from 18 to 21 years and I can give them your "questionnaire", ok?

Ciao

Niko

Michele, I'm not sure if you are allowed to take a class twice. I'll ask my friends and see if they know.

Mary

In the first example a student helped a peer by submitting her questionnaire to a scout group of which she is the leader. In the second example, a learner involved the community of friends and university colleagues asking them for help with her peer's work. Participants were completely involved in their tasks, which were perceived by them as meaningful for their educational and social experience and no longer merely imposed by their teacher:

Ciao, le mie colleghe!

Il sogetto dell'immigrazione e molto incendiario negli Stati Uniti! Il sogetto della lingua e importantissimo - si deve parlare soltanto inglese? Quello e la questione di cui mi interesso il piu dell'immigrazione americana.

E mi interesso dell'immigrazione italiana perche voglio abitare in Italia! Credo che sia molto difficile di farlo legalmente per tutti i cittadini dei paesi fuori della Unione Europea. Ma sogno di vivere nella Toscana, un giorno

(Hello, my colleagues! The immigration is a very fervent debate in United States. The subject of the language is very important. Do we have just to speak English? That is the aspect I am most interested in. I am interested in the Italian immigration because I want to live in Italy! I believe it is very difficult for non Union European citizens. But I wish to live in Tuscany one day).

In this message a learner shows her interest in the topic of immigration in Italy. She considers this study as an investment for her future because she is planning to live in that foreign community. Her work is meaningful

because is a bridge between two different periods of her life.

Conclusion

Students' responses in a final questionnaire showed that this integrated environment enhanced a multi level of learning. Findings point out that learners could benefit from this intercultural experience in terms of:

a) a multilevel of awareness,

b) a multilevel of autonomy,

c) a multilevel of authenticity.

Participants became aware of how to collaborate through the negotiation of their cultural identities and by means of the computer:

We have learnt how to work in a virtual and real group and also how to use technology.

One learns more about a culture knowing students of another country... you cannot learn that in the classroom or on a book.

Manipulating the interactional structures of the classroom and playing the role of problem solvers learners became aware of their different learning styles which a traditional learning context would limit, as the following student points out:

The success of this project was also determined by the relaxed atmosphere and by interpersonal relationships between teacher and students that probably in a lecture teaching style would not have developed in the same way.

The flexibility of the learning environment developed learners autonomy and improved the independent work they felt as "their own";

Another positive aspect was our autonomy... we did not have our teacher telling us what to do and how to do it, we organized our work and tasks, we scheduled deadlines".

We could participate more actively

and now I can feel that my work is really mine.

As van Lier maintains (1996:13) the result of these awareness and autonomy processes is an authentic behavior, an action intrinsically motivated and not provided by a teacher or a textbook. Participants found authenticity in their motivation and intention to interact on this intercultural ground made by their shared real goals:

The most positive aspect was to use language writing and reading messages for a real purpose with real people.

Students found the authenticity of the context and of the purpose of their task as well as of their interaction; they became finders (van Lier 1996:137) of all these opportunities:

It was not a scheduled meeting but a daily meeting we felt important so we looked for it.

We can conclude that an integrated and complex environment can empower student's learning system in multiple ways and promote the quality of the educational experience. This process is possible since "exposure-language is usable when the learner can make sense of it" (van Lier 1996:45) and when the shared knowledge " is mediated by this lived space, and by the materials artifacts we create" (Kramsch 2002:12).

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Professor Spinelli wrote the sections on: The *Incontro* Project, Language Acquisition: An Open Model, Multiple Identities, Multimodal Learning and Multilingual Interaction;

Professor Dolci is responsible for the sections on: The Multidimensional Environment and the Multi Scale Process.

Roberto Dolci is Associate Professor at the Department of Language Sciences at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, where he teaches Technology and Language Teaching.

His main research areas are language education, Theories of language teaching and learning, Language Teacher Training and Technology for language teaching with particular attention to e-learning.

Barbara Spinelli is the Director of the Italian Language Program at Columbia University, New York. She works as teacher educator, curriculum designer and materials writer. She has taught in universities in the United States and in Italy. Her current fields of research are: Network-based Language Learning, Socio-cultural and Ecological Approach in Second Language Acquisition. In this field she has presented papers at International Conferences and she has published articles in ISL journals

Some of the Articles In the next issue of

Mosaic

- **Beyond the Classroom: Bilingualism Cognitive Skills, and Health**

The authors discuss the effects of bilingualism on cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, task switching, and ignoring irrelevant information, and health, including the onset of dementia during aging.

by *Zofia Wodniecka* and *Nicholas J. Cepeda*

- **The Problem of Passion and Culture**

by *Roseanne Runte*

Language is, with other forms of communication, both the expression of culture and the tool which changes culture.

- **French, German, Italian and Spanish Tonguetwisters in the Classroom**

Tongue twisters are a useful source to teach pronunciation as well as a tool which provides moments of humour and relaxation.

by *Anthony Mollica*

- **Converting Comprehensivble Input into Comprehensible Input: The Effect of Reading the Book before Viewing the Film**

The author presents a simple method of making films more comprehensible for second language acquirers, helping them take advantage of a popular and enjoyable source of comprehensible input.

by *Kyung Sook Cho*

Anthony Mollica

Increasing the Students' Basic Vocabulary in French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish through English Cognates

How can we, as teachers, facilitate the acquisition of new lexical items? How do learners acquire a wider knowledge of vocabulary? The author suggests the use of cognates as one of several strategies in teaching/learning vocabulary.

Introduction

As Robert Galisson aptly said, "Jusqu'à preuve du contraire, les mots restent bien utiles pour communiquer."And as Jana Vizmuller Zocco (1985:13) correctly points out,

"It has been tacitly assumed by many instructors that reading literary works is one of the best methods for students in advanced courses to learn new vocabulary."

and observes that

"Given the fact that students in advanced language courses possess a certain grammatical competence, one of the most pressing objectives of such a course is to help them increase their lexical competence."

Stephen Krashen (1989:440), too, concurs that

"[...] the best hypothesis is that competence in spelling and vocabulary is most efficiently attained by comprehensible input in the form of reading, a position argued by several others."

Mollica has long held the view – and reflected that view in publications (Mollica 1973, 1976; Mollica and Convertini, 1979,) – that

"The aim of the reading program [...] should be the further development of oral and reading skills in the study of good literature. Al-though it is essential to read for accurate comprehension, teachers should avoid excessive grammatical analysis, word study or translation. [...] Synonyms, antonyms, definitions, diagrams, and gestures can prepare the student for a more profitable and pleasurable reading assignment. Word study should be done only to help the student understand, not as goal in itself." (Mollica, 1971:522).

Even from a quick glance at the literature available, then, we could reasonably conclude that the more one reads, the more vocabulary one acquires.

There exists, however, one unexplored goldmine: the introduction of cognates which could be presented even in the first language class

- to teach pronunciation,
- to show the affinity between English and the language being learned,
- to expand the student's vocabulary.

English-speaking students can acquire a great deal of vocabulary if they are made aware from the very first language class of the close relationship which exists between English and certain French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish words.The endings of some English words may be changed into the other languages' endings and, as a result, a word can easily be formed in French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. It is interesting to note that even when a student creates an incorrect word from the English into the target language, the listener – in spite of the error – will still be able to understand its semantic meaning and hence communication will still occur.

In spite of this great source for learning and expanding the students' basic vocabulary, only a handful of authors have written on the subject:

- for French: Péchon and Howlett (1977: 33,5);
- for German: Banta (1981);
- for Italian: Mollica (1971, 2001) and Russo (2003);
- for Spanish: Madrigal (1951), Garrison (1990, Richmond (1992).

More recently, Means has compiled three books on cognates for French (2003a), Italian (2003b,) and Spanish (2003c).

While a great emphasis has been put on cognates, *deceptive cognates (faux amis, falsi amici, falsos cognatos, falsos amigos)* have not been neglected. The lengthy compilation for Spanish by Diego Marín (1980) and the books for Italian by Marina Frescura (1984) and, a decade later, by Ronnie Ferguson (1994), immediately come to mind.

In teaching German vocabulary, Banta (1981: 129) regrets the lack of emphasis which teachers place on cognates and asks,

"Do we make it sufficiently clear to our students that German and English are close relatives? Do we make them usefully aware of the linguistic community that is Western Europe and all its wide-spread former colonies? Do we really train them for intelligent guessing when they meet new words? Not really enough."

The questions that Banta raises for German are equally applicable to Romance Languages.

Garrison (1990: 509-510) believes that a list of cognates can be very productive on the very first day of an introductory class and that

"It encourages timid students by showing them that they already know many words in Spanish and that they can easily learn many more. It provides a good first lesson in pronunciation, because differences between the sound system of the two languages become dramatically apparent when cognates are compared."

And Roseanne Runte (1995: 9) stresses,

"Language is more than grammar. It is more than a way of structuring thought. It is a way of signifying our deepest feelings, our most sincere beliefs. Each time I learn a word which has no translation into another language, I feel that I have discovered a rare gift, a new idea, a fresh insight."

The following lists show several English endings which, if replaced by French, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish endings, can form a word in those languages. It is obvious that these words derive from latin or Greek and are easily found in Romance Languages but many are also found in non-Romance Languages as well. Because these words derive from Latin or Greek, they are often referred as "Europeisms".

Space restrictionsallow us to give only a handful of examples for each language and for each ending. Nevertheless, a deliberate attempt has also been made to provide different cognates for the same endings in the various languages in order to avoid repetition and to lenghten the list of examples.

Because of space restrictions, we limited the selection of the suffixes to the most common.

The endings are listed in alphabetical order for easy reference. An asterisk [*] at the beginning of a word indicates a (slight) change in spelling in the target language.

From English to French

English Endings   *French Endings*

-able   =   -able

acceptable, curable, formidable, impeccable, improbable. indispensable, inimi- table, invariable, probable, responsable, vénérable

-acy   =   -atie

aristocratie, autocratie, bureau-cratie, démocratie, diplomatie, ploutocratie, suprématie, techno-cratie, théocratie

-al   =   -al

animal, commercial, digital, fatal, immoral, initial, local, mental, musical, national, oral, original

This list can be broken down into one in which the French words have an accent:

décimal, électoral, fédéral, général, *hôpital, idéal, légal, libéral, pénal, spécial

It should be noted that some English words which end in -al may end in -el in French.

-al   =   -el

accidentel, annuel, artificiel, essentiel, exceptionnel, formel, naturel, officiel, professionnel, ponctuel, sensationnel, tradition-nel, universel

Again, teachers may wish to separate those words which have an accent in French, but these are very few:

éventuel, matériel, véniel

-ant   =   -ant

abondant, assistant, constant, distant, participant, protestant, restaurant, ruminant, vacant

Note: reluctant → réticent

-ary   =   -aire

auxiliaire, bréviaire, calvaire, contraire, émissaire, honoraire, interdisciplinaire, itinéraire, militaire, *missionnaire, néces-saire, primaire, salaire, secondaire, secrétaire,

-ate   =   -er

activer, agiter, animer, associer, compliquer, consolider, coordon-ner, dicter, formuler, illuminer, imiter, inaugurer, narrer, insinuer, terminer

Once again, teachers may wish to separate these cognates from those with an accent by creating a separate list:

aliéner, atténuer, célébrer, coopérer, déléguer, délibérer, élaborer, énumérer, exagérer, hésiter, méditer

-cal   =   -que

analytique, astronomique, classique, clinique, critique, diabolique, économique, elliptical, fanatique, logique, magique, numérique, politique, rhétorique, typique

See also -ic = -ique

Note: *musical* remains the same, *musical*.

-ct   =   -(c)t

contrat, distinct, effet, exact, impact, indirect, instinct, objet, projet, respect, succinct

Note: dialect = dialecte, extinct = éteint, imperfect = imparfait

-ent   =   -ent

absent, agent, apparent, continent, diligent, dissident, imminent, impatient, impudent, innocent, insolent, patient, talent

Some words which end in -ent in English end in -ant in French:

-ent   =   -ant

délinquant, inconsistant, indépendant, *insuffisant

Note: efficient = efficace, obedient = obéissant, disobedient = désobéissant, student = étudiant,

exponent= exposant, sufficient = suffisant

-ible = -ible

accessible, compatible, horrible, impossible, incompréhensible, incorri-gible, irascible, possible, terrible

Note: credible croyable

-ic = -ique

académique, allergique, aristocra-tique, catholique, capitalistique, civique, didactique, égocentrique, énergique, excentrique, laconique, pacifique panique, romantique, sceptique

-ify = -ifier

amplifier, clarifier, classifier, codifier, crucifier, exemplifier, fortifier, identifier, intensifier, justifier, modifier, purifier, rectifier, solidifier ,vérifier

-ine = -ine

adrénaline, discipline, héroïne, insuline, marine, médicine, migraine, mine, sardine, vaccine, vaseline

-ist = -iste

antagoniste, dentiste, féministe, finaliste, journaliste, opportuniste, pianiste, radiologiste, socialiste, spécialiste

-ity = -ité

activité, adversité, antiquité, célébrité, communauté, diversité, facilité, formalité, localité, obscurité, priorité

-ive = -if

ablatif, actif, adjectif, adoptif, agressif, attractif, communicatif, contemplatif, créatif, explosif, fugitif, lucratif, négatif, offensif, positif, prohibitif, sédatif,

-ize = -iser

agoniser, angliciser, capitaliser, centraliser, civiliser, coloniser, commercialiser, criminaliser, finaliser, formaliser, généraliser, humaniser, maximiser, organiser, pénaliser, synchroniser, terroriser, visualiser

-ly = -lement

*accidentellement, admirable-ment, *annuellement, *cordiale-ment, cruellement, *exceptionnel-lement, *fondamentalement, généralement, honorablement, horriblement, *mentalement, *mortellement, *naturellement, probablement

Note: amicably → amicalement, absolutely → absolument, comple-tely → complètement

-nce = -nce

absence, alliance, assistance, confidence, différence, éloquence, existence, patience, présence, résidence, violence

See also -ncy = nce

-ncy = -nce

clémence, déficiance, émergence, fréquence, indécence, présidence, régence, urgence

-o(u)r = -eur

acteur, couleur, dictateur, faveur, horreur, liqueur, mineur, moteur, odeur, orateur, professeur, projecteur, recteur, sénateur, tracteur, visiteur

Note: "ténor" remains the same since its origin is Italian.

-ory = -oire

accessoire, accusatoire, auditoire, circulatoire, conciliatoire, conser-vatoire, contradictoire, déclama-toire, dégoratoire, diffamatoire, *dortoir, exploratoire, oratoire, territoire, victoire

-ous = -eux

anxieux, curieux, délicieux, fameux, généreux, méticuleux, nerveux, odieux, précieux, religieux, *vertueux

Note: atrocious = atroce, conti-nuous = continu, ferocious = féroce, instanteneous = instan-tané, posthumous = posthume, simultaneous = simultané

-sion = -sion

*agression compassion concession confession confusion décision division, expulsion, illusion, occasion, permission, persuasion, précision, profession, télévision, tension, transgression, version

-tion = -tion

action, admiration, attention, aviation, circulation, conclusion, citation, condition, connotation, conversataion, convention, correction, création, éducation, motivation, observation, ovation

-ure = -ure

capture, culture, cure, figure, fracture, investiture, législature, littérature, miniature, nature, température

-y* = -ie

*preceded by any consonant except "t"

académie, *amnistie, allergie, analogie, anarchie, autopsie, catégorie, économie, parodie, polygamie, théorie

Note: controversy = controverse, urgency = urgence, orthography orthographe

FROM ENGLISH TO ITALIAN

English Endings   Italian Endings

-able = -abile

accettabile, impeccabile, improba-bile, incalcolabile, incomparabile, inestimabile, *insaziabile, variabile

But the English ending -able can also be -evole in Italian.

-able = -evole

amichevole,*ammirevole, *caritatevole, *colpevole, confortevole, considerevole, convenevole, deplorevole, durevole, favorevole, notevole, onorevole, ragionevole, socievole

-acy = -zia

aristocrazia, autocrazia, burocrazia, democrazia, plutocrazia, teocrazia

-al = -ale

animale, capitale, commerciale, digitale, fatale, fondamentale,

generale, *ospedale, *nazionale, orale

-ant = -ante

*abbondante, *costante, distante, incessante, partecipante, protestante, *riluttante, ristorante, vacante

Note: assistant → assistente

-ary = -ario

contrario, diario, itinerario, necessario, ordinario, *rivoluzionario, salario, sanitario, secondario, *segretario, *volontario

-ate = -are

attivare, agitare, alienare, alternare, animare, arbitrare, assassinare, associare, celebrare, *dettare, esitare, generare, imitare, inaugurare, narrare

-cal = -co

alfabetico, comico, tipico, analitico, biblico, botanico, classico, critico, cinico, economico, identico, ironico, magico, politico, retorico

-ct = -to, -tto

contratto, dialetto, distinto, effetto, *esatto, estinto, indiretto, *istinto, *oggetto, *progetto, *rispetto, succinto

-ent = -ente

delinquente, inconsistente, indipedente, insufficiente, intelligente, obbediente, resistente, studente, sufficiente

-ible = -ibile

accessibile, compatibile, *orrible, impossibile, inaccessibile, incorrigibile, inimitabile, irascibile, possibile, terribile

Note: sensible = ragionevole, saggio, assennato; sensitive = sensibile

-ic = -ico

allergico, arsenico, automatico, *cattolico, *didattico, domestico, *eccentrico, fantastico, erotico, lunatico, magico, panico, romantico

-ify = -ificare

amplificare, codificare, deificare, dolcificare, *esemplificare, identificare, intensificare, modificare, *semplificare, solidificare

Note: magnify = ingrandire, stupify = istupidire

-ine = -ina

aspirina, caffeina, cocaina, concubina, disciplina, dottrina, eroina, ghigliottina, insulina, medicina, mina, nicotina, penicillina, saccarina

Note: airline = aerolinea, chlorine = cloro, feminine = femminile, iodine = iodo, masculine = maschile, mine → miniera, sanguine → sanguigno

Some words ending in -ine in English end in -ino in Italian.

-ine = -ino

alpino, aquilino, bovino, canino, declino, divino, equino, felino, *fiorentino, genuino, libertino, marino, *porcospino, supino, trampolino, vaccino

-ist = -ista

antagonista, conformista, dentista, femminista, finalista, giornalista, musicista, opportunista, socialista

-ity = -ità

attività, *antichità, *ansietà, *crudeltà, difficoltà, dignità, facilità, estremità, eternità, inferiorità, moralità, *onestà, *oscenità, *ostilità, *realtà, vanità, varietà

-ive = -ivo

*affermativo, *aggressivo, *aggettivo, *attivo, *collettivo, comparativo, compulsivo, decisivo, definitivo, eccessivo, evasivo, negativo, offensivo, *obbiettivo, passivo, primitivo, relativo

-ize = -izzare

alfabetizzare, analizzare, brutalizzare, civilizzare, economizzare, familiarizzare, generalizzare, idealizzare, legalizzare, sterilizzare, terrorizzare, visualizzare

Note: acclimatize = acclimare, apostrophize = apostrofare, baptize = battezzare, criticize → criticare, eulogize = elogiare, immortalize = immortalare, recognize = ricoonoscere, satirize = satireggiare, etc.

-ly = -mente

generalmente, *intelligentemente, mentalmente, naturalmente, *probabilmente, *ufficialmente

-nce = -nza

assenza, alleanza, *conseguenza, *esistenza, *esperienza, influenza, innocenza, *pazienza, presenza, prudenza, residenza

-ncy = -nza

clemenza, demenza, deficienza, efficienza, emergenza, frequenza, indecenza, presidenza, sufficienza, urgenza

Note: agency = agenzia, fluency = fluidità, solvency = solvibilità

-o(u)r = -ore

*attore, collaboratore, colore, *dittatore, *direttore, favore, inferiore, *ispettore, liquore, minore, motore, odore, oratore, posteriore

-ory = -orio

accessorio, conservatorio, declamatorio, derogatorio, dormitorio, illusorio, laboratorio, predatorio, territorio

Note: introductory = introduttivo, investigatory = investigativo

-ous = -oso

*ansioso, curioso, *delizioso, *favoloso, generoso, armonioso, industrioso, *geloso, luminoso, *misterioso, nervoso, numeroso, odioso, *prezioso, prestigioso, religioso

-sion = -sione

*adesione, *ammissione, confessione, decisione, dimensione, discussione, elisione, *esclusione, *esplosione, *espulsione, *estensione, illusione, pensione, tensione, versione

-tion = -zione

*azione, *amministrazione, *attenzione, benedizione, celebrazione, circolazione, conclusione, correzione, definizione, discrezione, eccezione

-ure = -ura

*cattura, cultura, cura, figura, *frattura,* investitura, legislatura, *letteratura, miniatura, natura, temperatura

-y* = -ia

*preceded by a consonant other than 't'.

Note: the -i of the -ia is stressed

agenzia, allergia, amnistia, *apatia, astrologia, autopsia, autonomia, categoria, *gelosia, melodia, poligamia, simpatia, terminologia, *teologia, *teoria

Note: The -i in the following -ia endings in *not* stressed in nouns such as:

accademia, cerimonia, efficacia, memoria, modestia, perspicacia

FROM ENGLISH TO PORTUGUESE

Since there is a slight change in spelling in some words between Portuguese and Brazilian [Portuguese], when two examples are given, they are separated by a [/]. The first word is Portuguese, the second is Brazilian.

English Endings   *Portuguese Endings*

-able = -ável

*aceitável, favorável, incalculável, incomparável, inevitável, inseparável, invariável, provável, memorável, *respeitável, responsável, sociável, variável

-acy = -acia

aristocracia, autocracia, burocracia, democracia, teocracia

-al = -al

animal, capital, comercial, digital, editorial, federal, fundamental, *geral, hospital, *nacional,oficial,
oral, original, provincial, sensual, sentimental

-ant = -ante

abundante, constante, distante, elefante, elegante, incessante, participante, protestante, *relutante

-ary = -ário

contrário, diário, dromedário, itinerário, necessário, ordinário, revolucionário, secretário, voluntário

-ate = -ar

agitar, activar/*ativar, alienar, alternar, animar, arbitrar, assassinar, associar, celebrar, *ditar, *gerar, iluminar, imitar, inaugurar, narrar

-cal = -co

acústico, analítico, bíblico, biográfico, idêntico, clássico, místico, numérico, político, *prático, satírico, *teórico, típico, econômico

-ct = -to

contrato, dialecto/dialeto, *efeito, exacto/exato, *imperfeito, indirecto/indireto, instinto, objecto/objeto, *respeito

-ent = -ente

agente, ausente, competente, continente, convalescente, delinquente/delinqüente, diferente, diligente, dissidente, eloquente/eloqüente, excelente, *iminente, *paciente, presente

Note: sediment = sedimento, sentiment = sentimento, talent = talento

-ible = -ível

admissível, compatível, horrível, inacessível, *incrível, infalível, irascível, legível, *possível, tangível

-ic = -ico

acadêmico, alérgico, arsénico/arsênico, católico, doméstico, elástico, excêntrico, fantástico, erótico, mágico, pânico/pánico, romântico

-ify = -ificar

codificar, exemplificar, identificar, intensificar, modificar, simplificar, solidificar

-ine = -ina

concubina, *doutrina, guilhotina, medicina, mina

-ine = -ína

cafeína, cocaína, heroína

ist = ista

antagonista, conformista, dentista, feminista, oportunista, jornalista radiologista

ity = idade

actividade/*atividade, adversidade, agilidade, *ansiedade, atrocidade, brevidade, cidade, *criatividade, facilidade, identidade, infinidade, peculiaridade, possibilidade

Note: clarity = clareza, difficulty = dificuldade, nobility =nobreza, locality = lugar, penalty = pena.

ive = ivo

activo/*ativo, adjectivo/*adjetivo, adoptivo/*adotivo, *afirmativo, *coletivo, *comunicativo, *descritivo, *destrutivo, emotivo, evasivo, passivo, sedativo

-ize = -izar

agonizar, baptizar, capitalizar, civilizar, cononizar, *comercializar, economizar, finalizar, formalizar, generalizar, humanizar, legalizar, visualizar

Note: analize = analisar

ly = mente

*calmamente, culturalmente, *fisicamente, *logicamente, normalmente, *obviamente, oficialmente, *ralmente, *rapidamente, *raramente, regularmente, *relativamente, *simplesmente, *tecnicamente, *tipicamente, *tradicionalmente

nce = ncia

assistência, ausência, ciência, circunstância, correspondência, distância, desobediência, eloquência/eloqüência, existência, expe-

riência, residência, tolerância, violência

Note: difference = diferença

ncy = ncia

clemência, continência, decência, deficiência, efficiência, emergência, exigência, freqüência, inconsitência, indecência, infância, presidência

-or = -or

actor/*ator, colaborador, director/*diretor, *doutor, favor, horror, humor, inspector/*inspetor, investigador, *licor, menor, motor, *orador, posterior

ory = ório

acessório, conservatório, declamatório, *derrogatório, dormitório, ilusório, laboratório, predatório, purgatório, território

-ous → -oso

*ansioso, curioso, delicioso, generoso, harmonioso, luminoso, meticuloso, misterioso, nervoso, precioso, religioso, virtuoso

Note: analagous = análogo, atrocious = atroz, continuos = contínuo, ferocious = feroz, jealous = ciumento

-sion = -são

adesão, admissão, confissão, decisão, dimensão, elisão, exclusão, explosão, expulsão, extensão, ilusão conversão

tion = ção

acção/ação, admiração, atenção, atracção/atração, *comunicação, destinação, edição, fracção/fração, inflação, injecção/injeção, objecção/objeção, promoção, secção/seção, tradição, tradução

ure = ura

captura, cultura, cura, figura, fractura/*fratura, *investidura, legislatura, literatura, miniatura

Note: nature = natureza

y* = ia

*preceded by a consonant other than 't'

academia, alergia, *amnistia, autobiografia, caterogia, ceremônia, diplomacia, eficácia, memória, paródia, poligamia, simpatia, *teoria

FROM ENGLISH TO SPANISH

English Endings   Spanish Endings

-able = -able

aceptable, favorable improbable, incalculable, incomparable, inevitable, inseparable, invariable, memorable, respectable, responsable, sociable, variable

-acy = -acia

aristocracia, autocracia, burocrazia, democracia, plutocracia, teocracia

al = al

animal, capital, comercial, editorial, digital, *excepcional, fatal, federal, fundamental, general, hospital, *nacional, oral, original, provincial, sentimental, total

-ant = -ante

abndante, constante, distant, elegante, incesante, participante, protestante, reluctante, restaurante, vacante

Note: assistant = asistente

-ary = -ario

contrario, diario, dromedario, itinenario, necesario, ordinario, *rivolucionario, salario, *secundario, secretario, voluntario

-ate = -ar

activar, agitar, alienar, alternar, animar, arbitrar, *asesinar, asociar, celebrar, dictar, hesitar, generar, imitar, iluminar, inaugurar, narrar

-cal = -co

acústico, analítico, bíblico, biográfico, clásico, idéntico, místico, numérico, ˜práctico, satírico, *teórico, típico

-ct = -(c)to

contrato, dialecto, efecto, exacto, imperfecto, indirecto, instinto, objeto, proyecto, respeto

-nce = -ncia

ausencia, asistencia, ciencia, circunstancia, correspondencia, desobediencia, diferencia, distancia, elocuencia, existencia, experiencia, residencia, tolerancia, violencia

-ent = -ente

agente, ausente, competente, continente, convaleciente, diferente, diligente, disidente, elocuente, excelente, inminente, *paciente, presente

Note: sediment = sedimento, sentiment = sentimiento, talent = talento, turbulent = turbolento

-ible = -ible

admisible, compatible, horrible, imposible, inaccesible, *increíble, infalible, irascible, legible, posible, tangible , terrible

-ic = -ico

académico, alérgico, arsénico, católico, doméstico, económico, elástico, erótico, excéntrico, fantástico, mágico, pánico, romántico

-ify = -ificar

codificar, ejemplificar, identificar, intensificar, modificar, simplificar, solidificar

-ine = -ina

cafeina, cocaina, concubina, disciplina, doctrina, eroina, guillotina, medicina, mina, nicotina

-ist = -ista

antagonista, conformista, dentista, feminista, finalista, oportunista, socialista

Note: journalist = periodista, musicist = músico, radiologist = radiólogo

-ive = -ivo

activo, adjectivo, adoptivo, afirmativo, colectivo, comunicativo, conclusivo, descriptivo, destructivo, emotivo, esplosivo, evasivo, pasivo, sedativo

-ize = -izar

agonizar, analizar, bautizar, capitalizar, civilizar, conolizar, *comercializar, economizar, finalizar, fomalizar, generalizar, humanizar, legalizar, visualizar

-ly = -mente

*afirmativamente, anualmente, artificialmente, automaticá-mente, ávidamente, *claramente, eficien-temente, enteramente, especialmente, *eternamente, finalmente, *fisicamente, probablemente, regularmente

-nce = -ncia

abstinencia, ambulancia, arrogan-cia, *ausencia, *ciencia, coinciden-cia, elocuencia, existencia, Francia, importancia, independencia, indi-ferencia, obediencia, observancia, presidencia, provincia, prudencia, tolerancia

-ncy = -ncia

clemencia, contingencia, decen-cia, deficiencia, eficiencia, emer-gencia, exigencia, frecuencia, in-consistencia, infancia

See also -nce = -ncia

-o(u)r = -or

actor, colaborador, director, favor, horror, humor, impostor, interior, inspector, interlocutor, investi-gador, licor, menor, motor, odor, orador, posterior

-ory = -orio

accessorio, acusatorio, conserva-torio, declamatorio, definitorio, derogatorio, dormitorio, explora-torio, ofertorio, oratorio, purga-torio, territorio

-ous → -oso

*ansioso, armonioso, *celoso, curioso, delicioso, generoso, luminoso, meticuloso, misterioso, nervioso, odioso, precioso, prodigioso, religioso, virtuoso

Note: analagous = análogo, atrocious = atroz, continuous = continuo, ferocious = feroz, posthumous = póstumo, simultaneous = simultáneo

-sion , = -sión

adesión, admisión,* confesión, decisión, dimensión, elisión, exclusión,* explosión, expulsión, extensión, ilusión

-tion = -ción

*acción, admiración, atención, atracción, comunicación, conver-sación, destinación, edición, excepción, fracción, inflación, *inyección, objeción, pensión, promotción, sección, tradición

-ty = -dad

actividad, adversidad, agilidad, *ansiedad, atrocidad, *brevedad, *ciudad, claridad, creatividad, curiosidad, dificultad, facilidad, identidad, infinidad, peculiaridad, posibilidad

Note: nobility = nobleza, locality = lugar, penalty = pena

-ure = -ura

captura, cultura, cura, figura, fractura, investitura, legislatura, literatura, miniatura, natura, temperatura

-y* = -ia

*preceded by a consonant other than 't'

academia, alergia, aristocracia, ceremonia, diplomacia, eficacia, memoria, modestia, parodia, poligamia

-y = -ía

Note: the -i of the -ia is stressed

amnistía, analogía, *anarquía, *apatía, artillería, astrología, autobiografía, autonomía, cate-goría, ecología, armonía, ironía, fotografía, simpatía, teoría

Pedagogical Applications

1. Teachers may decide to place these endings on bulletin boards and students add new words on a daily basis. One week could be words with the English "ble" ending, the next week, with the "al" endings, and so forth.

2. Teachers may wish to mark with an asterisk those words which in the new language have a slightly different spelling from the original English words and hence draw attention to them. Attention may also be drawn to those word by writing it in a different colour or by highlighting them.

3. Teachers should indicate to the student that nouns can be turned into adjectives, into verbs and even adverbs by changing some of the endings of the word of the target language. This activity will increase the students' vocabulary fourfold. For example,

FRENCH
noun: décision
adjective: décidé, décisif
verb: décider
adverb: décidément

ITALIAN
noun: facilità
adjective: facile
verb: facilitare
adverb: facilmente

PORTUGUESE
noun: criação
adjective: criador, criativo
verb: criar
adverb: criativamente

SPANISH
noun: confusión
adjective: confuso
verb: confundir
adverb: confusamente

4. To increase the students' vocabulary, and involve them in the use of the dictionary in the creation of new words, teachers may wish to give them a chart and ask them to complete it. (See Figure 1).

5. Techers may decide to ask

Substantivo	Adjectivo	Verbo	Adverbio
_____	_____	crear	_____
decisión	_____	_____	_____
_____	fácil	_____	_____
confusión	_____	_____	_____
_____	descriptivo	_____	_____
información	_____	_____	_____

Figure 1

ENGLISH	FRENCH	ITALIAN	PORTUGUESE	SPANISH
-able	-able	-abile -evole	-ável	-able
-acy	-atie	-zia	-acia	
-al	-al -el	-ale	-al	-al
-ant	-ant	-ante	-ante	-ante
-ary	-aire	-ario	-ário	-ario
-ate	-er	-are	-ar	-ar
-cal	-que	-co	-co	-co
-ct	-(c)t	-to, -tto	-to	-(c)to
-ent	-ent	-ente	-ente	-ente
-ent	-ant			
-ible	-ible	-ibile	-ível	-ible
-ic	-ique	-ico	-ico	-ico
-ify	-ifier	-ificare	-ificar	-ificar
-ine	-ine	-ina -ino	-ina -ína	-ina
-ist	-iste	-ista	-ista	-ista
-ity	-ité	-it	-idade	-idad
-ive	-if	-ivo	-ivo	-ivo
-ize	-iser	-izzare	-izar	-izar
-ly	-lement	-mente	-mente	-mente
-nce	-nce	-nza	-ncia	-ncia
-ncy	-nce	-nza	-ncia	-ncia
-o(u)r	-eur	-ore	-or	-or
-ory	-oire	-orio	-ório	-orio
-ous	-eux	-oso	-oso	-oso
-sion	-sion	-sione	-são	-sión
-tion	-tion	-zione	-ção	-ción
-ure	-ure	-ura	-ura	-ura
-y	-ie	-ia	-ia	-ia -ía

Figure 2

students to make up short phrases in the very first class, thus giving the student a sense of power (in the knowledge of the new language) and a sense of satisfaction:

Fr.   un animal intelligent
It.   un professore competente
Pg.   um animal inteligente
Sp.   un restaurante famoso

6. Teachers will discover that students may not be familiar with the meaning of many of the "new" words in their own language: "ruminant, "indelible", "mendicant", etc. This activity will also increase the students' own language vocabulary.

7. Teachers may want to identify the "learned words" with the ones more commonly in use. "Mendicant" for "beggar", "velocity" for "speed", etc.

8. If the endings are presented in chart format (See Figure 2), the chart may be used for native students of French, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish to expand their English lexical knowledge. For example, native students of Portuguese can make up words from Portuguese into English. Similarly, native Spanish students may use the chart to expand their French vocabulary; native Italian students their Portuguese, etc. The students' task is reduced to identifying the word in their native language. They can then easily produce it in another or other languages.

9. Teachers wishing to expand the lists of words found in this article should consult the following dictionaries in CD-rom. These electronic dictionaries allow the user to do a search by seeking out the endings of words (nouns, adjectives, verbs).

For French:

Le Nouveau Petit Robert de Langue

Française 2008. (Available from bookstores.)

For Italian:

Dizionario Italiano Sabatini Coletti (CD-rom).

For Portuguese:

Dicionário Editora da Língua Portuguesa. Porto Editor Multimedia.

For Brazilian Portuguese:

Novo Dicionário Aurélio da Língua Portuguesa. 2ª edição revista e ampliada. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Frontera, 1986. (paper format).

For Spanish:

María Moliner Diccionario de uso del español. Madrid: Edtitorial Gredos, 1998. Avalaible both in Cd-rom and in book form.

Conclusion

The introduction of cognates during the first few lessons of the target language – or even at an intermediate or advanced stage of language learning – will give students a sense of "word power" and will make vocabulary learning/expansion from English to French, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish much more enjoyable and pleasurable learning experience.

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Anthony Mollica is *professor emeritus,* Faculty of Education Brock University and professor (status only) University of Toronto at Mississauga. He has lectured in Canada, the USA, Italy, Brazil, Slovenia and Greece. His latest publication is a revision of *Teaching and Learning Languages* which is being used as a basic second-language textbook in various faculties of education.
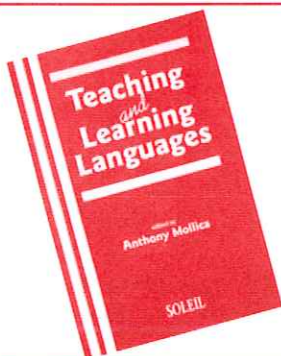
Jouons avec les mots

Anthony Mollica
Email: anthony.mollica@brocku.ca

Complétez les expressions suivantes avec la partie ou les parties du corps convenable(s).

☐ bras   ☐ nez   ☐ pied
☐ bras   ☐ nez   ☐ tête
☐ cheveux   ☐ oreille   ☐ tête
☐ jambes   ☐ oreille   ☐ yeux
☐ main   ☐ oreilles   ☐ yeux
☐ main   ☐ pied

1. être tout _____ : écouter attentivement

2. ne savoir où donner de la _____ : ne savoir que faire.

3. se prendre aux _____ : se quereller avec quelqu'un

4. avoir un _____ dans la fosse : être vieux et moribond

5. couper _____ et_____ à quelqu'un : enlever les moyens d'action à quelq'un

6. mener quelqu'un par le bout du _____ : mener quelu'un à sa guise

7. coûter les _____ de la _____ : coûter très cher

8. avoir la _____ ouverte : être généreux

9. recevoir quelq'un à _____ ouverts : accueillir quelq'un avec effusion

10. ne pouvoir remuer ni _____ ni patte : être complètement immobilisé

11. avoir l' _____ de quelq'un : en être écouté

12. ne pas voir plus loin que le bout de son _____ : manquer de prévoyance

13. faire la sourde _____ : feindre de ne pas entendre

14. de première _____ : directement de la source

15. être tout _____ : regarder attentivement
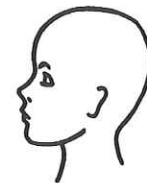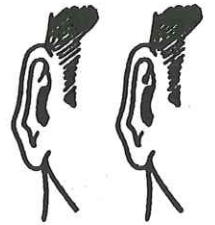
Giocando con le parole

Anthony Mollica
Email: anthony.mollica@brocku.ca

Scegli la risposta esatta per completare la battuta.

1 Perché il gallo chiude gli occhi quando canta?

2 Cosa disse Garibaldi quando sbarcò a Marsala?

3 Perché a Como non si può dormire?

4 Carletto, dimmi l'imperfetto del verbo "camminare".

5 Qual è il colmo per un nano?

6 Riccardo, dimmi il superlativo di "ammalato".

7 Qual è il colmo per un insegnante?

8 Perché l'asino raglia?

9 Pierino, dimmi il futuro del verbo "rubare".

10 "Uovo" è maschile o femminile?

11 Perché Colombo andò in America?

12 La maestra: "Se io dico 'Io sono bella.' Che tempo è?"

a. Perché non sa cantare.
b. Perché era un Colombo viaggiatore.
c. Io andrò in prigione, tu andrai in prigione...
d. Morto, signora maestra.
e. Per far vedere che sa a memoria il chicchirichì.
f. Grazie Mille!

g. Mangiare un tiramisù.
h. Passato remoto, signora maestra!
i. Non avere classe.
j. Non si può sapere finché non è nato il pulcino!
k. Zoppicare, signora maestra!
l. Perché vicino c'è Chiasso!

Soluzioni: 1.e; 2. f; 3. l; 4. k; 5. g; 6. d; 7. i; 8. a; 9.c; 10. j; 11. b; 12. h.

Juguemos con palabras

Anthony Mollica
Email: anthony.mollica@brocku.ca

Busque en el recuadro los nombres de los días de la semana, los mes del año y de las cuatro estaciones. Las letras que quedan dirán el nombre del mes más corto del año.

Los días

- ☐ lunes
- ☐ martes
- ☐ miércoles
- ☐ jueves
- ☐ viernes
- ☐ sábado
- ☐ domingo

Los meses

- ☐ enero
- ☐ febrero
- ☐ marzo
- ☐ abril
- ☐ mayo
- ☐ junio
- ☐ julio
- ☐ agosto
- ☐ septiembre
- ☐ octubre
- ☐ noviembre
- ☐ diciembre

Las estaciones

- ☐ *la* primavera
- ☐ *el* verano
- ☐ *el* otoño
- ☐ *el* invierno

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O M P A Y O E S S E L Ú N
N N E R B M E I T P E S O
O I R C I N O O M R S R V
E G S E R M C Q B U E M I
S E N E I T A M S R V A E
A Á I I U V E V B E E R M
B V B B M I N E E A U T B
R E R A C O F I G R J E R
I E S I D Ñ D O C R A S E
L I D B E O S O N A R E V
O Z R A M T C O L U N E S
J U N I O O N C U E A T R
M I É C O L E S R O Y A M
J U L I O O L O E T R A S
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¿Cuál es mes más corto del año?

☐☐☐☐☐. ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐

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☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

La solución en el próximo número.