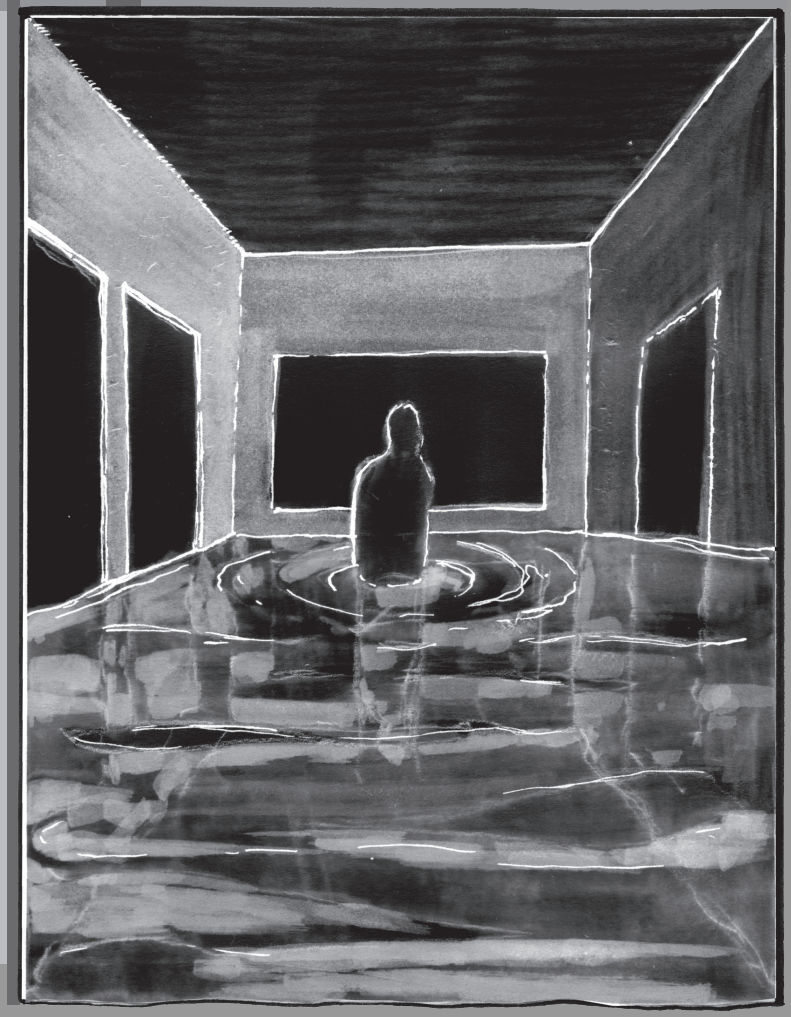
Tidskrift

för lärarutbildning och forskning

Journal of Research in Teacher Education

nr 2 2008



Theme:
Identity and Power in the Language Classroom

Tidskrift

för lärarutbildning och forskning

Nr 2/2008 Årgång 15

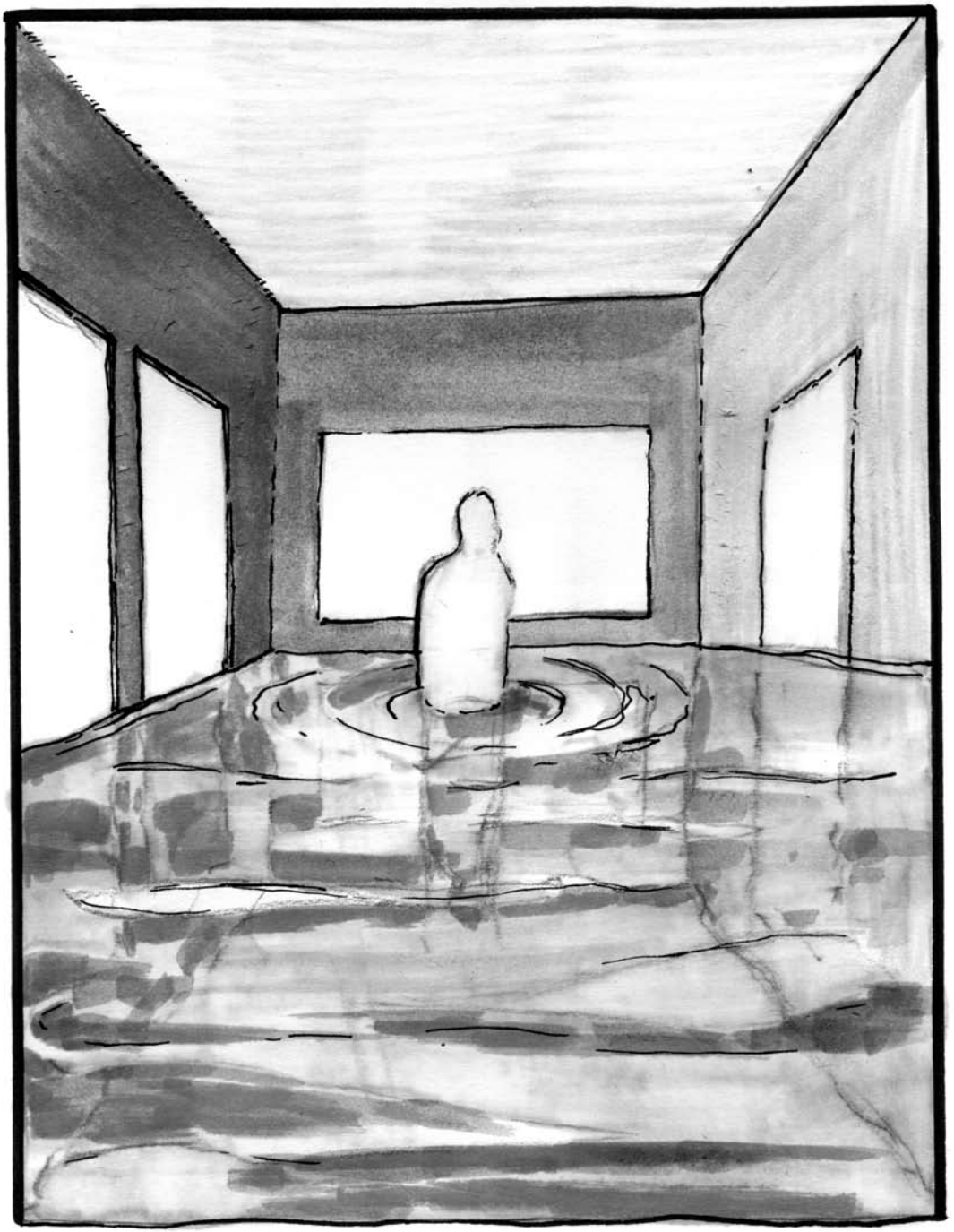
FAKULTETSNÄMNDEN FÖR LÄRARUTBILDNING
THE FACULTY BOARD FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning nr 2 2008 årgång 15

Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning (fd *Lärarutbildning och forskning i Umeå*) ges ut av Fakultetsnämnden för lärarutbildning vid Umeå universitet. Syftet med tidskriften är att skapa ett forum för lärarutbildare och andra didaktiskt intresserade, att ge information och bidra till debatt om frågor som gäller lärarutbildning och forskning. I detta avseende är tidskriften att betrakta som en direkt fortsättning på tidskriften *Lärarutbildning och forskning i Umeå*. Tidskriften välkomnar även manuskript från personer utanför Umeå universitet.
Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning beräknas utkomma med fyra nummer per år.
Ansvarig utgivare: Dekanus Björn Åstrand
Redaktör: Docent Gun-Marie Frånberg, 090/786 62 05,
e-post: gun-marie.franberg@educ.umu.se
Bildredaktör: Fil. Dr Eva Skåreus
e-post: eva.skareus@educ.umu.se

Redaktionens adress:
Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning, Gun-Marie Frånberg, Institutionen för interaktiva medier och lärande, Umeå universitet, 901 87 UMEÅ.
Grafisk formgivning: Eva Skåreus och Tomas Sigurdsson, Institutionen för estetiska ämnen
Illustratör: Jonas Lidström
Original och tryck: Print & Media, Umeå universitet, 2008:2004573
Tekniska upplysningar till författarna:
Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning framställs och redigeras ur allmänt förekommande Mac- och PC-program. Sänd in manuskript på diskett eller som e-postbilaga.
Distribution: Lösnummer kostar 50 kronor + moms och porto (dubbelnummer 80 kronor + moms och porto) och kan beställas från Lärarutbildningens kansli, Umeå universitet, 901 87 UMEÅ. Helårsprenumeration kostar 140 kronor + moms och porto.
Pg 1 56 13-3, ange Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning i Umeå, konto 600001400, samt avsändare.
Använd gärna det förtryckta inbetalningskortet.
Tidskriften distribueras gratis till institutioner inom lärarutbildningen i Umeå.
Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning är från och med nr 1/1999 utlagd som elektronisk tidskrift på den hemsida som Fakultetsnämnden för lärarutbildning i Umeå har: http://www.educ.umu.se.

Contents



Guest Editorial

This issue of Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning contains a selection of the papers presented at the international conference on *Identity and Power in the Language Classroom*, held at Umeå University 11–12 June 2007. The twenty odd presentations, of which only a few could be covered in this volume, dealt with a wide array of topics related to the research questions formulated by the organisers. The papers printed here, while they cannot claim to represent the whole spectrum of ideas aired at the conference, do focus on a couple of the classical issues of Critical Pedogogies, e.g. Who teaches and who learns? Are students allowed and encouraged to express their (new) identities in the classroom? Whose language is accepted and used, and who decides? The papers are presented in the alphabetical order of the authors' family names.

The opening paper by *Beers Fägersten* investigates how asserting identity and power between students in computer-mediated communication in web-based learning presents a challenge to the learners. In student-only sessions students are required to take on leadership and power roles normally associated with the teacher. Among the questions raised are by what means these roles are negotiated, how power is displayed, and what discursive strategies are applied in order to secure the progression of discussion sessions. The data analysis and the results of the study contribute to a better understanding of how working methods and teaching material can be designed in order to enhance empowerment, i.e. encourage students to assert their knowledge and authority in the distance-learning context.

The second paper by *Czigler, Karlsson, Poussa* and *Sullivan* explores the impact an undetected and untreated hearing deficiency can have on the second language (L2) learning process and on the learner's self-confidence. The results of the case study show that even a minor hearing impairment may have a major impact on an L2

learner's ability to follow classroom teaching, to participate in group activities, to gain from language laboratory exercises, and, last but not least, to function socially and deal with everyday life activities. It might even lead to a feeling of lost identity. In a wider context the results of the study can be applied in order to enhance policy- and decision-makers' awareness of the effects of hearing impairment especially on adult immigrant L2 learners. It also illustrates how important acoustically well-designed classrooms are for L2 learners to make optimal progress in their language learning.

In contrast to the first paper the article by *Deutschmann* and *Lundmark* focuses on the teacher in internet-based courses. As the design of the course described is based on collaborative learning, the communicative environment must be characterised by positive interdependence and interaction, encouraging the sharing of knowledge as well as the questioning and challenging of others' views and solutions. In such a context it is the teacher's role to set communicative norms that ensure an environment of acceptance and free expression of opinions. The study displays that in the initial stages of the course two important factors affect the level of student activity: how much the teacher communicates with the group and in what manner he/she does so. Several other factors that might have a bearing on the results are discussed.

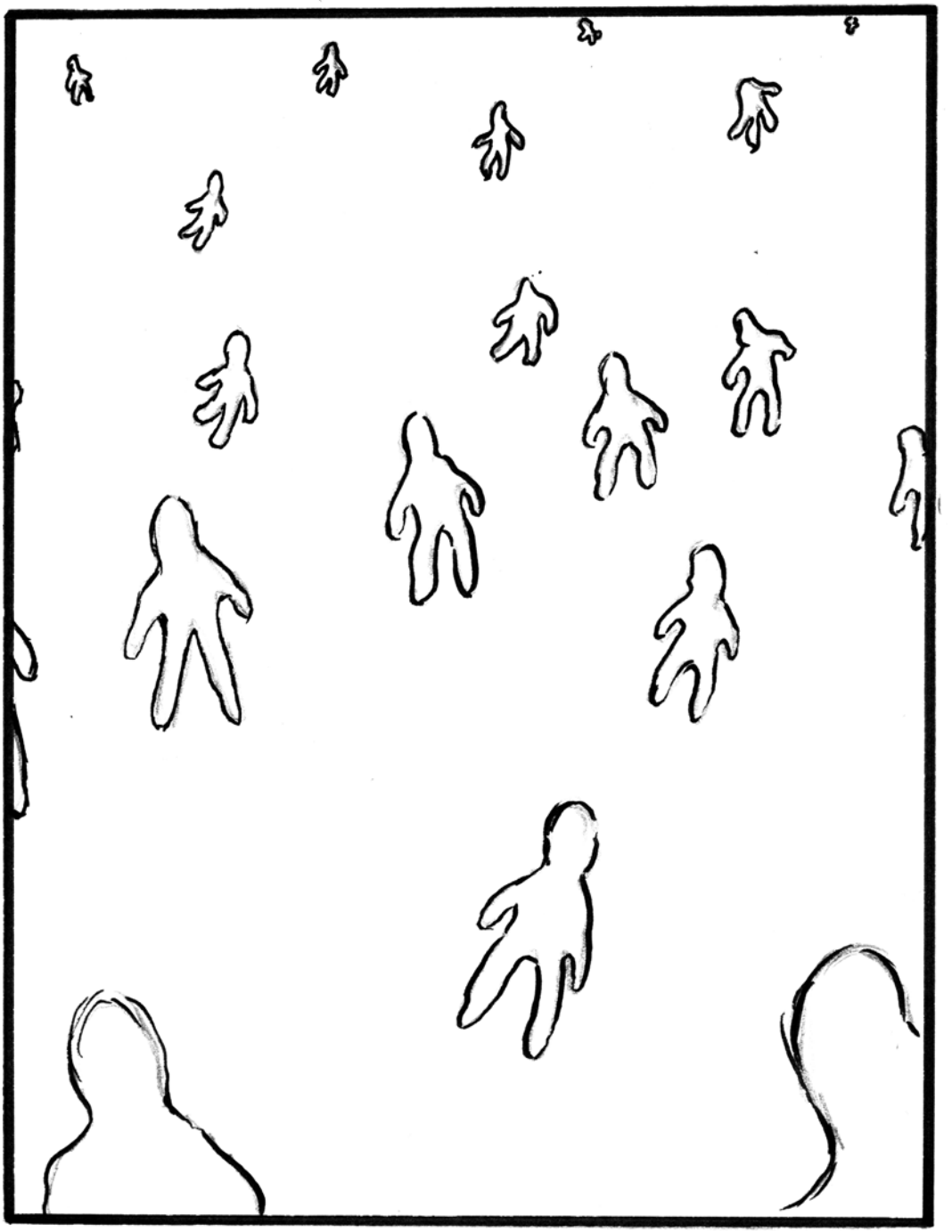
In the next paper by *Panichi* attention is again directed to the learner. It examines the role of learner criticalness and how it affects the construction of learner identity in foreign language education. The learning process is described as a continuum, where learners proceed towards a state of increased criticalness and action as they participate in learning and pedagogical dialogue. It is suggested that learners' critical ability is a factor of importance for their sense of identity in the process of personal and language development. The paper further discusses the role the language educator today must adopt in the face of changing learning and teaching conditions and gives examples of scenarios which accept multiple authorities in the language classroom and encourage learner empowerment.

The concern over the marginalisation and instrumentalisation of literary texts in the foreign language classroom in the last few decades is the subject of *Slibar's* paper. An alternative approach to literature is proposed in the form of a model for teaching, which builds on seven types of raising the awareness of the strangeness and otherness of literature, leading to enhanced "literary competences" in both teachers and learners and thus

to a change of power relations in the classroom. It is argued that if literary texts are reintroduced as alternatives to working with language structures and if they are understood as spaces of freedom, this leads to empowering both teachers and learners to deal more competently with the social system of literature.

In the last paper *Tornberg* discusses the notion of "voice" as an alternative perspective for analysing communication in the (foreign) language classroom. She suggests a shift of focus from describing and analysing learners' communicative skills to calling attention to the social aspects of communication, i.e. how the social language user functions. From this perspective individuals are not first and foremost seen as foreign language learners but as active participants in their own worlds, learning to take advantage of their possibilities and struggling to come to terms with their limitations. The classroom thus becomes a social, political and cultural arena, where identities and power roles are negotiated. It is argued that teachers must be made aware of the power they exercise and be prepared and competent to explicitly empower their learners.

Anita Malmqvist
Ingela Valfridsson



Discourse Strategies and Power Roles in Student-led Distance Learning

Kristy Beers Fägersten

Abstract

The assertion of identity and power via computer-mediated communication in the context of distance or web-based learning presents challenges to both teachers and students. When regular, face-to-face classroom interaction is replaced by online chat or group discussion forums, participants must avail themselves of new techniques and tactics for contributing to and furthering interaction, discussion, and learning. During student-only chat sessions, the absence of teacher-led, face-to-face classroom activities requires the students to assume leadership roles and responsibilities normally associated with the teacher. This situation raises the questions of who teaches and who learns, how students discursively negotiate power roles, and whether power emerges as a function of displayed expertise and knowledge or rather the use of authoritative language. This descriptive study represents an examination of a corpus of task-based discussion logs among Vietnamese students of distance learning courses in English linguistics. The data reveal recurring discourse strategies for 1) negotiating the progression of the discussion sessions, 2) asserting and questioning knowledge, and 3) assuming or delegating responsibility. Power is defined ad hoc as the ability to successfully perform these strategies. The data analysis contributes to a better understanding of how working methods and materials can be tailored to students in distance learning courses, and how such students can be empowered by being afforded opportunities and effectively encouraged to assert their knowledge and authority.

1. Background to the study

The English Department at Högskolan Dalarna, Sweden, participates in a distance learning program with Vietnam National University. Students enrolled on this program are teachers of English at secondary or tertiary institutions, and study half-time for two years to complete a

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 11–21. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

Master's degree in English Linguistics. The program includes courses in theoretical and applied linguistics, and encompasses a Master's thesis, which the students write during their last term of study. The program is run as a modified distance program, with students and Högskolan Dalarna's linguistics teachers and course coordinators participating in semi-annual visits at the VNU-Hanoi campus. Coinciding with the start of each academic term, these visits serve both to introduce new courses to existing groups of students, and to administer a new intake of students, approximately 25–30 students per semester. One of the first administrative tasks performed in Hanoi is to divide each new intake of students into four smaller groups (named for each of the four seasons), including the naming of one leader per group.

The distance courses in this program are designed to include not only teacher-led seminars, during which the teacher leads discussion with two of the four sub-groups at once, but also pre-seminars, during which students, in their own sub-groups only, discuss and complete preparatory assignments for the seminars. The inclusion of teacherless pre-seminars in the course design allows for student independence while at the same time encouraging co-operation and solidarity within the group.

In this paper, chatlog data from such student-led pre-seminars are analyzed in terms of discourse strategies and power roles. Power is not defined a priori, but rather identified via the performance of specific and recurring discourse strategies for interaction management. Power, in other words, is asserted by assuming the traditional teacher roles of negotiating the progression of sessions, asserting one's own knowledge or questioning the knowledge of others, and assuming or delegating tasks and responsibilitities.

2. Group membership and individual identity

Group membership within each intake is a defining program component for the students. Upon acceptance to the Master's program and further division into a sub-group, each student adopts a new identity, that of a program participant. The composition of the groups is therefore relatively homogeneous, and the status of each student relatively equal, resulting in social relations that can be characterized as horizontal and less influenced by hierarchy (Matsuda, 2002; Nakane, 1970). Despite such favorable circumstances for promoting equality, the contexts of student interaction, that is, pre-seminars and seminars, are nevertheless social contexts, and thus conducive to the emergence of power roles.

While one student per sub-group is indeed designated as the leader, his/her leadership responsibilities are mainly administrative and include arranging pre-seminar meetings and sending chatlogs to the teacher. Thus power remains an "emergent interactional quality" (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999:500), so despite the existence of a group leader, power is not necessarily ascribed (Okabe, 1983) to one participant. Instead, the pre-seminar data suggest that sub-group interaction is fundamentally a social situation which provides boundaries within which students can alternately exercise authority or safely challenge one another. The ability to negotiate power within the sub-group is a reflection of each student's sense of belonging to the group and the value attributed to group membership (Tajfel, 1974). As a group member, each student is therefore ratified to exercise leadership, thereby assuming a power position.

From a linguistic point of view, power is usually recognized and defined as a function of discourse, that is, via the discursive construction of a powerful or powerless identity. Powerful language has been characterized as confident, assertive or dominant (Hosman, 1989) and "perceived as more persuasive and credible than powerless language" (Burrell & Koper, 1994:252), while powerless language is hesitant and tentative, including "more polite forms, hedges, hesitations, disclaimers, intensifiers, empty adjectives, tag questions and hypercorrect grammar" (Grob et al., 1997:293). The present study suggests, however, that power roles can in fact be performed via powerless language, while assertive language may not necessarily result in successful exertion of a power role. Thus, the traditional approach to the linguistic performance of power may not apply to computer-mediated communication in the distance learning environment. Instead, the data presented in the following sections indicate that power is a function of the successful performance of teaching roles, including discourse strategies for negotiating progression, asserting or questioning knowledge, and assuming or delegating responsibility.

3. Negotiating the progression of discussion

In the pre-seminar situation, while students are encouraged to exchange ideas and display knowledge, they are aware of the main goal of completing a specific task in preparation for the teacher-led seminar. For this reason, students can frequently be observed participating in two distinct kinds of activity: furthering the progression of the pre-seminar or acting as a subject authority. These activities can there-

fore be said to reflect goal-orientation (progression through the pre-seminar task) or content expertise (displaying subject-matter knowledge). In example (1), a pre-seminar has just been started, with each of the participating students added to the chat session by the group leader. In all examples[1], the students are individually numbered and coded according to sub-group (season) membership:

(1) [9:05:58 PM] summerleader added sum1, sum2, sum3, sum4, sum5 to this chat
[9:06:01 PM] summerleader says: Hi
[9:06:13 PM] summerleader says: have anyone opened a room?
[9:06:54 PM] sum4 says: no, your duty
[9:07:02 PM] sum4 says: :D
[9:07:17 PM] summerleader says: I can see that everyone's here
[9:07:27 PM] sum4 says: i see all on line
[9:07:32 PM] summerleader says: yes
[9:07:39 PM] summerleader says: it's good
[9:07:46 PM] summerleader says: rarely
[9:07:50 PM] summerleader says: we can see all
[9:07:55 PM] sum1 says: I am here
[9:08:03 PM] summerleader says: shall we start now?

As the group leader, summerleader has the responsibility of starting the pre-seminar chat by adding the group members and initiating the discussion. The leader therefore has ascribed power, in that this responsibility is exclusively the leader's. The response by sum4 of "no, your duty" to summerleader's inquiry "have anyone opened a room?" indicates a recognition of this responsibility as unique to the group leader, and thus other group members are neither expected to take this action nor are they entitled to. It is interesting to note in this example that despite the group leader's inherent power, the language of the entries can be characterized as powerless. The questions "have anyone opened a room?" and "shall we start now?" are indirect speech acts, the perlocutionary act of the former being that no other rooms should be opened, while the illocutionary act of the latter is the initiation of the discussion (Austin, 1962). Summerleader's other entries can also be considered powerless, in that they reflect neither goal-orientation nor content expertise. Thus, despite her status of leader, a power role entailing traditional teacher responsibilities, summerleader does not employ powerful language in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, her power is recognized and performed through the discourse strategies of negotiating progression of the pre-seminar.

In the next example, the pre-seminar topic is language and gender, and the students are to discuss and analyze two sets of data: male and female biographies and single-sex conversations:

(2) [10:44:35 PM] springleader says: so, we'll come to the assignment […]
[10:45:02 PM] springleader says: 'single-sex conversation" […]
[10:45:23 PM] springleader says: do you find any differences?
[10:45:28 PM] spr4 says: I think they have a big difference in job profile
[10:45:33 PM] spr2 says: topic
[10:45:40 PM] springleader says: 'single-sex conversation"
[10:45:59 PM] spr4 says: Ruth didn't go to University, but Damien did
[10:45:59 PM] springleader says: We will come to the biography later spr4
[10:46:06 PM] spr2 says: it is not a conversation I think
[10:46:10 PM] spr5... says: between male first
[10:46:13 PM] spr4 says: let's come to the background first
[10:46:16 PM] spr3 says: Man doesn't overlap in conversation
[10:46:17 PM] springleader says: please 'single-sex conversation"
[10:46:17 PM] spr1 says: I found out some differences in Male and Female conversations
[10:46:32 PM] spr3 says: Man doesn't overlap in conversation
[10:46:36 PM] spr1 says: Right, spr3
[10:46:46 PM] springleader says: (please continue. I'll be back. My baby is crying)
[10:46:47 PM] spr4 says: Good
[10:46:56 PM] spr5... says: SINGLE-SEX CON BETWEEN MALE FRIENDS

The leader performs the goal-oriented act of directing the group's attention to the assignment, "so, we'll come to the assignment". There is a specification of which data set to begin with, "single-sex conversation", followed by a question to initiate discussion, "do you find any differences?" Springleader's goal-oriented discourse is that of a teacher, and together with her status as leader further function to position her in a power role. Nevertheless, her direction goes unnoticed or even ignored, as various group members begin to discuss the other data set. Redirection is attempted twice: "We will come to the biography later spr4" and "please 'single-sex conversation'", before springleader retreats, "(please continue. I'll be back. My baby is crying)". At this point, another student takes over springleader's leader/teacher role by repeating her original

instructions, "SINGLE-SEX CON BETWEEN MALE FRIENDS". Here, capitalization, often interpreted in computer-mediated communication as shouting (Crystal, 2001) indeed functions as an attention-getter and unequivocally serves to introduce focus to the discussion.

The absence of a teacher – and thereby obvious authority – in student–student pre-seminar interaction can be countered by the naming of a group leader, who is expected to perform the traditional goal-oriented duties of a teacher. Examples (1) and (2) suggest, however, that the language used by leaders may not include characteristics of powerful language, and that powerful language may not be sufficient to assert power.

4. Asserting and questioning knowledge

Another traditional teacher role which students assume in pre-seminar interaction is the assertion of their own and, more significantly, the questioning of others' knowledge. Such practices are characteristic of negotiating content expertise, which is also part of pre-seminar assignments in that there is a topic to discuss and specific questions to answer. The students are expected to show an understanding of the concepts pertaining to the topic, as well as agree on answers to the questions, as these will be presented in the teacher-led seminar. The students can therefore not progress between assignment tasks until they are addressed and answered satisfactorily.

In example (3), members of the Autumn group are discussing language and gender, focussing on the analysis of single-sex conversations:

(3) [9:07:32 PM] aut1 says: they have the same opinon
[9:07:39 PM] aut1 says: at the end of the talk
[9:07:47 PM] aut2 says: I don't think so, aut3.
[9:08:02 PM] autumnleader says: no not that aut3
[9:08:22 PM] aut1 says: they are probably more rational than women
[9:08:24 PM] aut3 says: that's people's saying
[9:08:41 PM] aut4 says: that's because men often talk more frankly than women, not necessarily they are wiser
[9:08:42 PM] aut2 says: They give their answers to the question right from the beginning.
[9:08:45 PM] aut1 says: women are sentimental

[9:08:57 PM] autumnleader says: yeah
[9:08:56 PM] aut2 says: right.
[9:08:58 PM] aut5 says: Yes, aut2
[9:09:02 PM] aut3 says: we shouldn't express our ideas right in the beginning
[9:09:12 PM] autumnleader says: why?
[9:09:19 PM] aut5 says: At the end they just repeat their opinion
[9:09:21 PM] aut1 says: the first male jumps into the talk immediately
[9:09:26 PM] aut3 says: people's experience
[9:09:33 PM] aut2 says: unluckily we have no man in our group.!!!
[9:09:36 PM] aut1 says: no hesitation
[9:09:42 PM] aut3 says: what's a pity
[9:09:53 PM] autumnleader says: yeah
[9:10:14 PM] aut1 says: we shouldn't pity ourselves
[9:10:27 PM] aut1 says: we are all fine without them

Although several students are engaged in the discussion in example (3), it is aut1 who most assertively displays knowledge. While each of the other group members (autumnleader, aut2, aut3, aut4 and aut5) negotiate content in reaction to a previous comment by aut3, aut1 engages in a monologue, seemingly unaware of or perhaps uninterested in the parallel discussion. It is not until aut3's reaction "what a pity" to aut2's exclamation "unluckily we have no man in our group.!!!" that aut1 takes notice of the others' discussion, commenting as well in an assertive, authoritative manner, "we shouldn't pity ourselves" and "we are all fine without them". In this way, aut3 presents a knowledgable, authoritative and therefore powerful identity discursively constructed with language that is assertive, dominant and confident.

In example (4), the Summer group is discussing language and gender, analyzing male and female-authored autobiographies:

(4) [9:33:20 PM] sum4 says: what Do you think if I say the first biography was written by a man and the second by a women?
[9:33:33 PM] sum2 says: It can't be that
[9:33:42 PM] sum1 says: no I do not think so
[9:33:53 PM] sum2 says: They wrote about themselves
[9:34:00 PM] sum1 says: look at their email sum4
[9:34:15 PM] sum4 says: no,
[9:34:27 PM] sum1 says: so I think They wrote
[9:34:31 PM] sum4 says: that is not the clue

[9:34:39 PM] sum2 says: What do you mean sum4?
[9:34:43 PM] sum3 says: but i think she writes on her own
[9:34:46 PM] sum1 says: why not
[9:35:05 PM] sum3 says: by herself
[9:35:07 PM] sum4 says: I think someone wrote their biography
[9:35:24 PM] sum1 says: because these put on web page
[9:35:28 PM] sum2 says: No sum4, Look at the instructions
[9:35:33 PM] summerleader says: but what make u think this 1st
[9:35:39 PM] summerleader says: is written by a man
[9:35:46 PM] summerleader says: and the second is by a woman?
[9:35:49 PM] sum1 says: so it must be with email
[9:36:12 PM] sum1 says: of the writer
[9:36:21 PM] sum4 says: the first's short, clear and simple sentence structures
Time periods are very clear
[9:36:32 PM] sum4 says: I mean it's in order
[9:36:43 PM] sum1 says: we will ask teacher later

Sum4 initiates discussion by posing a question, inviting the others to comment on her evaluation of the data set. There is general agreement among the others that sum4's evaluation is incorrect, and there follows a rather long period of discussion, explanation of opinion and negotiation of task interpretation. Sum4 has in fact misunderstood the explanation of data in the assignment, which clearly states the gender of the writers. Both sum1 and sum2 disagree explicitly with sum4 ("no I do not think so" and "It can't be that"), and sum3 disagrees as well, although less directly, "but i think she writes on her own". Summerleader takes on a teacher role, requesting an explanation from sum4 ("but what make you think ..."), which sum4 provides ("the first's short ..."). However, it is sum1 who initiates an end to the long sequence of negotiation with the goal-oriented entry "we will ask teacher later". Such deference to the teacher is a recurring strategy for resolving such conflicts, usually invoked after similarly long sequences of negotiation where general agreement or understanding is unachievable.

5. Assuming and delegating responsibility

Negotiating progression of pre-seminars and asserting and questioning knowledge are performed by discursive strategies reflecting goal-

orientation and content-expertise, respectively. Assuming and delegating responsibility, on the other hand, are performed by discursive strategies which reflect both goal-orientation and content-expertise at once. In example (5), the Spring group are discussing language and gender:

(5) [10:23:27 PM] springleader says: any more questions on the book and the lecture?
[10:23:27 PM] spr1 says: I have one question on Page 81
[10:23:31 PM] springleader says: yes
[10:23:33 PM] spr2 says: we go through the course book first I think
[10:23:50 PM] spr3 says: which one spr1?
[10:23:59 PM] springleader says: yes, your question spr1?
[10:23:58 PM] spr1 says: I don't understand the example in (7)
[10:24:20 PM] spr1 says: everybody understands (7)?
[10:24:25 PM] spr4 says: what about sexism in discourse?
[10:24:28 PM] spr2 says: we don't say lord gentlemen spr1
[10:24:43 PM] springleader says: lady here is a semantic derogation
[10:24:57 PM] springleader says: spr4, can you take spr1's question?

Example (5) begins with springleader's goal-oriented entry "any more questions on the book and the lecture?", signalling a desire to conclude a phase and/or continue the progress of the pre-seminar. Throughout example (5), springleader performs typical teacher/leader tasks, such as this comprehension check, fielding questions and, by repeating spr3's request for clarification, even indirectly denying another the right to assume leadership. It is springleader's last entry in example (5), however, in which responsibility is delegated to another student, "spr4, can you take spr1's question?" that fully establishes the power position of leader/teacher.

In example (6), the Autumn leader has started the pre-seminar chat, with the task of discussing language and gender:

(6) [8:49:27 PM] autumnleader says: HI, every body […]
[8:51:10 PM] aut1 says: is everybody here
[8:51:38 PM] aut2 says: yes, exept aut3.
[8:51:53 PM] autumnleader added aut3 to this chat […]
[8:52:38 PM] aut1 says: so we are all here
[8:53:00 PM] aut1 says: let's start our discussion, ok?
[8:53:01 PM] autumnleader says: yeah. we are all here

[8:53:03 PM] aut2 says: Should we start?
[8:53:05 PM] autumnleader says: sure
[8:53:24 PM] aut1 says: shall we look at the two conversations first
[8:53:33 PM] aut2 says: ok.
[8:53:36 PM] autumnleader says: ok

The leader has performed the expected duty of starting a chat group and adding the group members. However, aut3 is not present, and aut2's answer "yes, exept aut3" to aut1's check on attendance prompts autumnleader to add aut3. Much like "no, your duty" in example (1), aut2's indirect speech act confirms the fact that leaders are expected to perform certain duties. Once this administrative task is performed, however, both aut1 and aut2 assume leadership responsibilities, using goal-oriented discourse, "let's start our discussion, ok?" and "Should we start?" It is aut1 who retains leader status by taking responsibility for initiating content-expertise, "shall we look at the two conversations first". Both aut2 and autumnleader affirm aut1's leadership with the non-challenging "ok" and "sure".

6. Discussion

During student-only pre-seminar chat sessions, the absence of teacher-led, face-to-face classroom activities requires the students to assume leadership roles and responsibilities normally associated with the teacher. This situation raises the questions of who teaches and who learns, how students discursively negotiate power roles, and whether power emerges as a function of displayed expertise and knowledge or rather the use of authoritative language. The examples presented in this study and extracted from a corpus of task-based discussion logs among Vietnamese students of distance learning courses in English linguistics reveal recurring discourse strategies for negotiating the progression of the discussion sessions, asserting and questioning knowledge, and assuming or delegating responsibility. Power is defined ad hoc as the ability to successfully perform these strategies. The students who manage the progression of the pre-seminar, assert and question knowledge, and assume or delegate responsibility are those who exhibit typical teacher behavior, and thus are recognized as performing power identities.

The data analysis contributes to a better understanding of how working methods and materials can be tailored to students in distance learning courses, and how such students can be empowered by being afforded opportunities and effectively encouraged to assert their knowledge and authority. The Vietnamese students of Högskolan Dalarna's Master's of English linguistics distance program benefit from

pre-seminars by having a chance to actively prepare for subsequent student–teacher interaction, during which students are evaluated according to their ability to apply knowledge. Student–student interaction within their groups during the pre-seminar allows students to exchange ideas, display knowledge, exercise authority or safely challenge each other.

The pre-seminar data challenge the relationship between power and language, suggesting that power is not necessarily a function of powerful language, but rather is associated with discursive strategies for performing typical teacher responsibilities. This raises the question of how students can be empowered in the distance-learning context. The appointment of a group leader facilitates the process of empowerment by relegating to the leader specific, goal-oriented duties. A group leader also introduces the notion of an authority figure, which can be exploited for the purpose of interaction management, but thanks to the administrative nature of leader status, does not necessarily jeopardize the horizontal social relationships within the groups. Power identities are therefore continuously negotiable and accessible to all, as they are achieved through the performance of recurring discursive strategies.

References

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Ed. J. O. Urmson. Oxford: Clarendon.

Burrell, N. & Koper, R. (1994). The efficacy of powerful/powerless language on persuasiveness/credibility: A meta-analytic review. In: R. W. Preiss & M. Allen (eds.), *Prospects and precautions in the use of meta-analysis* (pp. 235–255). Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grob, L., Meyers, R. & Schuh, R. (1997). Powerful/powerless language use in group interactions: sex differences or similarities? *Communication Quarterly*, 45, 282–303.

Hosman, L. (1989). The evaluative consequences of hedges, hesitations, and intensifiers: powerful and powerless speech styles. *Human Communication Research*, 15, 383–406.

Jaworski, A. & Coupland, D. (1999). *The Discourse Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Matsuda, P. (2002). Negotiation of identity and power in a Japanese online discourse community. *Computers and Composition*, 19, 39–55.

Nakane, C. (1970). *Japanese society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Okabe, R. (1983). Cultural assumptions of East and West. In: W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory: Current perspectives* (pp. 21–44). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13, 65–93.

Footnotes

[1] The extracts are copied from the chatlogs. Language and typing errors are not corrected.

Language Learning through Fuzzy Ears

Peter E. Czigler, Fredrik Karlsson, Patricia Poussa, Kirk P. H. Sullivan[1]

Abstract

This paper explores the impact on second language (L2) learning and learner self-confidence that an untreated hearing loss can have. A case study was conducted that combined a reflective interview with an adult immigrant with a perception experiment. The interview showed that the learner had had problems in following classroom talk, had felt socially excluded and had had health problems that disappeared once a hearing aid had been fitted. The experiment revealed a minor hearing impairment. Hence, a minor impairment can result in failed L2 learning and a collapse of the learner's self-confidence. Teachers of adult immigrants, and policy-makers, ought to be made aware of the effects of hearing impairment on adult L2 learners as the personal and social costs of untreated hearing impairments may be high. We propose that learners of a second language should be encouraged to get their hearing tested before starting their studies.

Introduction

With the ever-increasing globalization of the world economy there has been an increase in the number of people migrating to countries where the societal language is not the migrant's mother tongue. These migrants are not only the young multilingual elite, but include middle-aged professionals, senior citizens moving to a better climate, economic migrants and asylum seekers who, together with their children, are in search of a better life. For many of these migrants the move to a new country entails the learning of a new language.

Many migrants take formal language classes to assist in their assimilation into their new country. Some continue to use their home language(s) at home and with friends and rarely use the new societal language outside of the classroom. Others are more proactive and use their new societal language as often as possible in many contexts. In all contexts there is

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 23–37. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

ambient noise and in many there is background noise that can be experienced as disturbing by the learner.

Ambient and background noises are features of many classrooms and this led Nelson, Kohnert, Sabur and Shaw (2005) to investigate whether classroom noise and learning through a second language result in a double jeopardy for children learning through a second language. Their answer was yes. Noise, even typical classroom noise and reverberation, places children learning in a second language at a disadvantage.

The impact of classroom noise is, however, not restricted to the child learning through a second language. Various studies (e.g. Elliott, 1979; Johnson, 2000) have noted that children are inefficient listeners and that their understanding of speech in noise is something that reaches adult-like levels at around the age of 15. Prior to achieving adult-like hearing ability in noise, students require optimal listening conditions to hear and understand. Learners who miss key words, phrases and concepts because of poor classroom (and other) listening conditions may struggle to keep up with the lesson. The risk group includes those with temporary hearing loss due to otitis media, those with permanent hearing loss, children learning in a second language, those with learning disabilities, children with speech impediments and very young children.

An international driving factor in classroom acoustics research and improvement has been the integration of children with hearing loss into the main-stream schooling. Wilson et al. (2002) argued in their report on primary school classroom acoustics that:

> *The ideal classroom should be acoustically friendly for all children regardless of abilities and for all teaching styles in common practice today. Classrooms should not just be acoustically good when the child has normal hearing and is sitting quietly on the mat close to the teacher. The room should also be acoustically friendly for the hearing-impaired student when there are high levels of noise because there is a group discussion going on.* (p. 6).

The classroom acoustic and the noise levels in the classroom also impact upon the ability of the adult immigrant attending formal language courses to follow the class and gain from the teaching. The importance of an acoustically well-designed classroom for the adult language learner finds support in the studies that have shown that the ability to listen to an L2 is nega-

tively affected by noise (e.g. Mayo & Florentine, 1997; van Wijngaarden, Steeneken & Houtgast, 2002), and that the ability to cope with noise as an L2 listener is impacted upon the age at which the L2 was learnt. Mayo and Florentine (1997) showed that those starting to acquire their L2s before the age of 6 were better than those who began after the age of 14. An early start is necessary for the acquisition of efficient high level processing that decreases the reliance on the acoustic signal and increases the use of linguistic experience in the L2. Research by Elliott (1979) and Johnson (2000) suggests that adult-like ability in understanding L1 speech in noise is gained at around the age of 15. Hence, classroom noise 1) is a problem for young L1 students, 2) is a bigger problem for those children learning though a second language and, 3) affects those with late start L2 learning more than those with an early start. Adult immigrants who have to learn the language of their new country fall into the latter category.

Adult learners can come to the classroom with a hearing problem of which they are unaware. Hearing loss is not only something that affects the elderly or those born with chronic hearing damage. Davis (1989) reported that in Great Britain (GB) 10.4% of the 31–40 age group, 20.0% of the 41–50 age group and 33.9% of the 51–60 age group have a ≥25 dBHL (decibel Hearing Level) hearing loss in their worse ear, that is a 'mild' hearing loss. Wilson et al. (1998) and Wilson et al. (1999) compared hearing loss in South Australia (SA) with Davis' GB study. The hearing losses were reported for different age ranges. For the 15–50 age group, the percentage of the population whose worse ear had a ≥25 dBHL hearing loss was 5.2% in SA and 10.6% in GB, for the 51–60 age group it was 28.3% in SA and 33.8% in GB and for the 61–70 age group it was 58.7% in SA and 51.2% in GB. Hearing loss is thus something that affects a broad spectrum of society.

Based on their study Wilson et al. (1999) also estimate that of 6.9% of the Australian population ≥18 years with a moderate hearing impairment at ≥35 dBHL (941 000 people) only 38% would wear a hearing aid on a daily basis. Many of the other 62% would not have undergone a hearing test and would not be aware of their hearing impairment.

It is likely that adult L2 learners will have problems learning in noisy environments and listening in noise, and that a hearing loss of which the learner is unaware will compound this problem. Hearing impairments have also been shown to have a potentially profound impact upon the

individual's quality of life and are, as Wilson et al. (1992) pointed out, an underestimated public health problem. Hogan et al. (2001) listed the following as associated with hearing impairment: "cardio-vascular and respiratory disease, affective mood disorders, poorer social relations and reduced self-sufficiency in instrumental activities of daily living" (p. 11). These factors can impact upon the learner's self-confidence and identity and could, therefore, affect the learner's uptake of the L2.

This paper presents some preliminary thoughts from a personal reflection interview and experimental case study. In order to interrogate the question of how severe an undetected hearing impairment needs to be for it to affect the learner's perception of identity and self-confidence this study synthesises the qualitative experience of one mature L2 learner who discovered a hearing impairment after starting to learn Swedish with the quantitative experimental data from auditory single word tests presented to the same learner. The qualitative interview framed the learner's situation by providing her personal history, her social experiences and her experience of language learning with a hearing impairment of which she was unaware. The experimental part of the case study investigated the learner's ability to perceive and repeat single words. This experiment provides an insight into how well our learner is able to correctly segment the speech signal she hears and whether this ability decreases in a noisy environment. The synthesis of this case study's qualitative and quantitative data shows that a minor hearing impairment of which a learner is unaware can have major repercussions on the learning of the L2, and on a learner's identity and self-confidence. We recommend that all L2 learners be encouraged to take a hearing test prior to starting their L2 studies.

The reflective interview study

This study was conducted via email. The learner was asked about her childhood, her student days and working life. She was instructed to reflect on aspects that could have been related to a hearing problem of which she was unaware and in particular to focus on how her quality of life has been affected by the detection of her hearing loss. Based on the learner's reflection the following description of the learner emerged.

The learner who is the focus of this case study was born in 1943, is female, and was 64 years old at the time of the study. She has most likely had damage to her left ear since the age of seven when she had a mastoid infection; damage has only just been detected.

When thinking back to her school days she remembered that even then she did not like groups of people. She preferred as she put it "to concentrate on one voice at a time". She never liked background music, and when she listened to the radio, she wanted to concentrate on it and not do something else at the same time. She spent a lot of time reading as a child, often kneeling on the floor with two fingers in her ears, to shut out background noise.

In 1968, at the age of 25, she moved to Finland to work as a university lecturer in English. She taught English pronunciation classes in the language laboratory, and Finnish–English translation classes, without noticing any hearing problem. She also undertook formal studies in Finnish morphology, syntax and semantics, to *cum laude-approbatur*, again with no perception of a hearing problem. She can only remember having one hearing test during the 19 years she lived in Finland before returning to England. This was conducted in Helsinki at the beginning of the 1970s when she wanted to study at Helsinki University.

In 1999 she moved to Sweden and began a part-time evening course for beginners of Swedish, with little success, switching to a full-time course in year three. She had felt excluded in the evening language classes, which were held in echoing rooms, with other students talking in the background. It is interesting to note that she reported that she began to feel very unwell in rock concerts and symphony concerts at this time, and finally even the sound of a tuba made her feel queasy, suggesting that a crucial change in her hearing had occurred. It was in the middle of the full-time course that our learner began to suspect that there was something wrong with her hearing, during lab-work. She still felt that spoken activities in groups held in a cafeteria or with any background noise were unhelpful. Even social coffee would leave her sitting quietly, drinking coffee and trying to segment the speech floating around her.

She booked an appointment with the university's private healthcare provider to have her hearing examined. They gave her a tone test and reported that her hearing was within normal limits (–10 dB to 25 dB). It was another three and a half years before she had her hearing tested for the right and left ear separately by an audiologist at the university hospital. This revealed that she was in need of a hearing aid in her left ear.

Reflecting upon how she felt before her hearing impairment was detected and her hearing aid fitted, she wrote: "I have never been so unpop-

ular and felt myself incompetent and disliked for my 'attitude problem'. I thought that half of my colleagues hated Finns and half hated the British. People refused to translate in meetings, and acted astonished if I asked the meaning of a word. I got told off for interrupting." She also reported an increase in blood pressure, poorer social relations and a reduced self-sufficiency in the activities of her daily life. When she reflected upon how things had changed after she had her hearing aid fitted she wrote: "At first it was euphoric, and I went out and bought a summer cottage. My dangerously high blood pressure has gone down. Made me slightly less of a frightened mouse when I have to speak Swedish."

The experimental investigation

Before conducting the experiments the experimental participant was given a pure tone hearing-test at the university hospital in Örebro, Sweden. In a pure tone audiogram, the minimum intensity of sound that can be heard by the patient is determined for a range of frequencies. It is the difference in intensity between the patient and the listener with normal hearing (20 dBHL, or above this level for all investigated frequencies) that is shown in an audiogram.

For clarity the Air conduction response is shown in Figure 1 and the Bone conduction response in Figure 2.[2] The air conduction response evaluates the hearing of the outer and middle ear; the bone conduction response bypasses the outer ear and the middle ear as the cochlea, or inner ear, is stimulated directly by a bone conduction oscillator placed by the audiologist on the mastoid bone.

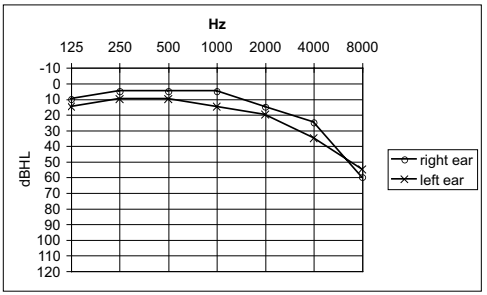


Figure 1. *Audiogram showing the experimental participant's hearing thresholds (Air conduction)*

From Figure 1 it is clear that the left ear is worse than the right ear; apart from at very high frequency, the curve for the left ears lies under that for the right ear. The figure also shows that the higher frequencies (4000 Hz and upwards) are most affected by the hearing impairment. This makes the discrimination of fricatives and plosives more difficult.

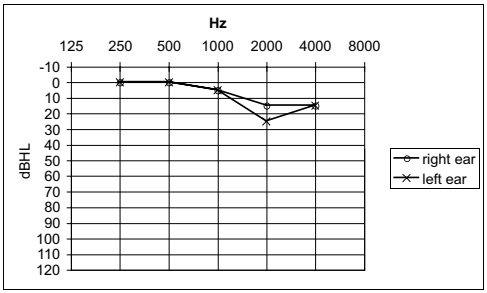


Figure 2. *Audiogram showing the experimental participant's hearing thresholds (Bone conduction)*

From Figure 2 a difference between the ears can be seen at 2000 Hz, along with a general deterioration in the performance of the inner ear. This difference will also impact upon the listener's ability to correctly perceive fricative and plosive phonemes.

Together, figures 1 and 2 indicate *presbycusis,* an age related hearing loss that tends to become evident from the fifth decade of life. As a consequence of this decline in hearing, the ability to hear phonetic distinctions degrades.

Our learner's left ear canal walls were found to collapse when external head-phones were placed on the head. This problem is common in audiometric assessment (Creston, 1965). An insert earphone or a plastic tube with appropriate adjustments to calibration was therefore used during the test. For interest, Figure 3 shows the difference between testing with external headphones and an insert plastic tube on the hearing of our listener's left ear. The collapsing ear canal walls could explain the problems the learner reported with language laboratory work (i.e. listening comprehension texts in Swedish). In Figure 3 it is easily seen how the pressure of the external headphone affects the frequencies above 1000 Hz and how the listener's abilities are better when an inserted plastic tube is used. Rather than improving the learner's hearing by presenting the sound directly to the ear, the external headphone worsened the listener's already impaired hearing.

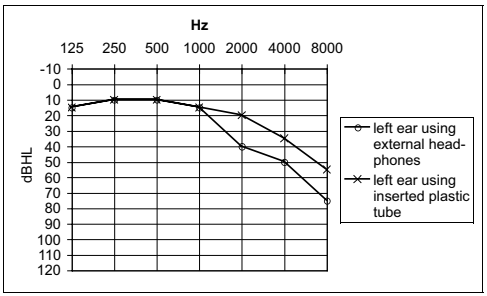


Figure 3. *The experimental participant's hearing thresholds in her left ear showing the difference in hearing ability when using external headphones vs. an inserted plastic tube*

The pure tone hearing-test confirmed that the experimental participant had a hearing loss, and that her left ear's impairment was greater than her right ear's. The detection of the collapse of the left ear's canal walls when external headphones are used fed into the experimental procedure, so that headphones were not used. The hearing test showed that the participant had a hearing loss that would impact upon her ability to hear phonetic distinctions, yet that she did not have a serious hearing problem.

The speech material

The Swedish speech material consisted of four of the 12 Svensk talaudiometri (1988) lists of 50 monosyllable words (see Appendix A) that are presented in a carrier sentence: "Nu hör ni _____" ('Now we hear _____'). The lists used were 4, 5, 11 and 12. This material is widely used in the audiology departments in Sweden.

The English speech material consisted of 12 of the Arthur Boothroyd Word Lists (Boothroyd, 1968). The lists used were 1–8 and 11–14 (see Appendix B). The test was purchased from MRC Institute of Hearing Research Nottingham, England, as these were not already available in the Hearing Science section of Örebro University nor at Umeå University. These lists were purchased together with a presentation program that runs on a PC that allows the words to be presented with and without noise with different signal-to-noise (SNR) ratios. Unlike the Swedish material these English words are not presented in a carrier sentence.

Procedure

All tests were conducted without headphones due to the difference in the hearing between our learner's left and right ear when wearing headphones. The learner sat one meter in front of a speaker. The volume was calibrated to 65 dB at her head. A signal-to-noise ratio of –4 dB was used for the noise conditions. All tests were conducted in a sound-attenuated room and were recorded for later analysis.

The Swedish tests were conducted at Örebro University Hospital by the audiology department. The four Swedish word lists were presented to our learner with a break in between them in the following order: No hearing aid, No noise; No hearing aid, Noise; Hearing aid, No noise; and Hearing aid, Noise.

The English tests were conducted at Umeå University two weeks after the Swedish tests. Three of the 12 English word lists were randomly and uniquely assigned to the four conditions: No hearing aid, No noise; No hearing

aid, Noise; Hearing aid, No noise; and Hearing aid, Noise. The four conditions were presented to our learner with a break in between them in the same order as the Swedish conditions were presented.

Following the audiology standards for each test, the Swedish lists were scored by counting the number of correct words and presenting this as a percentage of the number of words presented. The Boothroyd lists were scored by counting the number of correct phonemes and presenting this as a percentage of the total number of phonemes.

Results

The phoneme correct rate for the Swedish words was 100% correct for both NO NOISE conditions. When noise was present the phoneme correct rate was 62% with NO HEARING AID and 90% with HEARING AID. The phoneme correct rate for the English words was 100% for both NO NOISE conditions. When noise was present the phoneme correct rate fell to 86% with NO HEARING AID and to 74% with HEARING AID.

The results show that in conditions with no background noise our learner is as accurate in both languages. A difference occurs when noise is added. The English result is lower with the hearing aid, yet this result is not significant at the 95% level of confidence (Green, 1997). For Swedish, noise creates a decrease in accuracy. With her hearing aid the difference is not significant, yet without her hearing aid the difference is significant.

Discussion

This paper has examined one learner's experience of a move to a new country and the learning of a new language. The study focused on the impact an unknown hearing loss had upon the language learner's listening skills and how the difficulties created in learning the new language impacted upon her identity. The study set out to interrogate the question of how severe a hearing impairment of which the learner is unaware needs to be for it to affect the learner's perception of identity and self-confidence, and found that a minor hearing impairment can affect an L2 learner's quality of life in major ways.

The reflective interview showed that the learner believed that her undetected hearing loss had made learning to understand spoken Swedish more difficult than it ought to have been. It further revealed that the impact the hearing loss had on her identity and health were those that earlier have been reported in the literature (see Hogan et al., 2001); she reported an increase

in blood pressure, poorer social relations and reduced self-sufficiency in the activities of her daily life.

The experimental part of this paper, however, produced a slightly different picture and suggests that the learner experienced a minor problem as major. In perfect conditions with no noise, with and without her hearing aid, she produced perfect results in both languages. This shows that her knowledge of Swedish was not a contributing factor to her performance in noise. Further it shows that her hearing loss did not make it impossible for her to perceive and discriminate phonemes and words. This ability to perform perfectly in noise free conditions demonstrates the relatively minor nature of the hearing impairment. Perfect conditions of the type found in sound-attenuated rooms never occur out of the laboratory, however. Hence the noise conditions are more authentic. Noise produced a fall in both English and Swedish recognition rates. In English there was no significant difference due to use of the hearing aid, whereas for Swedish the use of the hearing aid produced a significant improvement. This difference between her performance in her L1 and L2 concurs with earlier studies that have shown that the ability to listen to an L2 is adversely affected by noise (e.g. Mayo & Florentine, 1997; van Wijngaarden, Steeneken & Houtgast, 2002).

Together our learner's reflections and the experimental data suggest that a minor hearing deficiency, if left undetected, may have a major impact upon a second language learner's abilities to follow teaching, confidence to participate in group activities and to gain from language laboratory exercises. A hearing impairment may only be minor, and when investigated experimentally not cause results dramatically different from what is expected based on research with people with no reported hearing impairment, but when this minor difference is placed in a real life context the impact on the individual may be serious. In the classroom setting the learner may be able to compensate for some of the deficiency by focusing on reading, writing and preparation for classes. However, communicating orally in the new L2 will not progress as well as it might have done without the undetected hearing impairment.

Immigrant L2 learners who are unaware of a hearing impairment and have to use the new L2 on an everyday basis both in and out of the classroom can find themselves in a downward spiral of decreasing self-confidence. A hearing impairment can affect an individual's self-con-

fidence as the impairment can affect an individual's mood, social relationships and ability to deal with life's everyday activities. This in turn can impact upon an L2 learner's classroom self-confidence. Lowered self-confidence and poor classroom acoustics can compound and accelerate the feeling of failure felt by a student. This in turn can lead to a further loss of self-confidence and questioning of one's identity, which in turn can impact upon a learner's affective reactions in the classroom. The outcome can be someone who fails in the L2 learning, loses their self-confidence and begins to question who they are due to the frequency of perceived failure. This identity loss in turn can cause a feeling of being excluded from society and make the integration process into the new society difficult and complicated.

If we place these findings in a second language learning and research context, it can be argued that in Europe today, highly motivated adult learners may be being taught by the wrong methods, then dismissed as socially or cognitively inadequate due to undetected hearing problems. Teachers of adult immigrants, and policy-makers, need to be made more aware of the effects of hearing impairment on adult L2 learners, in their particular social and cultural settings, as the personal and social costs of untreated hearing impairments may be high. Following Davis' (1997) proposal for mid-life intervention, we propose that adult L2 learners, regardless of age, be encouraged to have their hearing tested prior to beginning their L2 studies to reduce a loss of identity and self-confidence in the language classroom that can spill over into an individual's ability to achieve their full potential in their new home country.

This study also illustrates the importance of acoustically well-designed classrooms for all ages of learner. A badly designed classroom with long reverberation times should not be assigned to the adult learner in the belief that they are able to deal with the poorer conditions because they have reached neurological maturity and have the linguistic experience necessary to predict from context. The adult learner may have a hearing problem, and in a second language the learner's ability can be viewed as returning to pre-adult levels of perception of speech in noise. Younger immigrants who are learning a new language can also have a hearing impairment due to, for example, untreated middle ear infections and/or noise induced hearing loss due to war noise such as gunshots or exploding bombs. These immigrants will experience language learning problems similar to those of the learner in this case study.

Acknowledgement

We thank the staff and researchers of Ahlsén Research Institute, Örebro University Hospital, Örebro, Sweden for their practical assistance.

References

Boothroyd, A. (1968). Developments in speech audiometry. *Sound,* 2, 3–10.

Creston, J. E. (1965). Collapse of the ear canal during the routine audiometry. *Journal Laryngol-Rhino-Otologie,* 79, 893–901.

Davis, A. C. (1989). The prevalence of hearing impairment and reported hearing disability among adults in Great Britain. *International Journal of Epidemiology,* 18, 911–917.

Elliott, L. L. (1979). Performance of children aged 7 to 17 years on a test of speech intelligibility in noise using sentence material with controlled word predictability. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 66, 651–653.

Green, R. (1997). The uses and misuses of speech audiometry in rehabilitation. In: M. Martin (ed.), *Speech Audiometry* (2nd edn), (pp. 150–176). London: Whurr Publishers Ltd.

Hogan, A., Taylor, A., Doyle, J., Osborn, R., Fitzmaurice, K. & Kendig, H. (2001). The communication and health needs of older people with hearing loss: are hearing aids enough? *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Audiology*, 23, 10–17.

Johnson, C. E. (2000). Children's phoneme identification in reverberation and noise. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research,* 43, 144–147.

Mayo, L. H. & Florentine, M. (1997). Age of second-language acquisition and perception of speech in noise. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, 40, 686–693.

Nelson, P., Kohnert, K., Sabur, S. & Shaw, D. (2005). Classroom noise and children learning through a second language: double jeopardy? *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools,* 36, 219–229.

Svensk talaudiometri. Rev 1. (1988). Bromma: CA Tegnér AB.

van Wijngaarden, S. J., Steeneken, H. & Houtgast, T. (2002). Quantifying the intelligibility of speech in noise for non-native listeners. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America,* 111, 1906–1916.

Wilson, D., Xibin, S., Read, P. Walsh, P., & Esterman, A. (1992). Hearing loss – an underestimated public health problem. *Australian Journal of Public Health,* 16, 282–286.

Wilson, D., Walsh, P. G. , Sanchez, L., Davis, A. C., Taylor, A. W., Tucker, G. & Meagher, I. (1999). The epidemiology of hearing impairment in an Australian adult population. *International Journal of Audiology,* 28, 247–252.

Wilson, D., Walsh, P. G., Sanchez, L. & Read, P. (1998). *Hearing impairment in an Australian population*. Dept. of Human Services, Centre for Population Studies in Epidemiology. http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pros/portals/0/Hearing%20Impairment%20in%20an%20Australian%20Population%201998.pdf. Retrieved April, 2007.

Wilson, O., Valentine, J., Halstead, M., McGinnigle, K., Dodd, G., Hellier, A., Wood, J. & Simpson, R. (2002). *Classroom Acoustics: A New Zealand Perspective*. Oticon Foundation, Wellington, New Zealand. http://download.contentx.ch/160/new%20zeeland.pdf. Retrieved October 1, 2002.

Appendix A: The Swedish FB lists

List 4		**List 5**	
doft	tjänst	fat	syn
känns	sits	vinst	rik
skärp	plats	frakt	block
lik	liv	broms	glöd
grabb	bred	vid	orm
stund	fjol	rån	rum
nord	hål	struts	fläkt
sjuk	nerv	tur	sitt
slips	blek	strå	knapp
här	snår	skal	själv
tjog	blad	brant	mört
bly	kort	kall	pingst
mjölk	frid	gräl	bänk
frö	fet	stopp	ton
puss	smek	halm	tysk
skydd	spansk	not	fransk
grav	smörj	stum	kär
sin	vas	barn	svett
damm	tack	bör	spö
synd	torsk	sträck	låt
dräng	dans	stark	bild
dvärg	kalv	hur	bank
glass	stork	vek	vad
vink	fart	fem	flykt
kust	slut	lott	hel

List 11		**List 12**	
som	dag	tam	säng
hörn	båt	blick	krok
trött	flit	lönn	tagg
form	ned	flik	torg
fack	pärm	höjd	gro
tofs	punkt	smäll	där
lim	svår	tjat	fält
vem	svar	ben	stå
stel	varm	far	stryk
bränn	dam	sex	valp
skutt	gnäll	hår	till
hård	berg	klubb	natt
rygg	träd	vers	blank
sträv	boll	napp	hav
lat	jord	roll	band
nick	vård	rast	blus
ras	jul	stöld	slott
tratt	lök	ljus	fet
prov	lin	svag	häst
fly	färd	mjuk	trygg
fest	sak	dal	viss
torr	pank	kors	pump
hast	mjöl	hett	lugn
brun	tal	våg	löv
pigg	knuff	knöl	mark

Appendix B: The Boothroyd Word List showing their CVC structure

List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4
SH I P	F I SH	TH U D	F U N
R U G	D U CK	W I TCH	W I LL
F A N	G A P	WR A P	V A T
CH EE K	CH EE SE	J AI L	SH A PE
H A ZE	R AI L	K EY S	WR EA TH
D I CE	H I VE	V I CE	H I DE
B O TH	B O NE	G E T	G UE SS
W E LL	W E DGE	SH OW N	C O MB
J O T	M O SS	H OO F	CH OO SE
M O VE	T OO TH	B O MB	J O B

List 5	List 6	List 7	List 8
F I B	F I LL	B A DGE	B A TH
TH A TCH	C A TCH	H U TCH	H U M
S U M	TH U MB	K I LL	D I P
H EE L	H EA P	TH IGH S	F I VE
W I DE	W I SE	W A VE	W AY S
R A KE	R A VE	R EA P	R EA CH
G OE S	G OA T	F OA M	J O KE
SH O P	SH O NE	G OO SE	N OO SE
V E T	B E D	N O T	G O T
J U NE	J UI CE	SH E D	SH E LL

List 11	List 12	List 13	List 14
M A N	H A VE	K I SS	W I SH
H I P	WH I ZZ	B U ZZ	D U TCH
TH U G	B U FF	H A SH	J A M
R I DE	M I CE	TH IE VE	H EA TH
S IE GE	T EE TH	G A TE	L A ZE
V EI L	G AU GE	W I FE	B I KE
CH O SE	P OA CH	P O LE	R O VE
SH OO T	R U LE	WR E TCH	P E T
W E B	D E N	D O DGE	F O G
C OU GH	C O SH	M OO N	S OO N

Footnotes

[1] Authors are listed in alphabetical order.

[2] These conditions are usually presented in the same diagram. We present them separately to make the difference between the ears clearer.

QRSTUVW

"Let's Keep it Informal, Guys"

A Study of the Effects of Teacher Communicative Strategies on Student Activity and Collaborative Learning in Internet-based English Courses

Mats Deutschmann, Carita Lundmark

Abstract

The paper explores the quantity and quality of communication produced by teachers in Internet courses of academic English, particularly during the initial stages of course activity. The courses are entirely conducted in virtual learning environments without physical meetings, and are part of the Bachelor programme (A–C level) of English at Mid Sweden University. The pedagogic design of the courses is based on collaborative learning, which presupposes a communicative environment with positive interdependence and interaction, where knowledge is shared by students questioning and challenging each other. Consequently, the teacher's role in setting communicative norms which encourage an environment of high acceptance, where students feel that they can express their opinions freely, is of utmost importance. The results suggest that there are two important factors that affect student activity in the initial stages of an online course: how much the teacher communicates with the class and the manner in which he or she does so.

Introduction

Over the past 15 years, higher education has experienced a radical shift of paradigm – a shift from 'instruction' to 'learning'. In response to the demands of the 'learning society', the idea of life-long learning and an increasingly digitalised global society, higher education has had to evolve from a system which merely transfers pre-packaged knowledge from lecturer to student to one which "creates environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves" (Barr & Tagg, 1995:15). These changes have in turn had a great impact on teaching practices in higher education, both in terms of the practical skills needed and how we define our roles as teachers.

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 39–57. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

Arguably, a forerunner of this development is e-learning. Learning environments created by means of modern information and communication technology have, in response to the shift in learning paradigm, rapidly changed from being places for downloading ready-made educational material to places that make learning with others in a social context possible (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Haythornwaite, 2002; Koschmann, 1996; Stephenson, 2001). The present paradigm, so called Computer Supported Collaborative Learning CSCL (Salmon, 2004), involves a shift from passive learning to active student-driven participation, collaboration and dialogue between learners, in turn resulting in a shift of power from teacher to student and a shift of emphasis from the individual to the collective.

As roles and power relationships change, the need for new patterns for communication emerges. The traditional situation, where teachers (with power) provide knowledge to students (without power), is becoming less and less valid. Knowledge is instead constructed in collaboration, "negotiated" through social processes where people must define their roles, build trust, and identify common goals and expectations (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). The tool used in all these processes is language and the social signals transmitted through this medium arguably constitute the "oil" of the collaborative machinery.

In an e-learning environment, further challenges in this respect are represented by the mode of interaction; communication in the digital environment is often primarily dependent on asynchronous written text. This mode of interaction is lacking in such key elements as intonation, facial expressions, eye contact and body language – social elements of communication that we heavily rely upon (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Such non-referential meaning instead has to be embedded in the written text, leading to a situation that demands special language skills, both in relation to production and interpretation.[1]

This paper aims to look at some aspects of communicative strategies used by teachers in the initial stages of an Internet course, and explores the effects of these strategies on student activity in the course.

Theoretical framework

The learning theories relevant to this study are those associated with collaborative learning. Collaborative learning can be described as the active reconstruction of a learner's knowledge

and ideas through peer-to-peer dialogues, commenting, discussing, sharing, and reconceptualising (see O'Donnell, Hmelo-Silver & Erkens, 2006). Underpinning these methods are the assumptions that learning is socially mediated knowledge construction based on cooperation, and that learning results from interaction and negotiations between learners, instructors and content. The method is greatly influenced by the ideas of Vygotsky (1962, 1978).

The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. According to Vygotsky (1978:57), "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)." He goes on to say that all "higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (p. 57). A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea of zone of proximal development, defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978:86). In other words, development is attained when children (and indeed adults) engage in social behavior. Socio-cultural factors are obviously central to this idea, language arguably being the most important.

Lave and Wenger (1991), building on the ideas of Vygotsky, introduce the idea of situated learning. Here learning is placed in the context of social relationships – situations of co-participation. As Hanks (1991:14) puts it in his introduction to their book: "Rather than asking what kind of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved, they ask what kinds of social engagements provide the proper context for learning to take place". Learning is seen as a process of participation in a *community of practice*. A community of practice refers to the process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in some subject or problem collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations. The community as a whole and the social processes within it are thus seen as vital in the knowledge building process.

Assuming that learning is something we do in cooperation with our peers also means reconsidering the professional mission and ultimately, the professional identity, of the teacher. The ter-

minology used in one area of education in particular, namely e-learning, illustrates this state of affairs. Online educators are referred to as *learning facilitators*, *online facilitators*, *e-moderators* and *e-tutors*, terms which reflect a very different teacher role than the traditional 'lecturer'. In her *five stage model*, Salmon (2004) describes the technical and the social processes that an online learning community goes through and the role of the online educator in these stages. It is clear that the educator has to be more than a mere source of information, a traditional lecturer, and Salmon places much emphasis on the importance of the e-moderator in the process of community building. Salmon's list of tasks that the e-moderator has to deal with includes many social aspects such as giving encouragement, dealing with insecurities, instilling confidence, building bridges for communication, giving guidance about online behaviour, encouraging the sharing of information etc., and all this in addition to the more traditional tasks of giving feed-back and evaluating work. Especially in the initial stages of a course, the educator's most important task is arguably to orchestrate the prerequisites for learning, to set the scene for a collaborative learning environment. It is thus reasonable to expect the efforts of the teacher, both in terms of quality and quantity, to be of decisive importance for the future success/failure of a particular course. In an e-learning environment, these efforts are largely manifested linguistically, in the educators' everyday communication with the students.

Formality is one such linguistic aspect. Formality is generally associated with communicative situations where there is great power difference and/or social distance between the communicators (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Formal style is, however, very hard to define, even though most native speakers intuitively have a feeling for when something is formal or not. Many researchers, however, make a distinction between formal and informal based on the factor of 'involvement' (see Biber, 1988 and Heylighen & Dewaele, 1999, for example). According to Heylighen and Dewaele (1999:1) a formal style is "characterized by detachment, accuracy, rigidity and heaviness; and informal style is more flexible, direct, implicit, and involved, but less informative". There are also certain norms associated with formal vs. informal style, especially in written language. One such example is the absence of contractions, one linguistic detail looked at in this study.

Description of the courses

The Department of Humanities at Mid Sweden University has been distributing Internet courses

in English (as an academic discipline) on undergraduate level since 2004. The programme runs over three terms with full-time courses taught entirely over the Internet. The courses were built according to a collaborative model, and the aim has been to create active learning communities where the students actively participate in their own, and their peers' learning processes. The pedagogic design (the nature of the tasks, the communicative tools available, the communicative culture etc.) has taken the five key elements of collaborative learning identified by Johnson, Johnson, Stanne and Garabaldi (1990) as a starting point:

> Positive interdependence: Students organize themselves by assuming roles which facilitate their collaboration.
>
> Promote interaction: Students take responsibility for the group's learning by sharing knowledge as well as questioning and challenging each other.
>
> Individual accountability: Each student is held responsible for taking an active part in the group's activities, completing his/her own designated tasks, and helping other students in their learning.
>
> Social skills: Students use leadership skills, including making decisions, developing consensus, building trust, and managing conflicts.
>
> Self-evaluation: Students assess individual and collective participation to ensure productive collaboration.

Courses are run in the online learning management system WebCt. In the course platform, the student can access objects such as voice commented PowerPoint lectures, study guides, compendia, diagnostic quizzes, course tasks and various web links related to the subject. It is also in this environment that most of the in-course communication takes place. Default communicative tools include discussion boards, e-mail and chat, but other communicative tools that allow for communication using real-time audio (Skype and Marratech) are linked into the platforms.

Most tasks on the course are designed to include an individual element, a group element (usually involving students reviewing and discussing each other's work), followed by an individual reflection where the student evaluates his/her own performance and the feed-back received from others. There are also other types of tasks

such as diagnostic quizzes, group tasks (students together producing PowerPoint presentations, for example), problem-based tasks and discussion seminars, where different issues are discussed using real time audio. In the initial courses (the objects of this investigation), however, most communication takes place using text-based, asynchronous discussion boards and e-mail. More sophisticated communication tools are introduced after one term.

In this article, teacher communication with students in the very first course unit they come into contact with is looked at. The course module, Grammar, 7.5 ECTS credits, takes up the basics of grammar in terms of terminology and structure, and runs over a five-week period, finishing off with a written exam. Students are graded on their performance during the course (various tasks), combined with the result of their written exam. During this particular course, the students do three main types of tasks: individual online quizzes (mainly diagnostic), free discussion tasks where the entire class contributes to discussions of a more general nature (such as discussing the pros and cons of formal, explicit grammar teaching in relation to language learning), and finally, five graded tasks based on the model described above (individual effort, peer reviews followed by individual reflection).

Since all the students in this study were novices to the environment and did not know the other members of the group at the start of the course unit, the teacher had a very important role in guiding students in the workings of the learning management system and in explaining the organisation of the course. Looking at the group processes with reference to Salmon's (2004) five stage model, we would argue from experience that participants in this particular course unit primarily go through the first three stages of the proposed five stage model, namely the *Access and Motivation* stage (the participants engage in trying to access the system); the *Online Socialisation* stage (the participants familiarise themselves with each other and their learning environment) and the *Information Exchange* stage (participants begin to explore the range of information available to them and the interaction at this stage concerns the content and the sharing of information). Although there is some *Knowledge Construction* (the fourth stage), where participants start to become involved in active interaction and knowledge construction, responding and reacting to each other's input, this activity is orchestrated by the design of the tasks rather than a natural development. The final *Development* stage, where learners become more responsible for their own learning and need less support

from the e-moderator, is probably not achieved this early in the course programme.

The number of participants per class is limited to 40, and since the programme normally attracts around 80 students per term, two parallel courses with exactly the same content (but different teachers) are normally set up. The average class represented in the study thus consists of a maximum of 40 students and one teacher. Demographically, the student groups are quite heterogeneous. The majority (roughly 70 per cent) are female, and a typical term the proportion of mature:younger students is roughly 50:50. Several of the students (roughly 15–20 per cent) study the courses from other countries than Sweden, and many participants are native speakers of other languages than Swedish. Since the focus of the present study is on teacher behaviour, however, detailed accounts of the student demography will not be presented here.

Aims

The aim of the present study is to explore how the quantity of communication produced by teachers during the initial stages of a course affects the activity of the students and how this in turn affects pass rates. In addition, we also examine the style of communication of two of the teachers in terms of formality and the resultant effect in terms of signalling distance or involvement.

Methods and material

Teacher communication in the initial course unit, Grammar, 7.5 ECTS credits, of the English Internet course programme was observed over six terms, from autumn 2004 until spring 2007. This comprises twelve separate class groups in all. The learning environment, course content and methods of examination were identical on all these occasions.

Five teachers are represented in the study, two males and three females. Details of these teachers are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Teachers included in study*

Teacher	Gender	Age	First language	Online teaching experience
Teacher 1 (taught one of the classes studied)	Female	30+	Native Swedish speaker with near-native proficiency in English	Limited: first course taught.
Teacher 2 (taught four of the classes studied)	Male	35–40	Native Swedish speaker with native proficiency in English	Medium: at least 4 terms of online teaching.
Teacher 3 (taught two of the classes studied)	Female	35–40	Native Swedish speaker with native proficiency in English	Some: two terms of online teaching.
Teacher 4 (taught four of the classes studied)	Male	40+	Bilingual Swedish and English	Extensive: 5 years of teaching online courses and has designed and built online courses.
Teacher 5 (taught one of the classes studied)	Female	30+	Bilingual Swedish and English	Limited: first course, but has studied extensively on Internet courses.

The communication collected consisted of e-mails, web-board discussion contributions and group announcements. The material was collected from the platforms and saved in text files for further analysis.

Four sub-studies were made:

Sub-study 1 is a correlation study between quantity of teacher communication and student activity. 'Quantity of teacher communication' was here defined as e-mail and discussion board contributions made by the teacher, standardised to take the number of students in the course into account (i.e. average contributions to each student). Note that many of the communicative events were group mails and group announcements in bulletin boards. Student activity was studied by looking at the number of student to student contributions in the discussion boards and was standardised to the average number of contributions made per

student. Since the discussion bulletin boards are where the students are instructed to discuss their peer review tasks etc., it is assumed to be a reasonable indication of student activity, at least for comparative purposes.[2]

Sub-study 2 is a correlation study between teacher activity and student pass rate. Pass rate was calculated on the performance the term the course was given. Students who passed the course at a later date were not included in the data.

Sub-study 3 is a longitudinal study of the communication in the classes of Teacher 2. Teacher communication was observed over four course occasions and correlated to student activity.

Sub-study 4 is a qualitative study of the linguistic behaviour of Teachers 1 and 5 with special reference to the level of formality and involved vs. distancing style. Formality indicators studied included contractions, opening phrases and closing phrases. Involved or distancing style were analysed by looking at aspects such as the signalling of support, sympathy, encouragement, praise, accessibility and interest. Teachers 1 and 5 were chosen because their classes displayed the greatest difference in student activity. Both teachers also taught one class only. In addition, the teachers are comparable in that they are both inexperienced online educators, they are of similar age and both are women in their 30s. The profiles of the two teachers differ, however, in two important respects: Teacher 1 has a somewhat weaker command of English and Teacher 5 actually has extensive experience of online learning but in the role of student; she attended the Internet English programme at Mid Sweden University herself.

Results

Sub-study 1: A correlation study between quantity of teacher communication and student activity

The most active teacher of the teachers observed was Teacher 5. On average each student in her class received a total of 106 messages in the form of e-mail messages or discussion bulletin board messages. The least active teacher was Teacher 1, whose students received 17 messages during the course on average. Interesting to note at this stage is the difference in communicative tools the different teachers chose to use. Teacher 5, for example, favoured the more public tool of discussion bulletin board notices, whereas Teachers 1, 2 and 3, for example, showed a preference for the more "private tool" of e-mail messages. Figure 1 below summarises the teacher activity in the courses.

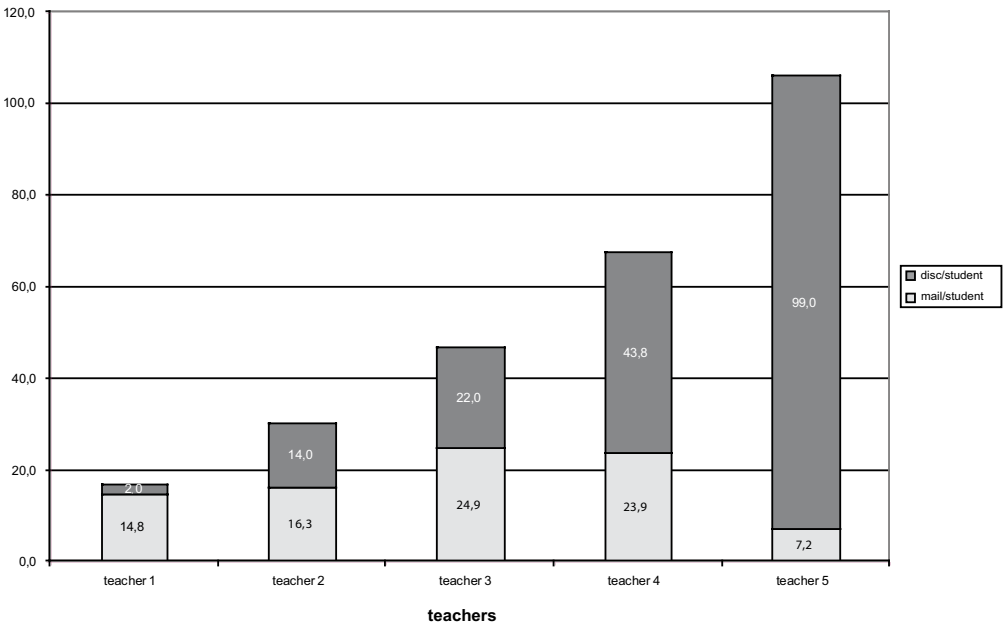


Figure 1. *Teacher activity – average number of e-mails and discussion contributions sent by the teacher to each student in the classes*

The student activity, measured by looking at the average number of discussion board submissions per student in the classes, showed that there was a very strong positive correlation (0.9) between teacher activity and student activity. Students in the class of Teacher 5, for example, were roughly four to fives times more active than the students in the class of Teacher 1. This can arguably be compared to the activity of these two teachers – Teacher 5 submitted roughly five times more e-mails and discussion board messages per student than Teacher 1. The results are summarised in Figure 2 below.

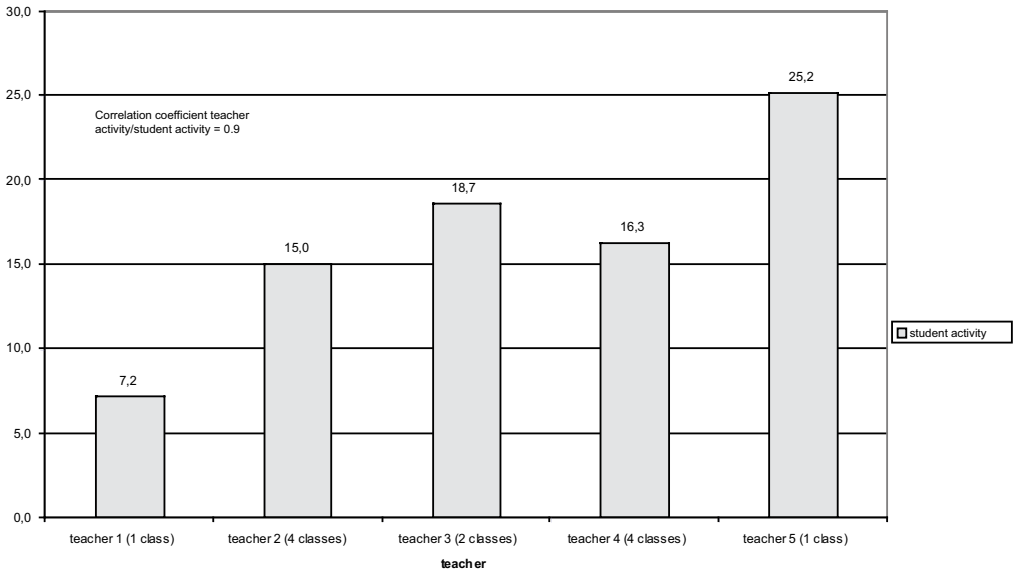


Figure 2. *Student activity in the different classes*

Sub-study 2: A correlation study between teacher activity and student pass rate

Student pass rate was calculated as the percentage of students of the class who had passed the course by the end of the term it started. Note that the figures are misleading in that very few students who completed the course actually failed. Pass rates less than 100 per cent are rather an indication of the number of students that failed to finish assignments and/or never actually took the exam. Again there was a strong positive correlation between teacher activity and student pass rate (0.68). The results are summarised in Figure 3 below.

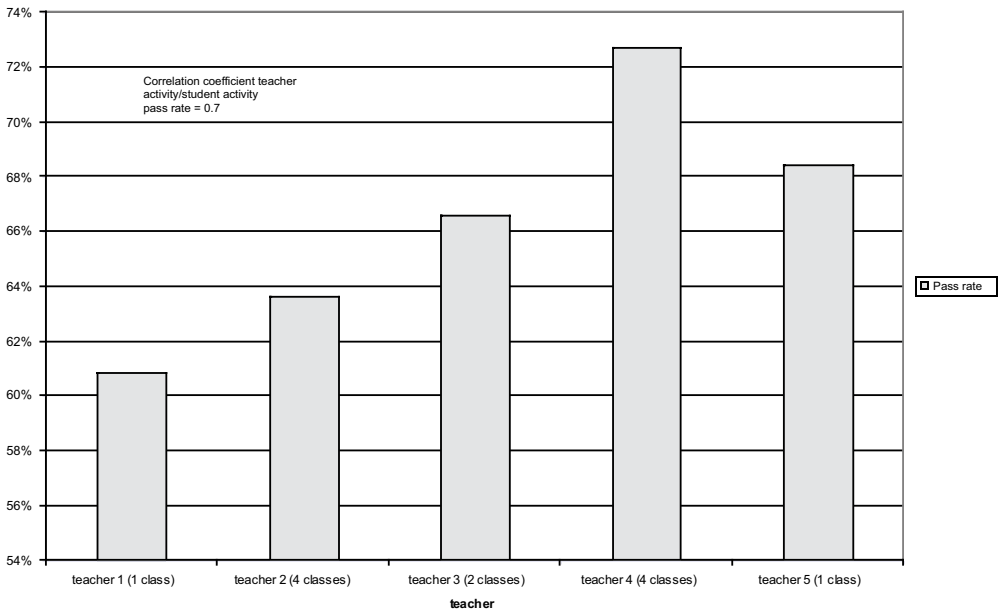


Figure 3. *Average pass rates of the classes of teachers 1–5*

Sub-study 3: A longitudinal study of the communication in the classes of Teacher 2

In this particular sub-study, we wanted to look more closely at the professional development of one particular teacher, and the effects this had on student activity in the course. The teacher chosen was Teacher 2, a 35–40-year-old native Swedish male with near-native proficiency in English. The teacher in question was a novice online educator when he joined Mid Sweden University, and it is interesting to follow his development during four terms of teaching the same course. It is apparent from the results that as Teacher 2 gains more experience, his input in terms of the number of communicative events with students increases. Initially, Teacher 2 can be classed as a comparatively sparse communicator, the average student receiving roughly

20 e-mails and discussion board contributions from him per course. By course occasion 4, however, Teacher 2 has more than doubled this input. There is a very strong positive correlation (0.94) between the quantity of communication and student activity; the student activity on the last course occasion is more than double that of the first course occasion. The results are summarised in Figure 4 below.

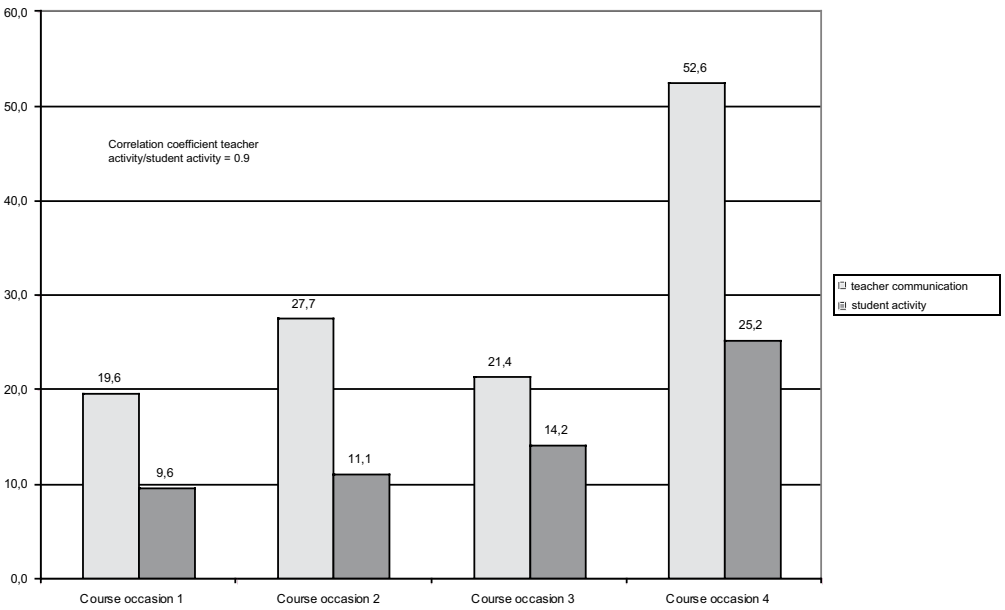


Figure 4. *Teacher 2's communication on four course occasions*

Sub-study 4: A qualitative study of the linguistic behaviour of Teachers 1 and 5 with special reference to the level of formality and involved vs. distancing style

In this part of the study, we looked more specifically at the language used by two teachers, namely Teacher 1 and Teacher 5. Of special interest is the use of formal and informal style and how the language used signals power relations, social distance and the teacher role.

The communication produced by Teacher 1 contained far fewer contractions (3.2 contractions per 1000 words written) than that of Teacher 5 (28.2 contractions per 1000 words written). The result of avoiding contractions is that many messages, especially those containing negations coupled with directives, become rather blunt, at times taking on the tone of direct orders. The effect is illustrated in the following examples produced by Teacher 1:

(1) If your information is correct, DO not CONTACT X.
(2) You have not attached your answers to your mail in the discussion forum.
(3) I have still not received a confirmation that your exam has reached X at the embassy in Rome.
(4) You will just send in your contributions to the Discussion notice-board.
(5) You must not communicate with anyone on the course about the exam before the official exam time.
(6) You are not supposed to have a simultaneous discussion with your group members.
(7) We will remove this function as soon as possible in order to avoid confusion.

Teacher 1 uses a very limited repertoire of openings and set politeness formulae in her correspondence: all of her letters are addressed as "Dear …". In contrast Teacher 5 varies her style more, using "Dear" extensively in the beginning of the course, but then gradually introducing openings such as "Hi", "Hello all", and even "Hiya".

There is a similar pattern in the repertoire of closing phrases used by the two teachers: Teacher 1 generally uses variations of *Regards* such as "Kind regards" (17), "Best regards" (3) and "Regards" (5) as well as some instances of the phrase "Best wishes" (7). Teacher 5 uses less set phrases to close her correspondence, but instead signals aspects such as praise, invitations to contact, well wishings etc. Examples of closing phrases include: "All the best" (39), "Please contact me if …" (3), "Take care" (4),

"Any problems let me know" (9), "Glad you enjoyed it" (1), "Well done" (33), "Good luck" (10) and "Yours" (4).

The use of formal vs. informal style signalling distance vis-à-vis involvement in the correspondence of Teacher 1 and Teacher 5 is also illustrated in the following examples of apologies delivered to students on the course:

(8) Dear X,
In order to get your message on the Discussion notice-board, you have to submit it. I know that it says that you do not have to submit your answer, but you actually have to do this if you want your contribution to end up in the right place. We will remove this function as soon as possible in order to avoid confusion. I apologize for the mistake that has been made, and hope that you are satisfied with these new arrangements.
Kind regards,
"Teacher 1"

The use of pronouns such as *we*, the use of the passive form – "the mistake that has been made", the use of formal Latinized vocabulary – "apologize", "in order to avoid confusion", "arrangements" etc., and the lack of contractions – "we will …", all give the impression that Teacher 1 distances herself from the event and the student. Compare this to Example 9 below, an apology delivered by Teacher 5.

(9) Dear X, I'm so, so sorry!
Totally my mistake. I do remember our discussion, but when I sat down to mark all of your essays I totally forgot. What can I say... more than sorry. I'll sort it out asap. Won't have time to do it before the weekend, I'm afraid, since I'm teaching all week, but you do not have to worry, I WILL sort it this time around!!! I do apologize! Bad XXXX! Slap on the fingers to me!
All the best,
"Teacher 5"

The jokes, contractions, deletions, abbreviations, and the personal references used by Teacher 5 all contribute to a familiar tone signalling less distance and power difference.

The two teachers also differ in the way that they give response to students. Consider the following two examples:

(10) Dear X,
Thanks for your answers! You have corrected the mistakes and given some explanations. Well done! You will find the

answer key in lecture 8.
Kind regards,
"Teacher 1"

(11) Hi X,
Finally one person who has got some good experiences of grammar learning! Thank you!!! I'm convinced that a good teacher is more than necessary in learning grammar. I also believe that some people find grammar much easier to apprehend than others, just as some find playing football or creating music easier than others.
Interesting thoughts!
"Teacher 5"

In Example 10, Teacher 1 makes no reference to the actual work produced. In contrast, Teacher 5 does so and also uses her response to introduce her personal views on the topic. The result signals engagement and involvement both in the student's work and the topic.

Finally, similar tendencies can be seen in the two teachers' use of questions in their correspondence. Teacher 1 uses questions strictly for information purposes as in the example below:

(12) Dear X,
Which quizzes do you have problems with? Can you be more specific? I have looked through the different settings, and everything looks ok, so please try again. If the problems are still there, let me know. And yes, the quizzes are obligatory.
Regards
"Teacher 1"

In contrast, Teacher 5 tends to use questions (especially tag questions) to get the students involved in the topics being discussed:

(13) Isn't it sad how the wsord [sic!] 'grammar' has got such a negative 'reputation'?
(14) It's often when you start thinking about grammatical rules that you get insecure, don't you think?
(15) Good thinking, X! There is also a different [sic!] in spoken and written language, isn't there?

In summary, it can thus be noted that the communicative styles of Teacher 1 and Teacher 5 differ greatly. Teacher 1 is more formal and distant, signalling her position clearly while Teacher 5 is more involved with her students and on more equal terms.

Discussion

The results suggest that there are two important factors that affect the level of student activity in the initial stages of an online course: how much the teacher communicates with the class and the manner in which he or she does so. The optimal prerequisites for an active class seem to be a teacher who communicates frequently with the students and shows involvement through his/her language use. There are, however, several other factors which could have affected the results. Note, however, that these do not include differences in course design – all the courses were identical in this respect. The make-up of the student groups, however, is one factor that may well have affected the results, a factor that has not been investigated in detail here.

It could well be argued that interested students make teachers more engaged, and that such a group is also likely to be more active and consequently also more likely to complete a course. In the courses studied, however, there are no systematic differences in the student group profiles. And even the most ambitious student group would have to be guided and invited to communicate initially in order for the group dynamics to start operating. In an e-learning environment this responsibility initially lies entirely in the hands of the teacher and this role should not be underestimated.

There may, however, be a conflict of roles here. The role of being a social facilitator, a "nice guy", does not always go hand in hand with the traditional role of the university teacher as an expert and examiner. The former arguably requires that you communicate on less formal terms while the latter is easier when you distance yourself and signal your authority clearly.

One could postulate new models for roles of educators in e-learning contexts; the examiner does not have to be involved with the course on an everyday basis, but is needed for input of academic content, and to evaluate academic production. The social facilitator, the engine in the group processes, needs different skills, socio-psychological skills. These two roles do not, and perhaps should not, have to be played by the same person. One interesting result from the study above illustrates this: the person most successful at encouraging student activity was not the experienced university lecturer, but a novice, a former student, who had herself studied the courses. We would argue that the insight into what it is like to be an online learner and the subsequent involvement with the students which Teacher 5 dis-

plays through her language may well be key factors to her success.

The results of this study are hardly revolutionary. Research, as well as common sense, tells us that social factors play a key role in learning. What is surprising, however, is the fact that the social role of the educator and the skills needed for this role are so very rarely stated explicitly in formal contexts such as recruitment.

References

Barr, R. B. & Tagg, J. (1995). From teaching to learning – a new paradigm for undergraduate education. *Change Magazine*, 27 (6), 12–25.

Biber, D. (1988). *Variation Across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bonk, J. C. & Cunningham, D. J. (1998). Searching for learner-centered, constructivist, and sociocultural components of collaborative educational learning tools. In: C. J. Bonk (ed.), *Electronic Collaborators. Learner-Centered Technologies for Literacy, Apprenticeship, and Discourse* (pp. 25–50). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brown, P. & C. L. Levinson. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hanks, W. F. (1991). Foreword. In: Lave, J. & Wenger, E. *Situated Learning – Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (pp. 13–24). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haythornwaite, C. (2002). Building Social Networks via Computer Networks – Creating and Sustaining Distributed Learning Communities. In: K. A. Renninger & W. Shumar (eds.), *Building Virtual Communities – Learning and Change in Cyberspace* (pp. 159–190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heylighen, F. & Dewaele, J-M. (1999). *Formality of language: Definition, measurement and behavioral determinants*. Internal Report, Center "Leo Apostel", Free University of Brussels.

Johnson, D. W., Johnsson, R. T., Stanne, M. & Garibaldi, A. (1990). The impact of leader and member group processing on achievement in cooperative groups. *Journal of Social Psychology,* 130, 507–516.

Koschmann, T. D. (1996). Paradigm shifts and instructional technology. In: T. D. Koschmann (ed.), *CSCL: Theory and practice of an emerging paradigm* (pp. 1–23). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning – Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Donnell, A. M., Hmelo-Silver, C. & Erkens, G. (2006). *Collaborative learning, reasoning, and technology.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Palloff, R. M. & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace: effective strategies for the online classrooms*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Salmon, G. (2004). *E-moderating: the key to teaching and learning online*. London: Routledge.

Stephenson, J. (ed.). (2001). *Teaching & Learning Online. Pedagogies for New Technologies*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Footnotes

[1] Synchronous audio communication is increasingly finding its way into e-learning. In our courses, however, we introduce these tools later, the second term, as learners become more confident with the technology involved.

[2] There may well have been more communication between students outside this forum (through private emails and telephone conversations, for example) but this data was not available.

Learner Criticalness as a Pedagogical Tool in the Construction of Identity in the Foreign-Language Classroom

Luisa Panichi

Abstract

This paper examines the role of learner criticalness in foreign language education and the role it plays, in particular, in the construction of learner identity. Learner criticalness is discussed and defined within the pedagogical framework of Language Awareness and learner counselling. It is argued that the learner's greater awareness and understanding of the processes he is engaged in will ultimately contribute to greater participation in the learning process. The second part of this paper provides a list of classroom scenarios which encourage learner empowerment through the gradual handing over of decisions that were traditionally taken by the teacher.

The paper also provides a backdrop for a discussion of the management of change in increasingly open and technological learning contexts such as that of the foreign-language classroom where the teacher is no longer perceived as the only source of language information but as a facilitator of learning amid multiple sources.

1. Introduction

In a world where the foreign language is increasingly available to the learner from a multitude of sources (the Internet, ever increasingly sophisticated multimedia, greater opportunities for travel, globalisation, etc.) the teacher and the textbook are no longer seen as the only or primary source of language input for the foreign language learner. At the same time, learner identity and the need to cater for increasing diverse learner needs is at the forefront of debate in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. In discussing the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, also known as TESOL (the Teaching of English to Speaker of Other Languages), there is a particular urgency to provide more appropriate language content as English can no longer be considered the sole property of the so-called "native speaker" (Jenkins, 2006). This article

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 59–71. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

will attempt to illustrate a few practical suggestions in order toto accommodate the increasing need for change in foreign language instruction at tertiary level. Change will be discussed primarily in terms of a pedagogical encounter in which the roles of teacher and learner are renegotiated through a process of engagement and sharing of knowledge. It is argued that the primary catalyst element for change is the development of learner criticalness.

This article will discuss learner criticalness as a form of learner empowerment within a pedagogical framework in which learners are free to explore their identity in relation to both their own mother tongue, other languages they might have been exposed to and feel are relevant to them in their lives in general and the specific target language of the foreign-language classroom or learning context in which they find themselves. It is argued that by creating a pedagogical framework in which the learner is encouraged to develop an awareness of himself as a learner in a language-learning continuum which is inclusive of all his languages and language-learning experiences, he is ultimately placed in a better position to make decisions concerning his learning of the target language. In this sense, contributing to building a strong sense of identity in the learner is considered a necessary step in the development of learner criticalness. Finally, it is argued that the "aware" learner is ultimately better equipped to become both an actor and an agent in the language learning-process thus increasing the chances of a successful learning outcome. In short, the development of learner criticalness and the process of identity building within language education are viewed as mutually reinforcing dimensions.

In this scenario, the learner emerges as an author of his own learning in the original sense of the word author as a *promoter*, i.e. he who holds the authority or the right to promote something, in our case, the learning of a foreign language. It is hoped that the examples of classroom dynamics presented here will ultimately lead to an understanding of learning and teaching as a process of co-authorship or multiple-authorship, the co-authors being all those who engage with each other within the learning context and contribute to the learning process, in other words, the learner, the teacher, fellow-learners and the text or target-language input.

The next section of this paper will provide an overview of Language Awareness as presented in the literature and will expand on current definitions of Language Awareness to include

learner counselling. Section 3 will attempt to define learner criticalness in foreign-language educational contexts, and provide a list of conditions necessary for it to develop. Section 4 will attempt to illustrate the various stages of the learner's language-awareness development by including specific student questions that lead to the emergence of learner criticalness. Section 5 will provide examples of teaching and learning contexts that, it is argued, facilitate the development of learner criticalness. The final section of this paper will discuss some of the issues presented here against the backdrop of the "World Englishes" debate.

2. Language Awareness

In this section I would like to introduce the concept of *Language Awareness* and explain how it offers a useful framework for the discussion of learner empowerment and learner identity within foreign-language education. First of all, according to the Language Awareness tradition (cf. Hawkins, 1981; James & Garrett, 1991; Svalberg, 2007) mother-tongue education and foreign-language learning have much to gain from occurring in tandem and building on each other. Indeed, the Language Awareness approach advocates that all language learners have an identity first of all as speakers of their own language. In this sense it is argued that the foreign-language learning classroom is made up of language experts and learners already in possession of considerable implicit if not explicit knowledge about language and language learning. By extension, it can be argued that not to take the learner's mother-tongue language identity into account in the foreign-language classroom is to deny the learner a considerable part of what constitutes identity in the first place: one's language. Furthermore, treating the learner as a *tabula rasa* in terms of language knowledge is to forgo innumerable opportunities for teaching and learning.

Language learning differs from other types of learning insofar as subject matter and methodology coincide. In other words, one learns language and about language through language itself (cf. Balboni, 2005; van Lier, 1996). In foreign-language learning this compenetration of the subject matter (the target language) and the tool or means of analysis (mother-tongue language) creates a rich environment for comparing and contrasting languages or talking about language (cf. Little, 2000; 2001; Hawkins, 1999).

Furthermore, as human beings, language is what defines us (i.e. our identity) (Nunan, 2007) and is at the heart of our affective, cognitive and

social development (Vygotsky, 1962; 1978). In this sense, it can be argued that all language learning – be it learning the mother-tongue (L1), a second language (L2) or a foreign language, as a child or as an adult – embraces the whole self (van Lier, 2004). This is even more the case with foreign-language learning as it necessarily takes place after the L1 has been acquired and usually is the consequence of a conscious decision of some sort (i.e. to enrol in a course, to travel to a foreign country). In this sense, it can be argued that foreign-language learning is intimately linked to and influenced by our past experiences of language learning, our current needs and our vision of the future.

And it is this very approach to language learning and teaching that is inclusive of all language knowledge and experience which is referred to as *Language Awareness*. The term Language Awareness is used primarily in language learning and teaching which explicitly draw and build upon the language knowledge of a/the specific learning community. Furthermore, within a/the Language Awareness framework, all foreign-language learning contexts are, by definition, at least bilingual if not multilingual insofar as the learner will always be proficient in at least one other language besides his target language, i.e. his mother-tongue (see for example Hawkins, 1999) and/or be a carrier of a heritage language (Candelier, 2003).

For the purposes of our discussion, Language Awareness can, therefore, be considered as the pedagogical dimension to language learning that is inclusive of the learner, the learner's languages and the learner's learning continuum. Language Awareness is the cognitive process by which the learner creates links between himself, his languages and his learning. Language Awareness includes self-awareness, learning awareness, linguistic awareness (awareness of language and its linguistic features), meta-linguistic awareness (the ability to talk about and refer to linguistic features of language and language use) and meta-cognitive awareness (the ability to reflect on the process of language learning as discussed for example in Wenden (2001)).

Language Awareness is, thus, a *pedagogical framework* that enables the learner to give meaning to language in terms of its significance to himself and his learning. For a language educator, Language Awareness is the counselling framework which enables the teaching professional to take into account all of the learner's languages, learning experience, beliefs and culture as they relate to the learner's sense of identity.

3. From counselling to criticalness[1]

Lazzari and Panichi (2005) argue that if a learner's language awareness is fully developed it ultimately leads to criticalness or critical language awareness in the context of his or her language-learning experience. This occurs in the pedagogic dialogue of the classroom:

> *[…] in aula la Language Awareness si traduce in luogo di incontro e di dialogo dinamico, creativo e sempre aperto fra docente e studente, fra studente e testo, e dello studente con se stesso […] viene creata un'autentica occasione di formazione attraverso lo sviluppo nello studente delle sue capacità di osservazione e di critica. (Lazzari & Panichi, 2005)*
>
> […] Language Awareness in the classroom becomes a dynamic, creative, ever-open space where teachers and students meet and talk, where the student encounters the text and himself […] [it is a place where] authentic learning takes place as the learner develops his ability to observe and be critical.[2]

However, I would like to argue that for learner criticalness to develop certain conditions have to be fulfilled. First of all, learner criticalness develops where there is scope for the learner to explore his needs and act upon them; in other words, where a certain amount of learner autonomy is possible. Secondly, learner criticalness develops where it is authentically meaningful to do so at a personal level (see also van Lier, 1996). Finally, learner criticalness develops where there is formal recognition and validation of the learning and teaching context which fosters it in the first place. This aspect will be discussed further in the section below on testing and evaluation.

3.1. Criticalness as agency

As the learner develops in terms of his awareness and criticalness – and the conditions for criticalness are in place – he also becomes more active in the learning process. Van Lier (1996; 2004) repeatedly stresses the importance in foreign-language learning that learners, as they develop in terms of awareness, are also able to make the most of their learning environment. In a more recent article (2007) learners are described as "agents of their own educational destiny" (van Lier, 2007). It is thus suggested here that the aware and critical language learner acts upon his understanding of the process he is engaged with and becomes pro-active towards his learning. As agents of their own educational destiny, students can be expected to make informed decisions about their language learning that were tra-

ditionally made by others (teachers, textbooks, educational bodies, legislation, society, etc.). In addition to this, it can also be expected that the learner shows an ability to interact *appropriately* and *effectively* with his language-learning environment and the resources or opportunities for learning it provides.

4. Questions the critical learner asks himself

The issues we have discussed so far are reflected in the questions the critical learner asks himself. While it is not necessary that the learner be able to formulate these questions explicitly, it can, however, be assumed that in making decisions about his learning he is implicitly acting upon them.

They are:

- What learning am I interested in?
- Why am I learning this language in the first place?
- How can I use the environment to further my learning?
- How do I relate this learning experience to the world beyond (work, travel, personal life, etc.)?
- Is the learning experience I am engaged in useful/good/effective/relevant/interesting/what I really want/need?

As suggested by this last question, learner criticalness can be extended to include reflection on and an awareness of how learning is catered for by educational bodies. In this sense, learner criticalness occurs not only when the learner is able to make value judgments about his language development but also when expressing an opinion about the way in which his learning is catered for by others (Panichi, 2007). It is further argued that this provides the educational body with useful feedback for the provision of quality control in teaching and learning.

5. Incorporating learner identity into language teaching practice

The following are examples of teaching-practice ideas that have been put in place at the University of Pisa in an attempt to make language learning more meaningful to the learners in terms of motivation and more relevant to their real learning needs. Foreign-language instruction at the University of Pisa is provided for through faculty-run courses and courses run by the *Centro Linguistico Interdipartimentale* (The University Language Centre). The examples are taken from both compulsory language modules and elective language courses. Learning at the Language Centre generally takes place in small groups of students from different degree-course backgrounds while the in-faculty based courses

are usually made up of larger numbers of students with similar learning needs. While most of the examples provided here are taken from courses at the University Language Centre, similar teaching approaches are also used within the context of faculty-based teaching. All examples come from the EFL context. However, it is felt that the suggestions and approaches are equally applicable to the teaching and learning of other languages.

5.1. Joint teacher-learner syllabus design

At the beginning of the course students are given a course description which outlines the teaching and learning objectives of the course and the content areas to be covered. Students are then asked to relate the course description to their own individual learning needs and to write in extra activities and content they feel they need to cover. This task is carried out individually and as a group discussion. The individual syllabi the students produce are then kept by the students for future reference during the course and are referred to by the teacher in preparing tests and in the final student evaluation process.

5.2. Materials and textbooks

Students are encouraged to use materials that are relevant to their individual syllabus and to produce syllabus-related work. In addition to this, the teacher can select and incorporate materials she knows will be relevant to the specific learning context. Textbooks are selected on their degree of openness and flexibility. In other words, textbooks are selected that allow the learner to move around the book according to his needs and interests and not necessarily according to a predetermined order of language items to be acquired. Ideally, the textbook also needs to provide tasks that allow for adaptation by students and for open-ended solutions and answers. Collaboration between learners will be maximised and tasks will be equally challenging for students at different proficiency levels.

This is particularly relevant in those teaching contexts where there is a higher degree of variety and diversification of learner needs. The teacher plays an important role in promoting the effective use of these materials and of finding creative ways of making them meaningful to as many students as possible.

5.3. Testing and evaluation

It is important that tests reflect what has been going on in the classroom (cf. Shohamy, 2001). In the teaching environments at Pisa, where the above attempts have been made to cater for the various learning needs of students from a variety of backgrounds, test content and procedure

is discussed and negotiated with students at the beginning and during courses. For example, the students and teacher might decide that there will be one set test activity for all and various additional options students can choose from as part of their final exam or test. In an attempt to encourage students to become increasingly pro-active towards learning, their ability to manage their learning is also taken into account at the evaluation stage. Students are also evaluated on their ability to make good use of all the resources at their disposal (i.e. materials, fellow-learners, multimedia technology). An attempt is also made to evaluate how likely the student is to do well in future learning contexts based, among other things, on the level of pro-active behaviour displayed during the course. Finally, student evaluation will consider the learner's entrance level and how successfully individual learning goals have been achieved during the course.

5.4. Collaborative tasks

Within the course framework described in the sections above, a significant role is assigned to tasks designed to encourage collaborative learning. Two examples in particular will be discussed here: joint presentations and peer feedback on individual writing tasks.

For the joint presentations students work in groups and choose a topic they wish to present to the rest of the class. It may be a topic of general interest or related to their field of study. Generally, the students are expected to deliver the presentation orally with the support of visuals. Students are expected to be able to document all the sources and materials they have used in putting together the presentation. In addition to this, they are expected to be able to evaluate the sources they have used in terms of how useful or relevant the language input was. Students are expected to show evidence of the language they have been exposed to in the presentation. Teacher feedback from the presentations is then used as input for further teaching and as a means of verifying what areas of learning still require attention.

Another task that makes use of collaborative learning is peer revision of individual writing tasks. For this task students are expected to produce a piece of writing and discuss it with a peer. The changes are discussed by the pair or group of students and a final draft is written. From a pedagogical point of view, this activity is felt to be of particular importance as it enables the learner to make explicit processes and thoughts on which to build further understanding. From a collaborative point of view, students are thus

able to use their fellow learner as a means for further learning and language input. All changes are then discussed with the teacher and additional feedback is provided.

5.5. Tandem learning module

The face-to-face Tandem learning module has been running at Pisa for several years. Tandem learning is a collaborative learning experience in which two students complete a series of learning tasks in each other's native tongue (cf. Little & Brammerts, 1996; Little et al., 1999; Panichi, 2007). In Tandem learning both students want to learn and practise the language of the other. In this sense, Tandem learning is considered a language exchange. The Tandem module at Pisa allows for students from different learning backgrounds and with different learning needs to work together to achieve individual learning goals. The Tandem syllabus is negotiated at the beginning of the course and students are monitored on their progress throughout the course. Testing at the end of the Tandem module takes place in Tandem and, as discussed in section 5.3. above on testing and evaluation, students are also assessed on their ability to make use of the learning opportunity they have been exposed to in relation to their individual learning needs (cf. Panichi, 2007).

5.6 Remedial counselling sessions

Remedial counselling sessions are offered at the Language Centre in particular for students who have repeatedly failed their compulsory university language requirement exam and are also available to all students upon request. The counselling sessions focus on compiling a background survey of the learner and his language-learning history and provide an analysis of his current situation. During the counselling sessions, students are encouraged to develop an awareness of themselves as learners and to discuss various means of dealing with their problem areas. In particular, students are assisted in identifying their immediate learning needs and the means at their disposal to meet these needs. Students are monitored in counselling sessions over a period of time. Preliminary findings have shown that remedial counselling sessions lead to a 100% pass rate.[3]

6. Learner criticalness against the backdrop of World Englishes

There are some interesting parallels between the present discussion of learner empowerment as learner criticalness and the debate on World Englishes. Jenkins (2006:168) in her overview of World Englishes and its implications for TESOL says:

> *There is still little if any awareness among TESOL practitioners and SLA researchers that learners may be producing forms characteristic of their own variety of English, which reflect the socio-linguistic reality of their English use […] far better than either British or American norms are able to.*

While Jenkins' observation above is focussed on learner production, it can also be argued that the idea of relevancy (what English? whose English?) equally needs to be addressed in the teaching and learning scenarios described above. Indeed, the shift towards greater student participation in many of the decisions that affect his language learning (from syllabus design, to the choice of materials, to testing and evaluation) inevitably carries significant implications for the teaching–learning experience. In this sense, it is suggested that the critical language learner in today's global context also needs to be made increasingly aware of the fact that, in learning English, the type of English he learns depends on a series of variables which start with his own language identity and move outwards to include his environment or socio-linguistic communicative reality. The following is an example of the various steps learners may progress through in establishing the kind of English they want or can expect to be exposed to:

– my languages (my dialect)
– my learning needs
– my communicative needs
– my context
– my tools
– my audience
– my English.

7. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have attempted to describe how learners proceed from an initial phase of awareness of self as a language learner in a language-learning continuum to a state of increased criticalness and action as they engage in pedagogical dialogue and participatory learning. It has been argued that in a learning environment in which a clear learning identity is established, learners become more critical. In turn, it has also been suggested that learners' critical ability further feeds into their sense of identity in an continuing process of development and mutual reinforcement.

In the face of unlimited and unstructured access to language and information we are experiencing today, learner criticalness becomes an essential tool in mediating what could be learnt, what should be learnt and what will be learnt. The language educator's role is, thus, increasingly one of gate-opener and counsellor rather than

the traditional provider of absolute truths. As the learning and teaching conditions change, acceptance of the coexistence of multiple authorities or authors in the language classroom seems to be a satisfactory way of accommodating current educational challenges and promoting quality in language learning and teaching.

For the language educator, the emergence of a more critical, more active learner leads us to consider new scenarios for foreign-language education. The following claims can thus be made:

- language teaching is a process of inclusion;
- language learning is a process which thrives on learning specificity and agency;
- alternative learning necessarily has implications for assessing and testing;
- course content is no longer a fixed entity but a continuous process of realignment between students' internal pedagogical needs and external institutional requirements;
- best practice is unique to the specific teaching and learning environment and is not made up of a fixed, predefined set of norms;
- quality control in teaching and learning occurs where quality is not a finite product but rather an ongoing concern based on dialogue and on general consensus between the parties involved.[4]

Finally, the teaching and learning contexts described here open up a series of further questions for the language educator. What should we be teaching? How does what we teach contribute to the learner's sense of identity? How does language learning contribute to learning in terms of individual development? To what extent do traditional roles and understanding of teaching and learning contribute to or impede the development of and access to learning opportunities?

It is hoped that some of the scenarios illustrated in this paper will provide an opportunity for reflection on teaching and learning practice in foreign-language education and on the changing roles of teachers and learners.

References

Balboni, P. (2005). *The Epistemological Nature of Language Teaching*. Venezia: Dipartimento delle Scienze del Linguaggio, Università Ca' Foscari (Working Papers in Language Acquisition and Learning.).

Candelier, M. (ed.) (2003). *L'éveil aux langues à l'école primaire. Evlang:bilan d'une innovation européenne.* Bruxelles: De Boeck.

Fairclough, N. (ed.) (1992). *Critical Language Awareness*. London: Longman.

Hawkins, E. (1981). *Modern Languages in the Curriculum*. Cambridge: CUP.

Hawkins, E. (1999). Foreign language study and Language Awareness. *Language Awareness,* 8 (3&4), 124–142.

James, C. & Garrett, P. (eds.) (1991). *Language Awareness in the classroom*. Harlow: Longman.

Jenkins, J. (2006). Current Perspectives on Teaching World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca. *TESOL Quarterly* 40 (1), 157–181.

Lazzari, A. & Panichi, L. (2005). *English in Economics and Business*. Milano: Hoepli.

Little, D. (2000). Why focus on learning rather than teaching? In: D. Little, L. Dam & J. Timmer (eds.), *Focus on Learning rather than Teaching: Why and How?* (pp. 3–17). Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies.

Little, D. (2001). Sprachenlernen im Tandem und Lernerautonomie. In: H. Brammerts & K. Kleppin (eds.), *Selbstgesteuertes Sprachenlernen im Tandem. Ein Handbuch* (pp. 17–23). Tübingen: Stauffenburg (Forum Sprachlehrforschung 1).

Little, D. & Brammerts, H. (eds.) (1996). *A guide to language learning in Tandem via the Internet*. Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS Occasional Paper No. 46).

Little, D., Ushioda, E., Appel, M. C., Moran, J., O'Rourke, B. & Schwienhorst, K. (1999). *Evaluating Tandem Language Learning by E-mail. Report on a Bilateral Project.* Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS Occasional Paper No. 55).

Nunan, D. (2007). *What is this thing called language?* London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Panichi, L. (2007). *The EFL Tandem Course Experience at the Language Centre of the University of Pisa: Practical considerations and pedagogical implications.* Unpublished thesis.

Shohamy, E. (2001). *The Power of Tests. A critical perspective of the uses of language tests.* Harlow: Longman.

Svalberg, A. (2007). Language Awareness and Language Learning. *Language Teaching*, 4, 287–308.

UNIcert® homepage at http://rcswww.urz.tu-dresden.de/~unicert/e/index.htm.

van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the Language Classroom. Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity*. London: Longman.

van Lier, L. (2004). *The Ecology and Semiotics of Language Learning: A socio-cultural perspective.* London: Kluwer.

van Lier, L. (2007). Action-based Teaching. Autonomy and Identity. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching,* 1 (1), 46–65.

Vygostky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygostky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wenden, A. L. (2001). Metacognitive knowledge in SLA: the neglected variable. In: M. Breen (ed.), *Learner Contributions to Language Learning* (pp. 44–64). Harlow: Pearson Education.

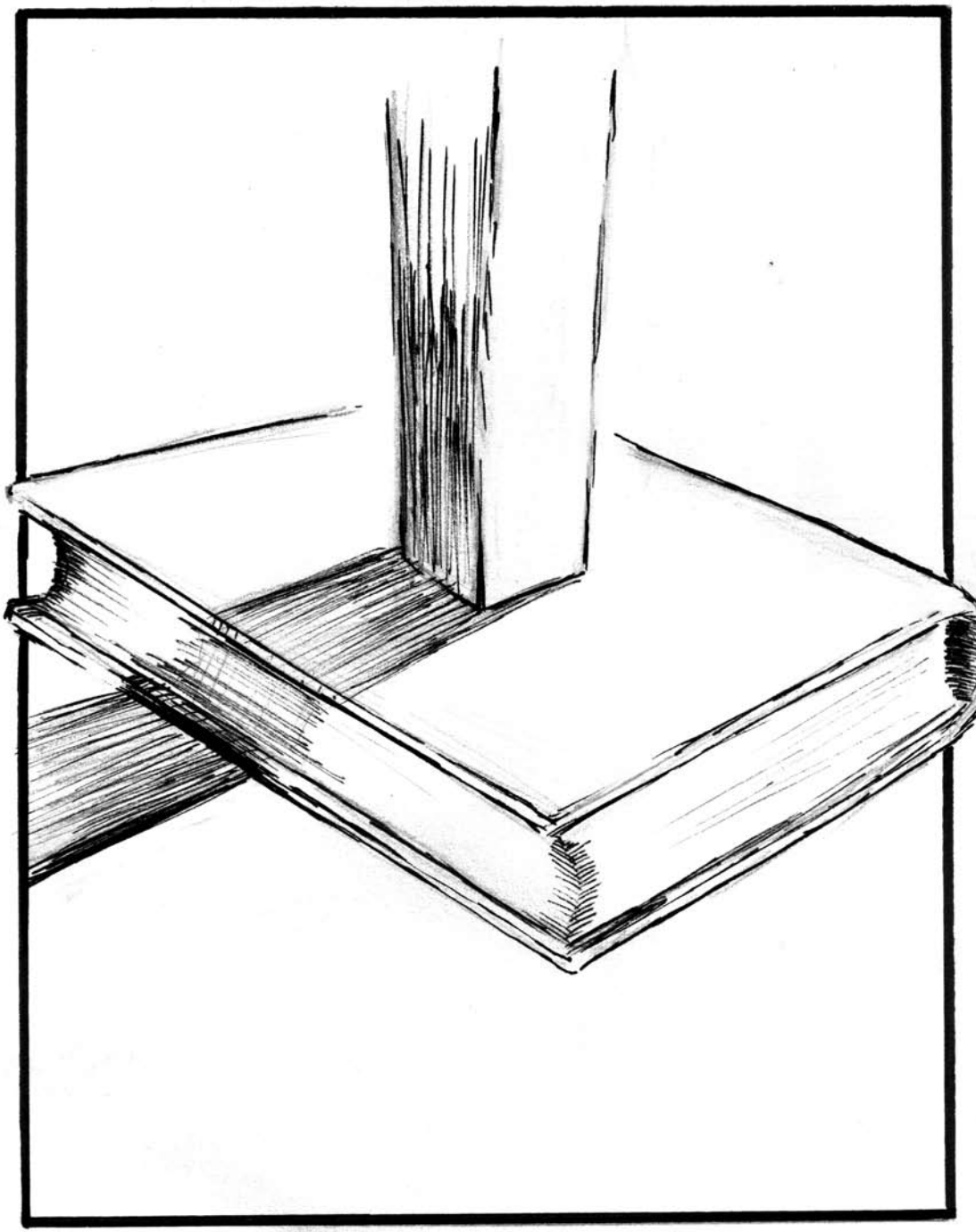
Footnotes

[1] See also Fairclough (1992) on Critical Language Awareness.

[2] My translation.

[3] Further research is needed in this area to better evaluate the efficacy of current counselling techniques.

[4] For a discussion of quality control in language education in Europe, see the UNIcert® webpage.



Empowerment through Literature in the Language Classroom

Neva Šlibar

Abstract

Due to the marginalisation and instrumentalisation of literary texts in foreign language learning and teaching over the last twenty years teachers and learners feel equally insecure, i.e. disempowered, when dealing with them. This paper proposes an alternative approach to literature, focussed on raising the awareness of the strangeness and otherness of literature. The devised model identifies seven types of the "foreign" when included in the language classroom: that of the discourses used and of the corresponding cultures, the systematic, functional and structural otherness of literature itself as well as the otherness of reception and situation of literature when introduced into the classroom. Working consciously with these in all phases of literature teaching from the preparatory stage and onwards re-empowers learners and teachers by making them accept the ambivalence of literary texts, their attraction as well as their alterity.

1. Introduction

As regards literary texts in the foreign language classroom two trends have been observed over the last twenty years: the marginalisation of literature and the instrumentalisation of literary texts. Both lead to insecurity and disorientation, i.e. disempowerment, in teachers and learners.

The communicative approach has brought about many improvements in the linguistic competence of the learners, but the strong orientation towards practical use led to neglecting the cultural dimension of language and literature. While in former times literary texts were mostly the only source of authentic teaching material, media today offer a wide variety of authentic factual texts, thus reducing the use of literature in the language classroom. Moreover, young people are not in favour of reading books or longer texts. Last but not least teachers sometimes have difficulties understanding, what literature is and what it can achieve. All

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 73–85. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

these factors have contributed to reducing the number of literary texts or even totally banning them from textbooks and the language classroom.[1]

Many teachers have welcomed this trend towards excluding literature: they feel uneasy with the complexity of aesthetic expression and they know how time consuming close reading, text analysis and interpretation are, especially when students' knowledge of the foreign languages is limited. They feel forced to entertain their students in order to motivate them and they believe that understanding the social system of literature requires a special "talent". Therefore many foreign language teachers have introduced the cultural dimension by other means, e.g. documentaries and faction, texts from print media, student exchange or excursions.

In the last decades a vast repertoire of approaches has been devised by theoreticians as well as practitioners in order to make students enjoy literature and make teachers include literary texts in foreign language courses.[2] It is not the aim of this paper to sketch the large number of suggestions, models, examples of good and bad practice, instruments and materials produced for and in different languages to tackle this intricate set of problems. However, the common denominator of the many different and sometimes even conflicting approaches is the effort to motivate students to read and enjoy reading by using all their senses, to activate their response to literary texts and use the acquired competences to produce their own texts. Teachers on the other hand are provided with sets of ideas, practical advice, guidance through texts and tested material in order to help them cope with their difficult task. These new approaches have certainly done much good to encourage the take up of literature in the foreign language classroom. But, unfortunately, despite many attempts to the contrary, the spectrum of how literary texts are instrumentalised is still wide. Even if they are not used as grammar exercises or illustrations of "culture", they are often reduced either to their plot, a single surface meaning or as stimuli for "games" of associations running under the general cover of "creativity". Very often they are stripped of their polyvalence and reduced to referential texts, thus denying readers to develop their own sets of meanings, to handle and bear ambiguous, contradictory signals and statements, and to resist stereotyping, mediocrity and simplification.

Disempowerment in the language classroom mostly works asymmetrically. Competence and knowledge are traditionally teacher-do-

mains. Particularly when literature is reduced to "knowledge", e.g. to the author's biography, to the historical background, to genre-characteristics, to the style or to identifying structures, the teacher's power can be overwhelming for the students as the power-position can be enforced and exploited when making interpretations. This authoritarian way of teaching reflects an elitist understanding of literature. Reducing literature to factual information does not account for literature's subversive and democratic nature and signals the teacher's insecurity. If literary texts are taken seriously in their literariness both actors – students and teachers – will at first experience another kind of disempowerment that surpasses the ordinary experience of linguistic incompetence. The loss or the lack of competences when dealing with (enigmatic) literary texts can be extremely disturbing and affects teachers and students alike. Why is this so? Why do we often feel helpless when reading a poem or a piece of prose by e.g. Kafka? Why bother at all with literary texts in foreign language courses if they cause discomfort, make us insecure or increase our general disorientation

At this point I would like to change the perspective from the uneasiness of the recipients and mediators to the "uneasiness" of literature itself. Many approaches, mostly introduced in order to "motivate" and "keep alive" the interest of the learners, minimise and trivialise literary texts. A close look at course material[3], published research, workshop papers and also discussion reports discloses practices ignoring the aesthetic specificity of the texts, i.e. their "literariness".

2. Alterity as possibility

This contribution aims at introducing a somewhat unorthodox view on working with literature by offering a literature model based on alterity, thus hoping to stimulate discussion about a widely ignored or misused set of texts and approaches in the foreign language classroom. It would be unsatisfactory, however, if the wider contexts (e.g. literary and scientific traditions) of the issues discussed were completely ignored. An uncritical adoption and transfer of results and methodologies ignoring the literary and receptive contexts must be questioned. Even though teachers of foreign languages share many experiences and solutions as regards teaching and learning issues, which can be transferred from one language classroom to the other, a generalising view without any differentiation as to a particular language and its literature might lead to questionable results, where products of culture, the symbolic capital,

are involved.[4] Although text- or course-books and National Curricula might not always reflect the work done in the classroom, they are nevertheless an expression of different national/regional teaching and learning traditions. Thus inter- and cross-cultural issues have to be taken into consideration on the scientific and "meta-receptive" level, an obvious fact that often gets "lost in mediation".

At this point it is necessary to make clear the position I am speaking from: As a teacher of German literature, a teacher trainer and an observer of the difficulties teachers in Slovenian schools have to deal with, I have become aware that there are additional obstacles to be overcome if one teaches German as a foreign language. In Slovenia German is considered a difficult, unattractive language and its literature even more so, even if it is one of our neighbouring languages and many economic, cultural and family ties between the countries exist. The German literary language tends to be dense, complex and hard to grasp, and the texts are often considered difficult, serious and lacking humour. Even if translations of contemporary German writing are generally well received, these preconceptions are widely spread and hard to eradicate, and they often affect selection processes as well as teachers' and decision-makers' preferences. This unfavourable situation represents a hard challenge to initial and/or in-service foreign language teacher trainers.

3. (Re)empowering teachers and learners

The model that is to be presented below is a result of cooperation and communication with students and teachers in initial and in-service teacher training for a long period of time. Thanks to these contacts I arrived at the conclusion that a new awareness of the strangeness and otherness of literature has to be developed in order to overcome the disempowering shortcomings mentioned in the introduction. It does not mean, however, that literary texts are not to be presented in all their appealing, sensual, and pleasurable aspects – on the contrary. They also have to be tied up with the personal lifeworld of the readers.

Therefore, the first step to be taken is to develop the awareness that readers acquire many competences in literary socialisation from early age on as they are acculturated with numerous aesthetic procedures in the larger context of everyday life. On this basis it is easier to come to terms with the systematic ambivalence of literature, making it pleasurable as well as strange and foreign.

The knowledge about otherness as a constituent of literature has therefore to be included from the beginning and must accompany every didactic step in literature teaching. The model proposed here is anchored in strategies of (re) empowerment known since the Enlightenment, i.e. in the established conviction that gaining confidence is a consequence of the ability to rationalise, and to verbalise one's uneasiness and discomfort as well as to make oneself and others realise how things work and how they are being done. The new aspect is that here it is applied systematically to literature teaching.

The highly schematic model presented below helps to understand where the strangeness of literature comes from. To my knowledge this is the first attempt to introduce the concept of strangeness holistically in teaching literature. To keep the model transparent, it is built on basic propositions that are also relevant for my view of teaching literature. Therefore it aims to respond to the demand for theoretically based and consistent as well as competence-oriented and pragmatic literary didactics. Its structure is dynamic and expandable and wants to prove that literary competences can be taught and acquired and, last but not least, that they make sense also outside the "literature classroom". Despite its schematic frame it strives to be anchored in real teachers' and students' needs.

4. Seven types of strangeness and foreignness of literature and of literature teaching

When introducing literary texts in the language classroom, it is important to make oneself – and also the learners to an extent appropriate to their age, competences and abilities – aware of the fact that we are going to deal with several types of strangeness and otherness, i.e. aspects of the "foreign". My model identifies the following seven dimensions of the "foreign", and the concepts are an attempt to convey the German semantic field of "das Fremde, die Fremde, Fremdheit" and "das Andere, der/die Andere, die Andersheit" (Waldenfels, 1997:20ff.; Waldenfels, 2006:20).

- Discourses
- Cultures
- System
- Functions
- Structures
- Reception
- Situations.

4.1. Discourses

The strangeness of discourse is easiest to understand as it is foreign language literature that is

taught in the foreign language classroom. Teachers and pupils are used to coping with the obvious insecurity due to lacking language skills. In addition they now have to come to terms with two other unfamiliar discourse types, which are not only a phenomenon of the foreign language. The first one is a basic component of the way literature works, i.e. the otherness of the literary discourse (see 4.5). The second one is the meta-lingual, meta-literary competence to speak empoweredly, i.e. competently, about a literary text, which demands specific skills, knowledge and practice as well as some familiarity with the theoretical discourse. These two discourse strangenesses are also present in dealing with literary texts in the first language. The difference between reading and teaching literature in a first or foreign language is thus a quantitative, not a qualitative one. If the foreign language teacher can rely on a good basis of literary and meta-literary discourse competences in the first language, the teaching of literature can be facilitated.[5]

4.2. Cultures

Alterity, otherness or strangeness in foreign language teaching normally refers to intercultural or cross-cultural aspects. This new paradigm has proved to be of great importance for foreign language teaching, as other perspectives have been introduced, e.g. cultural reciprocity. It has revealed that cultural phenomena are constructed and has exposed their ideological background. It has, however, also led to an inflation of the term "inter- or cross-cultural", as it has encouraged taking it up in a great variety of research fields without always securing a solid theoretical framework. A good example of this is the field of the so called "interkulturelle Germanistik" (Wierlacher, 2000; 2003), where, despite some serious attempts at theoretical consistency, the lack of a comprehensive and persuasive theoretical basis can still be noticed.

The phenomenological studies of Bernhard Waldenfels[6] offer analytical tools and concepts also for the field of literary criticism and didactics. For dealing with literary texts Waldenfels' three level model of strangeness or otherness is in my opinion particularly useful (1997:35ff.). He differentiates between the "everyday or normal strangeness/foreign", the "structural strangeness/foreign" and the "radical strangeness/foreign". "Everyday or normal strangeness" keeps within the limits of the ordinary and can be easily dissolved by filling in the empty spaces in the familiar context; changes in lifestyle are therefore not necessary. Such changes, however, prove to be indispensable when we are confronted with "structural strangeness", as it

signals differences in life contexts and forms, stands outside the usual orders, and divides the lifeworld into a familiar and a foreign world. On the third level we have to deal with "radical strangeness", a transgression of existing orders and established horizons of meaning. It is defined as a surplus value, something that cannot be grasped, e.g. love, death, sleep.

Moreover, Waldenfels' notion of the foreign and the other as an integrated part of the self (1997:27f.) on the one hand avoids a reduction to a mere difference in culture, a narrow understanding of culture that tends to absorb, abolish or exclude whatever is considered "foreign" and thus reveals its Eurocentric, phallogocentric (Derrida, 1987) origin. On the other hand it makes the confrontation with or, in Waldenfels' terms the "response" to (2006:44f.) the foreign and the other a must, part of human existence, thus justifying that it has to be dealt with in wider contexts, especially in education.

This change of perspective advocates a difference of themes and texts between the first language and the foreign language classroom. While in the first understanding of cultural differences aims at developing tolerance and democratic behaviour as well as cooperation and social acceptance, foreign language teaching has to focus on the culture of the target language. What kind of cultural differences do we want our students to see? It is in my view primarily the wide field of "tacit knowledge", i.e. unconsciously or subconsciously used norms and patterns in a specific target culture we should be interested in. They are the hardest to grasp because they are taken for granted and thus almost impossible to discern for the untrained eye.

4.3. System[7]

Belonging to the social system of art, literature can represent radical strangeness and a culture's otherness when it transgresses its normal orders and their horizons of meaning and becomes a surplus value. I understand it with Schmidt to be a social or communicative system (1989:15f.; 1991:104ff.), fulfilling a variety of functions (1991:145ff.) other systems or subsystems are not able or willing to fulfil. It is a socially constructed (Kos, 2003:18ff.), accepted and established system of actions, codes, norms and patterns with a specific structure. In our occidental society it is considered to be fairly autonomous, representing a space of freedom, where several norms of everyday expectations and behaviour do not apply. Thus it does not have to conform to the rule of true and false nor to those of real and not real; violations of these social conventions are not sanctioned (Schmidt, 1991:113f.).

The so called aesthetic function has, as pointed out by Mukařovsky (1982:34), the ability to take over spaces emptied by other functions (e.g. the practical function) or to satisfy arising needs of society.[8] It is a flexible system, adapting to the needs of individuals and collective entities; it also compensates for losses, and as such it appeals to the human being as a whole, i.e. as a cognitive and reflexive, ethical and social, emotional and hedonistic being (Schmidt, 1991:14, 150ff.). The socially accepted space of freedom, where literature can operate, represents its systematic strangeness and otherness.

4.4. Functions

As literature fulfils a variety of social functions[9] that make up its specificity and otherness it is important to take them into account in order to explain to students why it makes sense to gain competences in this field and to motivate them to reach out for literary texts. Storing and transmitting ways of life, values, norms, problem-solving strategies, images of the self and the other etc. help to construe identities and offer a context of familiarity. Besides the many consolative functions, e.g. through its regularities and rhythmical structure, it also serves as collective memory, especially for all the areas excluded from traditional historiography, e.g. the history of the private and the intimate, the history of emotions, fears, and wishes of the repressed, the deprived, oppressed, marginalised and victimised. Thus it is a huge archive helping us to get in touch with the past and including the individual and collective other.

Moreover, literature works through empathy. It makes us sensitive not only to different and other life-styles and cultures, but also aware of the differences themselves and their reasons. Thus it resists and counteracts the tendencies of globalisation by stressing particularities and specificities as well as by developing solidarity.

One of the most important functions of literature and art in general was discovered almost a hundred years ago by the Russian formalists and is still valid. It shows how cognition and the construction of reality and identity work and it makes patterns and norms of behaviour visible (Šklovskij, 1987:11ff.). Thus it questions ideologies and the ideological nature of discourses. With their constructive qualities, literary texts keep language alive and develop additional tools of communication. Moreover, literature is known for enhancing emancipative tendencies and creating images of utopias and dystopias as well as trying out and modelling life-forms, communal and individual ways of

living and communicating. It fosters imagination and creativity and strengthens our reasoning and interpretative skills.

4.5. Structures

The most important part of our model is the structural strangeness of literary texts. It is neither easy to understand nor to transfer into the language classroom without knowing about it, even if we have all been acculturated with it. Literature is auto-referential, i.e. the *how* is at least as important as the *what*, so literary texts have to be seen as meaningful also in their forms and structures (Jakobson, 1978:94). Generally accepted criteria for literature are fictionality and polyvalence which signal its basic otherness (Schmidt, 1991:107ff.). Some advantages of fictionality have already been dealt with in 4.4. In addition, the fact that literary works are rounded up contributes to their attraction. Polyvalence on the other hand activates the readers to construct their own meanings and motivates them to reduce the radius of possible meanings to a consistent, personally relevant selection.

Both criteria of literariness can demonstrate how relative the asymmetry of power between teachers and learners in the literature classroom is. A balance between learning and teaching can be created, if the teacher accepts his/her own limitations as regards a literary text and takes the role of moderator seriously. Thus s/he might profit from the students' openness and freely roaming imagination, while using his/her competences to draw them back into the realm of the text. It goes without saying that empowerment here works only as a dialogue. The teacher might have better literary competences, more routine and experience, but this is not a guarantee for not failing the text. But is failure a drawback or an advantage? It certainly helps to "deautomatise" perception (Šklovskij, 1987), one of the main goals of art.

The creation of strangeness works through defamiliarisation effects ("Verfremdungseffekte"), mostly in the form of deviations from the norm, and results in deep insecurity and uneasiness in the reader. These effects are consciously and deliberately produced in order to slow down the reception process. Thus ignoring them disempowers the texts, falsely creating the impression of "handling" them. For example Kafka is simply not "manageable"; his texts are ultimately "radically strange". Our failure to "understand" them turns into a success, if we – teachers and learners alike – learn how to deal with their transgression of order and to endure the tension they create.

As already mentioned, literary texts are shaped and formed into consistent wholes, guaranteeing the meaningfulness of all their elements, especially the formal ones that are semanticised (Lotman, 1973:22, 27, 100; Schmidt, 1991:146). Literary texts do not possess any additional, specific "poetic" means; the difference between them and non-literary texts consists in the higher degree of complexity, regularity and conformity to rules of structuring (Lotman, 1973:24). Paradigmatic structures play an important role besides the syntagmatic ones; all structural and formal possibilities can be used in order to produce meaning (Jakobson, 1978:94). The openness of a polyvalent, dereferentialised text is regulated by the so-called multiple coding, which means that the orientation towards certain meanings is signalled through repetition, contrasting or by singling out certain elements on the different text-levels. (Lotman, 1973:165ff.)

4.6. Reception

The possibility of multiple meanings in literary texts generates irritation and uneasiness just like when being in open, disorienting situations. They make us endure tension and pressure and prepare us for dealing with them in a non-literary setting.[10] Their openness thus compels us to make meaning, activates our imagination and awakens our senses and reasoning, as well as our reflective and deductive skills. On the one hand literary texts through the constant building up of tension keep the readers' interest and persuade them to involve themselves in their fictional worlds with almost all their senses. On the other hand they demand precision and perseverance because of the many alienating effects and the semanticised structure. The method of close and delayed reading needs to be practised as it counteracts the normal reading habits in media reception. Literature presents an alternative to everyday experience and trivial culture, and therefore it is often rejected especially by young audiences. In the language classroom it represents a permanent challenge for the teacher as s/he has to activate the whole range of methods in order to make learners enjoy the hardships of precise reading and to empower them to speak competently, argue persuasively and verbalize emotions, feelings and enigmatic matters of taste. The social and communicative skills that can be a result of these endeavours should convince also the sceptics.

4.7. Situations

The last type of strangeness refers to the school environment, which is part of the public sphere and thus creates triple discomfort. First it is in opposition to the habitual intimate, private read-

ing situation. Secondly the school environment with its outcome orientation, its competitive character and restrictive atmosphere ruins the "space of freedom" art tries to create. Thirdly the selected literary texts mostly deal with problem oriented themes that can be tricky and delicate in the classroom. Young people dread public exposure when talking about personal impressions and emotions. It goes without saying that students should be allowed and encouraged to express their (new) identities in the classroom and that working methods and materials should be designed to foster students' rights and opportunities to express their identities.

As a result of working with this model teachers and learners are empowered to accept literature in its ambivalence of pleasure and discomfort as this is its system, structure and method. Although the acknowledgement of art's ambivalence since Burke's "delightful horror" is certainly not a new idea, the combination of contrasting feelings is not only one of literature's fascinations: it is also intensely used especially in trivial genres. So it is very well known to teachers and pupils alike.

5. Conclusion

How does this model contribute to empowering learners and teachers when dealing with literary texts? Besides the answers that have been already sketched it has two main final goals: The first is to change uneasiness into pleasure by savouring the richness of literature, the space of freedom it secures and the competences for an emancipated and fuller life it enhances through understanding the functioning of its strangenesses. The second is to thus procure a lasting and rewarding reading interest in high quality literary texts by enhancing perception and reflection as well as patience and acceptance of the different grades of otherness, especially of the "radical strangeness".

Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that literature's otherness balances the power scale in the classroom giving both partners in the dialogue equal, albeit different opportunities. Teachers might have the longer routine and the more advanced literary competences but lack the freshness and authenticity of response. Learning and teaching becomes a joint effort as both partners are first and foremost readers and are exposed to the same effects of otherness. As the teacher is allowed to pull back and leave the classroom "stage" to the students who are encouraged to express their views by constructing meaning, a more productive atmosphere can develop and the teachers learn about their students, the identity of every reader thus enrich-

ing the weaving of the nets of meaning. When literary discussions are included in lessons from an early stage of language learning on, learners quickly develop strategies of empowered reading and coping with literature's otherness.

But there are also concrete uses of the model for the teacher: It shows in what areas problems might arise so that s/he can brace her/himself to cope with them in the stressful classroom situation. In practice s/he can use its different elements in the preparatory phase when deciding on the text, the goals, competences, strategies and exercises to be chosen. The description of the steps to be taken, as well as the identification and modelling of literary competences, however, exceed the frame of this paper, but more extensive publications on both issues are being prepared.

The initially described changes in foreign language teaching and learning together with Higher Education reforms have stimulated me to a revision of the understanding and use of literary texts by focussing on the one hand on the otherness of literature and on the other on new outcome-driven approaches as well as on a strive for developing general and literary competences. The newly introduced term "literary competences" reflects the holistic outcomes oriented approach, is directed equally to teachers and learners and will hopefully, together with the enhanced awareness of the importance of cultural and cross-cultural issues for the individual's development and social cohesion, contribute to literature re-entering the classroom. If literary texts are used in the language classroom as alternative to the necessary work with language structures and if they are understood as spaces of freedom, empowerment of learners and teachers should be its result. It is not an easy task, but in my own experience and that of my students I can say that it gets easier on the way.

References

Derrida, J. (1987). *The Post-Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

Jakobson, R. (1979). *Poetik. Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1921–1971*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Kos, D. (2003). *Theoretische Grundlage der empirischen Literaturwissenschaft*. Maribor: Slavisti no društvo.

Krumm, H.-J. & Portmann-Tselikas, P. R. (eds.) (2002). *Das Jahrbuch 2002. Österreichische Beiträge zu Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. Innsbruck, Wien, München & Bozen: Studien Verlag.

Lotman, J. M. (1971). *Die Struktur des künstlerischen Textes*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Mukařovsky, J. (1982). *Kapitel aus der Ästhetik*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Schmidt, S. J. (1989). *Die Selbstorganisation des Sozialsystems Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Schmidt, S. J. (1991). *Grundriß der Empirischen Literaturwissenschaft*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Šklovskij, V. (1987). Die Kunst als Verfahren. In: F. Mierau (ed.), *Die Erweckung des Wortes. Essays der russischen Formalen Schule* (pp. 11–32). Leipzig: Reclam.

Waldenfels, B. (1997). *Topographie des Fremden. Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 1*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Waldenfels, B. (2006). *Grundmotive einer Phänomenologie des Fremden*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Wierlacher, A. (ed.) (2000). *Das Fremde und das Eigene. Prolegomena zu einer interkulturellen Germanistik*. München: Iudicium-Verlag.

Wierlacher, A. & Bogner, A. (eds.) (2003). *Handbuch interkultureller Germanistik*. Stuttgart & Weimar: Metzler.

Wintersteiner, W. (2001). *»Hätten wir das Wort, wir bräuchten die Waffen nicht«. Erziehung für eine Kultur des Friedens*. Innsbruck, Wien & München: StudienVerlag.

Footnotes

[1] An illustration of this trend can be seen in the topics proposed for the next world conference of IDV, the International Association of German Teachers, in 2009. Only one of more than forty sections is devoted to literature in the language classroom, cf. www.idt-2009.de.

[2] Cf. for example the papers in Krumm & Portmann-Tselikas (2002).

[3] The analysis of over twenty course books for German by well-established German publishers revealed a lack of competence when dealing with literary texts. The few literary texts included were reduced to their referentiality, with only a single exercise directed towards literary understanding.

[4] This can be observed in Germany, where the impact of methods developed for English as a foreign language is so dominating that they are often uncritically transferred to other languages. This is questionable not least as intercultural approaches in the so called "interkulturelle Germanistik" have been developed in the last twenty years (e.g. Wierlacher, 2000; 2003).

[5] In Slovenia this is problematic as national literature primarily fulfils the goal of enhancing national identity, and foreign language teachers have to provide the tools for talking about literature.

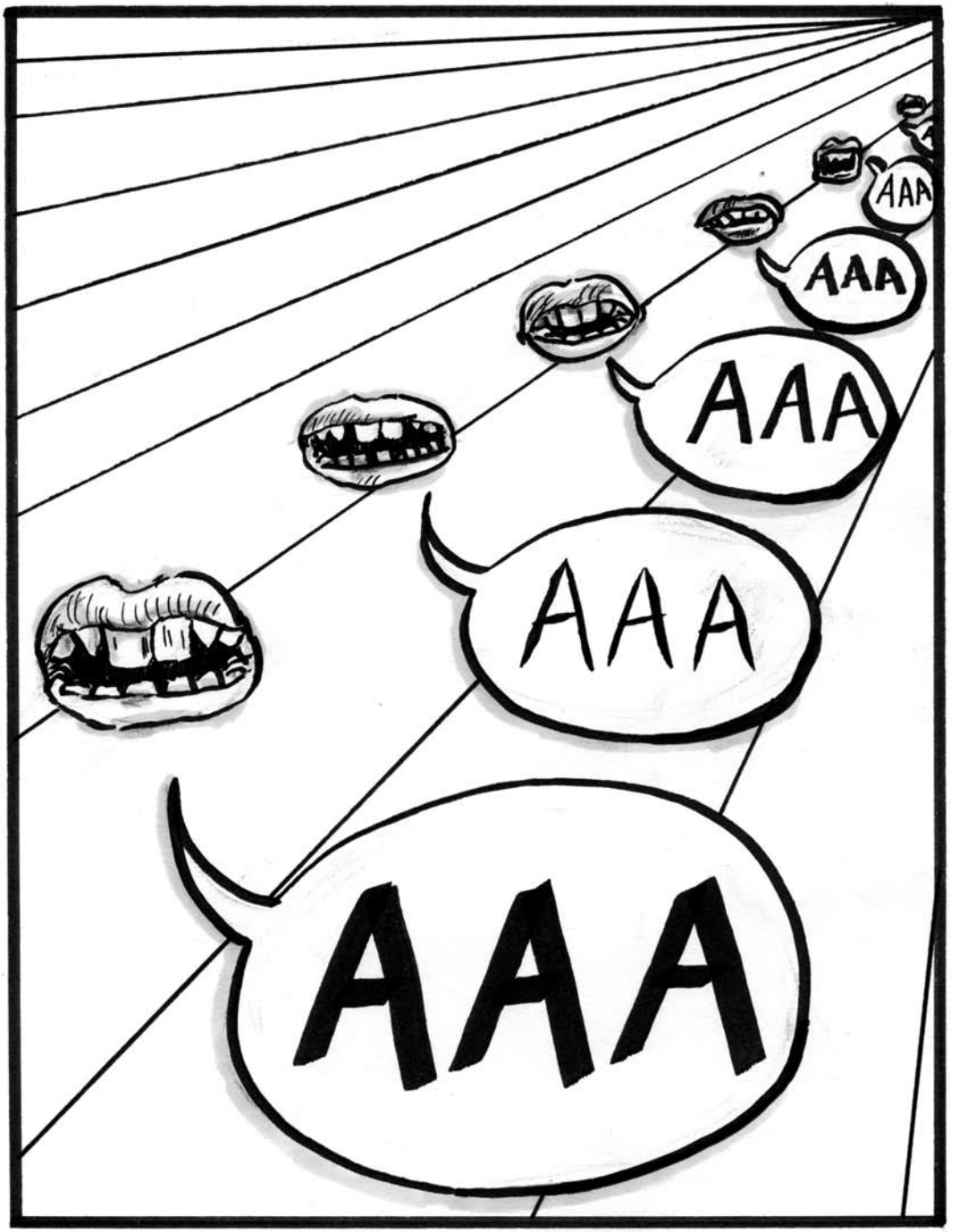
[6] Bernhard Waldenfels has published one study after the other in the field of the phenomenology of the other ("das Fremde") in the last twenty years. In this context, see particularly Waldenfels (1997; 2006).

[7] In the following chapters on literature as a system, on functions of literature and the structural strangeness, known and established theorems from the formalists, the structuralists, and reception aesthetics to systems and cultural theory are taken up and organised into a systematic whole.

[8] An example is German Democratic Republic literature, which functioned as a critical counterbalance of dissent, because media were strictly censored. This illustrates how literature can take on functions some other systems are not able to fulfil.

[9] My organisation of functions differs from Schmidt (see last paragraph) for didactic reasons, although I agree with his findings.

[10] This "competence" together with the ability of negotiating meaning has become a favourite goal in the context of using literary texts for democratic education, conflict-management and peace education. Cf. Wintersteiner, 2001.


AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA

A Different Language

"Voice" as a Perspective for Analysing Communicative Action in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Contexts

Ulrika Tornberg

Abstract

Analysing communication in foreign language teaching and learning settings usually means analysing communicative skills that individual students may demonstrate in various communicative tasks or through language tests. The aim of this text is to discuss the notion of "voice" as an alternative perspective for investigating communicative action within foreign language teaching and learning contexts. Whether seen as a means of cultural self-articulation (Pennycook, 1997; Benhabib, 2002), as an issue of power enacted in the classroom (Delpit, 1993), as the words we populate with our own meanings (Bakhtin, 1973; 1997), or as an ethical dimension of social practice (Biesta, 1999; 2006), I will argue that the notion of "voice" as a perspective for analysis may offer a discursive space for perceiving those dimensions of communication that may not be taken into account within more traditional pragmatic analyses of conversation and discourse in foreign language teaching and learning practices.

Introduction

Depending on context "voice" may, of course, have a variety of meanings. For example, "voice" is what we use when speaking or singing, "my voice" is what I am raising when I want to defend my position concerning a specific question, or "my voice" is what I make use of when voting or taking part in common decision making. Naturally, in addition, there are plenty of other connotations. In this text, however, I want to discuss the notion of "voice" in the sense of *a different language* and as a focus for the analysis of communicative action in various foreign language teaching and learning practices. The question, then, is: a language different from what? The quotation below will hopefully contribute to a preliminary clarification:

> *The notion of voice […] is not one that implies any language use, such as the often empty babble of the communicative language class, but rather must be tied to an understanding that to use language is not so much a ques-*

Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 87–95. Umeå: Faculty Board for Teacher Education.

> *tion of mastering a system as it is a question of struggling to find means of articulation amid the cultures, discourses and ideologies within which we live our lives.* (Pennycook, 1997:49)

In my interpretation of Pennycook's argument, "voice" may be contrasted to what is frequently understood as "communication" in the language class, usually aimed at students finally mastering the language system. In the context of foreign language teaching and learning in general (for example, in the Swedish curricular texts over time), the social aspects of language use are only rarely touched upon (Kramsch, 1996; Tornberg, 2000; 2004; 2006; 2007). The main emphasis is on communicative competences, described – and assessed – from an individualized point of departure (see, for example, Council of Europe, 2001*).* Consequently, what may be observed and analysed are the communicative skills of the individual student that manifest themselves in her managing various communicative tasks in the language class or in practising communication with her fellow students. I would like to point out, however, that I certainly do not want to argue against the importance of the development of skills, that is not my point (see also below). After all, these skills are required for a language user to make herself understood. But I would like to suggest an alternative direction of observation and analysis of what may be going on in communicative action, turning away from the individual language learner and her competences, to the social language user in communication with others in a "contested space of language use as social practice" (Pennycook, 1997:48). This shift of focus may help to clarify that being a (foreign) language user also means being part of a context, not only in the language class, but in a wider socio-cultural and political context as well.

The struggle for cultural alternatives

According to Pennycook, his interpretation of the notion of "voice" implies "a more socially, culturally and politically engaged version of language education than that commonly assumed" (Pennycook, 1997:49). Thus the political nature of the language user is stressed and "voice" conceptualized as a place of struggle where the subject has to confront the possibilities and limitations of making herself understood as an active participant in the world (Pennycook, 1997:48). In other words, language is not just a code to be learnt, but also an important aspect of the cultural practices within which language teaching and learning take place. The notion of "voice" may open up cultural alternatives for language

students to become authors of at least part of their own worlds. (Pennycook, 1997:49)

Nevertheless, how do we make sure that the language users in question, i.e. the students, actually know the linguistic and cultural codes needed to make their voices heard in class as well as in society, unless we explicitly teach them? Lisa Delpit (1993:593) argues from an example of the teaching of black children by white so-called progressive teachers in the US, that their warm and friendly attitude may be just as oppressive as the authoritarian way of teaching language skills that they say that they want to avoid. It is oppressive in the sense that they take their own white middle-class cultural codes of participation for granted, without being aware of the fact that they are thereby exercising power:

> *Those with power are frequently least aware of – or least willing to acknowledge – its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.* (Delpit, 1993:583)

That is how dialogue is silenced, says Delpit, when the culture of power is enacted in classrooms by teachers who are not aware of what they are doing. If students are not yet taking part in the culture of power, they will indeed benefit from learning about the rules and codes that make it easier for them to aquire that power. Ignoring the mistakes students are making out of some well-meaning politeness means that you are letting them down. As I understand Delpit, the notion of "voice" as a place of struggle for cultural alternatives does not concern the awareness of students only but that of teachers as well, since it adresses the fundamental question of whose voices will actually be heard. According to Delpit, teachers must become aware of the power they themselves are exercising and so explicitly empower their students. However, they must also take into account that students are the experts of their own lives, and may therefore be the true, authentic narrators of their own experience. Or, as Delpit puts it:

> *Teachers are in an ideal position […] to attempt to get all of the issues on the table in order to initiate true dialogue. This can only be done, however, by seeking out those whose perspectives may differ most, by learning to give their words complete attention, by understanding one's own power, even if that power stems merely from being in the majority […].* (Delpit, 1993:594)

The arguments above may contribute to problematizing the way teachers sometimes think and speak of the students they encounter in their

daily language teaching practices. Are these students just "immigrant students", students with "a foreign culture", students with "a Swedish background", "good language learners", "weak language learners" etc., or are they social language users at the intersection of various cultural borders? Holding on to the notion of "voice" as expressed by Delpit we learn about the otherness of the other by his or her concrete narratives in the same way as others learn about us (Tornberg, 2004:131). From this perspective of "voice", then, language teaching and learning practices, especially in multicultural settings, may be seen not only as learning and teaching practices as such, but at the same time as ongoing struggles about respect, freedom and equality across and beyond cultural borders (Tornberg 2004:135). Seyla Benhabib (2002:19) emphasizes that a person's right to cultural self-ascription is a prerequisite for developing cultural pluralism in the liberal, democratic state. This means, in my interpretation, that no authority should impose cultural affinity on a person with reference to her so called background. It also means that a person must be free to leave her cultural group and to join any other group of her liking.

In accordance with the argumentation above, the notion of "voice" may help us, and, hopefully, our students to perceive the social practices of (foreign) language teaching and learning as a potential discursive space, a kind of borderline work, where people from whatever cultural background they may have struggle for their right to find and define their own cultural alternatives.

Dialogue

"Voice" may also be understood from a different angle, an angle which, however, seems to be at least partially in line with the discussion so far. What I am referring to is Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, for example as expressed in his analysis of the "Socratic dialog":

> *The two basic devices of the 'Socratic dialog' were the syncrisis […] and the anacrisis […]. Syncrisis was understood as the juxtaposition of various points of view towards a given object. This technique of juxtaposing various word-opinions was, because of the very nature of the 'Socratic dialog', accorded very great importance. Anacrisis consisted of the means of eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion, and express it fully […]. Syncrisis and anacrisis dialogize thought, they bring it outside, turn it into a speech in a dialog, and turn it over to the dialogical intercourse between people.* (Bakhtin, 1973:90–91)

To me this quotation expresses a perspective of dialogue in which a plurality of reciprocally deviating, provocative opinions are brought to the fore and made visible, almost in the sense that Pennycook uses "voice" as a site of struggle. However, whereas to Pennycook (as well as to Delpit and Benhabib) the struggles they are talking about have a clearly political connotation, Bakhtin, in his time and place, did not have the opportunity of being political. Nevertheless, according to Morson and Emerson (1992), Gardiner (1996) and Witoszek (1997), he seems to have found his own ways despite the repressive Soviet state, by constantly emphasizing the importance of dialogue and multivocalism. When analysing the "Socratic dialog" as a speech genre he is juxtaposing it to the authoritarian monologue:

> *The Socratic concept of the dialogical nature of truth and of human thought about it lies at the foundation of the genre. The dialogical means of seeking the truth is counterposed to the official monologism which claims to possess the ready-made truth; and it is counterposed to the naive self-confidence of people who think that they know something, i.e. who think that they possess certain truths. The truth is not born and does not reside in the head of an individual person; it is born of the dialogical intercourse between people in the collective search for the truth.*
> (Bakhtin, 1973:90)

Although I do not want to associate the notion of "voice" as discussed earlier with "seeking the truth" in general, I interpret Bakhtin's analysis of the Socratic dialogue, and the search for truth going on in this dialogue, as being contingent as well as situated in a specific, social context. In my view, the same goes for his analysis of the meaning of words. The words we use, says Bakhtin (1973:167), are not neutral words, unless we look them up in a dictionary. They are already "inhabited" (ibid.) by foreign voices. We "receive the word from the voice of another and the word is filled with that voice" (ibid.). It is not until we use the word and fill it with our own expressive intention that it becomes a word of our own. Consequently, we do not learn the words of a language out of dictionaries and grammars but by listening to and then reproducing real utterances in situated communication with others (Bakhtin, 1997:219–220). Words, therefore, exist in three different ways:

> *– as neutral words of a language,*
> *– as words belonging to someone else,*
> *– as my own words when I use them in context with my own expressive intention.*
> (after Bakhtin, 1997:229)

There may be even a further step to be taken when it comes to Bakhtin's dialogism and its affinity to the notion of "voice". In his book on Dostoevsky's poetics (1973), Bakhtin emphasizes the unfinished nature of dialogue. The world is an open place with an unlimited potential for freedom and creativity. When analysing dialogue in Dostoevsky's poetics, he writes as follows:

> *Dialog is for him not the threshold to action, but action itself. Nor is it a means of revealing, of exposing the already-formed character of a person; no, here the person is not only outwardly manifested, he becomes for the first time that which he is, not only – we repeat – as far as others are concerned, but for himself, as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. When the dialog is finished, all is finished. Therefore the dialog, in essence, cannot and must not come to an end.*
> (Bakhtin, 1973:213)

Also in this analysis of dialogue, Bakhtin, in my view, touches upon "voice", albeit in a different wording and from a somewhat different perspective. What is emphasized, though, is the element of self-articulation inherent in dialogue, which, in this case, takes on existential dimensions. When the dialogue ends, everything ends.

I have used Pennycook's notion of "voice" as well as Bakhtin's "dialogue" in order to indicate that, by these perspectives, the focus of analysis of what is going on in communicative action may be moved from an individualized, task-based approach to the social, political and existential dimensions of language use. However, social, political and existential dimensions of communicative action include ethical dimensions as well. In this last part of my text I will discuss some of these aspects, referring especially to the writings of Gert Biesta (1999; 2006).

Ethical dimensions of "voice"

Whereas Pennycook, Delpit, Benhabib and Bakhtin all stress self-articulation, whether in terms of becoming the author of one's own life, the right of cultural self-ascription or dialogue, to Biesta an ethical space means "that we are with others before we are with ourselves" (1999:39). With reference to the discussion above about "voice", Biesta's ethical space may imply that we neither exist as subjects outside or independently of the social world, nor are we ever the first on the scene. Our struggle for self-articulation will always take place in an intersubjective relation to others, starting not with a statement of "who I am" or with the question "where am I?", but by asking "where are you?".

Referring again to the struggle of self-articulation discussed above, Biesta's term for this may be "coming into presence" (1999:21–45), although this does not mean that coming into presence would disclose a fixed and already determined identity worth struggling for. Rather, it means that neither the intersubjective space nor the subject exists outside or before the interaction. Nevertheless, coming into presence also implies that the participants are seen as agents continuously intruding on each other's individual space, which, in turn, also makes the intersubjective space a violent space:

> *The violence that we are talking about is the very condition of possibility of the coming into presence of someone as some one, and there is no way outside of this violent realm of inter subjective space that the coming into presence of someone can happen.* (Biesta, 1999:39)

Violence, or disjunction, then, is as necessary for coming into presence as it is for the struggle of self-articulation. Consequently, and in line with the notion of "voice", Biesta turns the traditional idea of agency as the very *aim* of education upside down. He argues that agency is in fact the *condition* of education, that education may actually be the very space where singular beings come into presence (Biesta, 1999:40).

Of course, we cannot force anyone to come into presence, but as Biesta puts it, we can at least make sure "that there are opportunities for our students to really respond, to find their own voice, their own way of speaking" (2006:69). This argumentation may be related to what he calls the difference between two communities; the "rational community", i.e. the community in which we normally exist, and the "other community", a difference that may be understood in terms of the way we speak. Whereas the rational community is concerned with *what* is said, i.e. with facts, which, in turn, may be expressed in a representative voice, the other community is asking for your own, unique and "unprecedented" voice. (Biesta, 2006:67)

A crucial remark about the other community, at least within the frame of this text about "voice", may be that it should be understood as a constant possibility abiding inside the rational community (in which we normally live) and coming to the fore when one "responds to the other, to the otherness of the other, to what is strange in relation to the discourse and logic of the rational community". (Biesta, 2006:66)

In my view, the unique voice spoken in the other community and the notion of "voice" discussed earlier have some important characteristics in

common. The different meanings of "voice" that I have tried to develop here may all imply a kind of border crossing: from the individualized language learner to the social, political and existential language user, from the student to be socialized into agency through education to a subject coming into presence in an intersubjective space by speaking in his own, unprecedented voice.

Conclusion

The aim of this text has been to discuss the notion of "voice" as an alternative perspective for analysing what may be going on in communicative action within the contexts of (foreign) language teaching and learning. The reason for undertaking this investigation has been the assumption that focusing on the notion of "voice" may offer a discursive space where other dimensions of communicative action may be visible than is usually the case when the focus is on the analysis and assessment of communicative competencies of individual speakers.

There are, of course, a few remaining questions to be asked in connection with the discussion so far. Why, for example, is it necessary, as Pennycook suggests, that the practices of teaching and learning languages open up social, political and cultural alternatives for language users to become the authors of at least part of their world? Or, why is it important, as Delpit argues, that as teachers we should bother about seeking out those students whose class-based or cultural perspectives differ most from our own, and let them articulate themselves? And, finally, in line with Bakhtin, why should we consider it of vital interest that students populate the words they are learning with their own, expressive intentions? In other words: Why do we need the metaphors of "voice" and "the other community" in order to understand what may be going on in communicative action within the practices of (foreign) language teaching and learning?

The answer to all these questions must probably be: "It depends." According to some contemporary educational discourse at least, these metaphors may not be considered important at all, since educators should be mainly concerned with discipline and order and with the teaching and assessment of knowledge and skills. Consequently, what may be of interest and therefore perceived, i.e. ethnographically observed and investigated, depends on the perspective chosen, and the perspective we choose depends, in turn, on what we want to achieve as (language) educators.

References

Bakhtin, M. (1973). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.* Ann Arbor: Ardis.

Bakhtin, M. (1997). Frågan om talgenrer. In: E. Hættner Aurelius & T. Götselius (eds.), *Genreteori* (pp. 203–239). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Benhabib, S. (2002). *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era.* Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Biesta, G. (1999). Where Are You? Where Am I? Education, Identity and the Question of Location. In: C. A. Säfström (ed.), *Identity* (pp. 21–46). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Biesta, G. (2006). *Beyond Learning. Democratic Education for a Human Future.* London: Paradigm.

Council of Europe (2001). *Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Delpit, L. D. (1993). The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children. Reprinted in L. Weis & M. Fine (eds.), *Beyond Silenced Voices: Class, Race and Gender in United States Schools* (pp. 583–595). Albany: SUNY Press.

Gardiner, M. (1996). Alterity and Ethics. A Dialogical Perspective. *Theory, Culture & Society,* 13 (2), 121–143.

Kramsch, C. (1996). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morson, G. S. & Emerson, C. (1992). *Mikhail Bakhtin, Creation of a Prosaics.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Pennycook, A. (1997). Cultural alternatives and autonomy. In: P. Benson & P. Voller (eds.), *Independence and Autonomy in Language Learning* (pp. 35–53). London: Longman.

Tornberg, U. (2000). *Om språkundervisning i mellanrummet – och talet om "kommunikation" och "kultur" i kursplaner och läromedel från 1962 till 2000.* Uppsala: Uppsala universitet (Uppsala Studies in Education 92).

Tornberg, U. (2004). "Multiculturalism" – a dead end in conceptualizing difference, or an open-ended approach to facilitating democratic experiences in the foreign language classroom? *Utbildning & Demokrati. Tidskrift för didaktik och utbildningspolitik. English Edition,* 13 (3), 127–145.

Tornberg, U. (2006). Språkundervisning på didaktisk grund – vad kan det betyda? In: J. Einarsson, E. Larsson Ringqvist & M. Lindgren (eds.), *Språkforskning på didaktisk grund. Rapport från ASLA:s höstsymposium, Växjö, 10–11 november 2005. Approaches to teaching and learning in linguistic research. Papers from the ASLA symposium in Växjö, 10–11 November 2005* (pp. 271–283). Uppsala: ASLA.

Tornberg, U. (2007). Vem äger språkundervisningens språk? In: T. Englund (ed.), *Utbildning som kommunikation. Deliberativa samtal som möjlighet* (pp. 361–379). Göteborg: Daidalos.

Witoszek, N. (1997): Kulten av dialogen. *Dialoger*, 41 (Bachtin), 32–40.

Kristy Beers Fägersten, Lecturer, School of Arts and Languages, Dalarna University College
kbf@du.se

Peter Czigler, Senior Lecturer, School of Health and Medical Sciences, Örebro University
peter.czigler@oru.se

Mats Deutschmann, Senior Lecturer, Department of Humanities, Mid Sweden University
mats.deutschmann@miun.se

Fredrik Karlsson, Senior Lecturer and Research Engineer, Department of Language Studies, Umeå University
fredrik.karlsson@ling.umu.se

Carita Lundmark, Senior Lecturer, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kristianstad University College
carita.lundmark@hkr.se

Luisa Panichi, Lecturer, University Language Centre, University of Pisa
panichi@cli.unipi.it

Patricia Poussa, Professor, Department of Language Studies, Umeå University
patricia.poussa@engelska.umu.se

Neva Šlibar, Professor, Department of German, Dutch and Scandinavian Languages, University of Ljubljana
neva.slibar@guest.arnes.si

Kirk P. H. Sullivan, Reader, Department of Language Studies and Department of Child and Youth Education, Special Education and Counselling, Umeå University
kirk.sullivan@ling.umu.se

Ulrika Tornberg, Reader, Department of Education, Örebro University
ulrika.tornberg@pi.oru.se

Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning
Journal of Research in Teacher Education

Notes on the submission of manuscripts

1. One electronic version of the article should be submitted.
2. Articles should not normally exceed 5–6000 words. They should be typed, double-spaced an A 4 paper, with ample left- and right-hand margins, author's name and the paper only. A cover page should contain only the title, author's name and a full address to appear on the title page of the paper.
3. An abstract not exceeding 150 words should be included on a separate sheet of paper.
4. Footnotes should be avoided. Essential notes should be numbered in the text and grouped together at the end of the article.
5. Diagrams and Figures, if they are considered essential, should be clearly related to the section of the text to which they refer. The original diagrams and figures should be submitted with the top copy.
6. References in the text of an article should be by the author's name and year of publication, as in these examples:
   Jones (1987) in a paper on…; Jones (1978c:136) states that; Evidence is given by Smith *et al.* (1984)…; Further exploration of this aspect may be found in many sources (e.g. White, 1981a; Brown & Green, 1982; Jackson, 1983).
7. All works referred to should be set out in alphabetical order of the author's name in a list at the end of the article. They should be given in standard form, as the following examples:
   Cummins, J. (1978a) Educational implications of mother tongue maintenance in minority-language groups. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 34, 395–416.
   Cummins, J. (1978b) Bilingualism and the development of metalinguistic awareness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 9, 131–49.
   Genese, F., Tucker, G.R and Lambert, W.E. (1976) Communication skills of children. *Child Development* 46, 1010–14
   John, V.P and Horner, V.M. (eds) (1971) *Early childhood Bilingual Education*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
   Jones, W.R. (1959) *Bilingualism and Intelligence*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
   Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1986) Some fundamental aspects of language development after age five. In P Fletcher and M.Garman (eds) *Language Acquisition:Studies in First Language Development* (2nd edn). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Författarvägledning

Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning står öppen för publicering av artiklar och recensioner av arbeten inom områdena lärarutbildning och pedagogisk yrkesverksamhet

1. Artikeln ska sändas till redaktören i en elektronisk version.
2. Artikeln får till omfånget inte innehålla mer än cirka 5000 – 6000 ord. Manuskriptet ska vara skrivet med dubbelt radavstånd med stora höger- och vänstermarginaler. Ett försättsblad ska innehålla uppgifter om författarens namn och adress.
3. En abstract av artikeln ska finnas på en egen sida och omfatta cirka 150 ord.
4. Fotnoter ska undvikas. Nödvändiga noter ska numreras i texten och placeras i slutet av artikeln.
5. Diagram och figurer ska i de fall de anses nödvändiga placeras i anslutning till den text de referera till.
6. Referenser i löpande text anges med författarens namn samt tryckår för den publikation som hänvisningen görs till, som i detta exempel:

Jones (1987) menar att…; Jones (1978c:136) hävdar att; Bevis på detta ges av Smith *et al.* (1984)…; Dessa aspekter utreds ytterligare i andra studier (e.g. White, 1981a; Brown & Green, 1982; Jackson, 1983).

7. Referenser ska ordnas i alfabetisk ordning efter författarnamn i slutet av artikeln. Dessa ska anges i standardformat enligt mönstret ovan:

Innehåll i nummer 1–2/2004

Lena Rubinstein Reich och Ingegerd Tallberg Broman: Homogeniserings- och särartspraktiker i svensk förskola och skola
Maria Wester: Om normer, normbildning och uppförandenormer
Anders Birgander: Avvikande eller annorlunda: Hinder för undervisningen om homosexuella
Jenny Gunnarsson, Hanna Markusson Winkvist och Kerstin Munck: Vad är lesbian and Gay Studies? Rapport från en kurs i Umeå
Per-Olof Erixon: Skolan i Internetgalaxen
Agneta Lundström: Mobbning – eller antidemokratiska handlingar?

Innehåll i nummer 3–4/2004

Daniel Lindmark: Utbildning och kolonialism
Anders Marner: Ett designperspektiv på slöjden och ett kulturperspektiv på skolan
Per-Olof Erixon: På spaning efter den tid som flytt
Monika Vinterek: Pedagogiskt arbete: Ett forskningsområde börjar anta en tydlig profil
Barbro Bergström & Lena Selmersdotter: Att tala är ett sätt att lära!
Paula Berntsson: Att tillvarata förskollärarutbildningen
Kennert Orlenius: Progression i lärarutbildningen

Innehåll i nummer 1–2 2005

Tomas Bergqvist
IT och lärande – i skola och lärarutbildning
Jonas Carlquist
Att spela en roll. Om datorspel och dess användare
Elza Dunkels
Nätkulturer – vad gör barn och unga på Internet?
Johan Elmfeldt och Per-Olof Erixon
Genrer och intermedialitet i litteratur- och skrivundervisning
– teoretiska utgångspunkter och empiriska iakttagelser
AnnBritt Enochsson
Ett annat sätt att umgås – yngre tonåringar i virtuella gemenskaper
Anders Gedionsen, Else Søndergaard, Jane Buus Sørensen
Når moderniteten i læreruddanelsen møder virkeligheden
Ylva Hård af Segerstad och Sylvana Sofkova Hashemi
Skrivandet, nya media och skrivstöd hos grundskoleelever
Patrik Hernwall
Virtual Society: skillnad, tillgång, frånvaro
– om villkoren för inträdet i cybersamhället
Bertil Roos
Examination och det lärande samhället
Eva Skåreus
Du sköna nya värld

Innehåll i nummer 3 2005

Innehåll i nummer 4 2005

Innehåll i nummer 1 2006

Lovisa Bergdahl
Om gemensamma värden i ett pluralistiskt samhälle
– Lärarutbildarens syn på och arbete med gemensamma värden i den nya lärarutbildningen
Elza Dunkels
The Digital Native as a Student
– Implications for teacher Education
Maria Elmér & Hans Albin Larsson
Demokratiutbildningen i lärarutbildningen
– Några jämförelser och tolkningar
Bodil Halvars-Franzén
Med fokus på lärares yrkesetik i den nya lärarutbildningen
Gun-Marie Frånberg
Lärarstudenters uppfattning om värdegrunden i lärarutbildningen
Margareta Havung
”Du, som är kvinna – du kan väl ta det, det där om genus”
– Om jämställdhet och genus i nya lärarutbildningen
Britta Jonsson
Lärarstudenters värderingar och kvaliteter

Innehåll i nummer 2–3 2006

Hans Thorbjörnsson
Swedish educational sloyd – an international success
Kajsa Borg
What is sloyd? A question of legitimacy and identity
Lars Lindström
The multiple uses of portfolio assessment
Mia Porko-Hudd
Three teaching materials in sloyd – An analysis of the makers' thoughts behind the visible surface
Viveca Lindberg
Contexts for craft and design within Swedish vocational education: Implications for the content
Bent Illum
Learning in practice – practical wisdom – the dialogue of the process
Ragnar Ohlsson
A Practical Mind as an Intellectual Virtue
Kirsten Klæbo & Bodil Svaboe
Design and Digital Textile in higher Education:
The Impact of Digital Technology on Printed Textile and Surface Design
Marléne Johansson
The work in the classroom for sloyd

Innehåll i nummer 4 2006

Peter Bergström, Carina Granberg,
Pär Segerbrant, Dag Österlund
Kursutvärderingar för kursutveckling
Steven Ekholm
Ungdomars läsvanor och läsintressen
Rapport från ett läsprojekt
Kath Green
Problematic Issues in Action Research:
Personal reflections as a researcher, doctoral student and supervisor
Kerstin Munck
Mångfald, text och värdegrund
Ett ämnesdidaktiskt perspektiv: svenskämnet
Joakim Samuelsson
Lärarstudenters emotioner för skolmatematik

Innehåll i nummer 1 2007

Lena Fejan Ljunghill
Till skolan, med kärlek och vrede
Diane J Grayson
The Making of a Science Teacher
Ference Marton and Lo Mun Ling
Learning from "The Learning Study"
Per-Olof Erixon
Från språk och litteratur till multimodalitet och design i det pedagogiska arbetet
Per Lindqvist och Ulla Karin Nordänger
Lärande i riskzonen? – konturer av ett obrukat forskningsfält
Christer Stensmo
Etnografiska fältnotiser i en vfu-period inom lärarutbildningen

Innehåll i nummer 2 2007

David Andrew
Learners and artist-teachers as multimodal agents in schools
Andrew Clegg
Creative Processes in technology Education;
Namibian Solutions to Namibian Problems
Liesl van der Merwe
Assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture:
A South African perspective
Hetta Potgeiter
The "I" in multicultural music education
Kajsa Borg
Assessment for Learning Creative Subjects
Per-Olof Erixon
From Written Text to Design. Poetry for the media society
Hans Örtegren
Formative Evaluation of Projects in Art Pedagogy

Innehåll i nummer 3 2007

Galina Nilsson & Elena Luchinskaya
Problembaserat lärande i högskolematematik. En studie av högskolestuderandes kunskapsutveckling i matematik på datavetenskapligt program
Eva Nyström
Reconceptualising gender and science education: from biology and difference to language and fluidity
Kathleen Quinlivan
Twist and Shout! Working with Teachers towards affirming Sexual Diversity in a New Zealand Girls' Secondary School
Britt-Marie Styrke
Estetik – kropp – genus i relation till dans och dansutbildning
Hugo Vanheeswijck
Limitations and Possibilities of Catholic Education in a Multicultural World

Innehåll i nummer 4 2007

Arja Virta
Historical Literacy: Thinking, Reading and Understanding History
Elisabeth Erdmann
Visual Literacy: Images as Historical Sources and Their Consequences for the Learning and Teaching of History
Yehoshua Mathias
Cultivating Historical Literacy in a Post-Literate Age: Historical Movies in Classroom
Annie Bruter
History as a Tool for Acquiring Literacy in 19th-Century French Schools
Cristina Yanes Cabrera
Pedagogical Museums and the Safeguarding of an Intangible Educational Heritage: Didactic Practices and Possibilities

Innehåll i nummer 1 2008

Pavel Zgaga
On the Eutopic Dimension of Knowledge
Mikael Alexandersson
I skuggan av bildningens bärare
Om Fridjuv Berg och läraryrtkets utveckling
Karin Taube
Läsa för livet
Kenneth Ekström, Anders Garpelin & Pernilla Kallberg
Övergångar under förskoleåren som kritiska händelser för barnet, föräldrarna och verksamheten – en forskningsöversikt
Anders Garpelin & Pernilla Kallberg
Övergångar i förskolan som kollektiva passageriter eller smidiga transitioner – en intervjustudie

Tidskrift

för lärarutbildning och forskning

UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

FAKULTETSNÄMNDEN FÖR LÄRARUTBILDNING
THE FACULTY BOARD FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Printed in Sweden

ISSN 1404-7659