Proceedings

Van *Schools* tot Scriptie.

een colloquium over universitair taalvaardigheidonderwijs

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Content

Van Schools tot Scriptie.

Een colloquium over universitair taalvaardigheidsonderwijs

Dick Smakman

1. Het colloquium

Op 8 en 9 juni 2012 organiseerde de Sectie Taalvaardigheid van de Opleiding Engelse Taal en Cultuur van de Universiteit Leiden een colloquium over de rol van het universitair taalvaardigheidsonderwijs in Nederland en Vlaanderen. Dit colloquium bracht docenten in het universitair talenonderwijs samen, als wel belanghebbenden en belangstellenden, om van gedachten te wisselen over de rol van dit vakgebied binnen de universiteit. Het colloquium werd gesteund door het Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL).

Meer dan tien vreemde talen waren vertegenwoordigd. Ongeveer een derde van de presentatoren heeft zijn of haar lezing omgezet in een artikel, en deze zijn in deze colloquiumbundel te vinden.

2. Thematiek

De bijdragen van de deelnemers richtten zich op de vraag: "Wat zijn de grenzen van het universitair taalvaardigheidsonderwijs?". Voorbeelden van specifieke vragen die beantwoord werden waren:

- Is taalvaardigheid een ondersteunend vak of een discipline op zich?
- Moet taalvaardigheidsonderwijs in de latere studiejaren grenzen aan, of gelijk zijn aan, taalkunde?
- Is universitair talenonderwijs intrinsiek anders dan niet-universitair talenonderwijs?
- Zijn er typisch universitaire lesmethoden of onderwijstools voor taalvaardigheid?
- Moet gestimuleerd worden dat taalvaardigheiddocenten onderzoeksinteresses ontwikkelen?
- Dient taalvaardigheidsonderwijs analytisch te zijn of wordt slechts een vaardigheid aangeleerd?
- Hoe staat het met het overleg en de samenwerking met HBO's, middelbare scholen en met bedrijven en instellingen?

Over deze en soortgelijke onderwerpen werd gepresenteerd, en de presentatoren namen daarbij al dan niet een specifieke vreemde taal of een bepaalde onderwijsinstelling als uitgangspunt.

3. Doelgroep

Het colloquium richtte zich op de volgende groepen:

- Docenten Taalvaardigheid binnen universitaire opleidingen waar vreemde talen worden gedoceerd
- Onderzoekers op het gebied van taalverwerving en didactiek
- Vakdidactici en beleidsmakers op universiteiten
- Studenten, scriptanten en afgestudeerden van opleidingen waar vreemde talen worden gedoceerd
- Docenten en andere medewerkers op universitaire talencentra
- Overige geïnteresseerden

Een brede groep deelnemers meldde zich aan, waaronder betrokkenen bij talen die als schoolvak worden aangeboden (Duits, bijvoorbeeld), zogenaamde 'nultalen' - die vanaf de basis worden gedoceerd (zoals het geval is voor het Noors) - en niet-westerse talen (zoals het Chinees). Daarnaast leverden onderzoekers een bijdrage in de vorm van relevant onderzoek, bijvoorbeeld onderzoek naar het meetbare effect van doceermethodes. Ook een enkele beleidsmaker was aanwezig om een lezing te geven over de achtergronden van het universitair talenonderwijs. Ten slotte waren studenten aanwezig en enkele daarvan hebben hun scriptie-onderzoek gepresenteerd, om te illustreren wat taalvaardigheid als scriptieonderwerp behelst en wat we van dat soort onderzoek kunnen leren.

4. Achtergrond

Enkele van de bekende vraagstukken die spelen rondom taalvaardigheidsonderwijs lijken de laatste jaren steeds actueler te worden. Een constant thema is de link met de wetenschap. Universitair taalvaardigheidsonderwijs pleegt een analytisch karakter te hebben maar de link met het academische is vaak lastig te leggen omdat de eindtermen vaardigheden zijn. Hierdoor heeft de docent Taalvaardigheid vaak een andere positie dan bijvoorbeeld de docent Literatuur, Taalkunde, Cultuur of Filologie op dezelfde opleiding.

Moet de docent Taalvaardigheid zich beperken tot praktische taalvaardigheid of daarnaast academische vaardigheden doceren als wel kennis verspreiden over taalverwerving, didactiek, en bijvoorbeeld cultuur? Het universitair taalvaardigheidsonderwijs sluit vaak aan op de lessen op de middelbare school, met de methoden en eindtermen die we van het secundair onderwijs kennen. Een universitaire student is bovengemiddeld intelligent maar is niet noodzakelijkerwijs beter in het verwerven van een vreemde taal dan een niet-universitaire student. Vanuit dat opzicht is er geen reden om aan deze slimme studenten ander onderwijs te bieden dan op de middelbare school, als immers het doel gelijk is aan het doel op deze scholen: praktisch toepasbare kennis van de taal. Aan de andere kant behoort genoemde student zich academisch te kunnen uitdrukken in de vreemde taal. Dat zou weer betekenen dat docenten Taalvaardigheid deze student academische vaardigheden dienen te doceren. Treden docenten Taalvaardigheid buiten hun eigen vakgebied (en in het gebied van, bijvoorbeeld, de taalkundige) als ze theoretisch onderwijs geven tussen de vaardigheden door?

Een ander thema is het onderscheid met andere disciplines binnen opleidingen. De verschillen tussen Taalvaardigheid en de meer theoretische disciplines beïnvloeden de aard van de secties Taalvaardigheid, de uitstraling die ze hebben naar studenten en de positie binnen opleidingen. Zo wordt het vak Taalvaardigheid relatief vaak gegeven door docenten Taalkunde en door studenten in de laatste fase van hun studie. De ene taalvaardigheiddocent beperkt zich tot colleges in de eerste twee jaren van de studie en doceert vanaf de zijlijn van de opleiding een vaardigheid, terwijl de andere tot in de Masterfase colleges verzorgt en volop meedoet met scriptiebegeleiding en publiceren.

Een bijzondere positie wordt ingenomen door de talencentra, die onderwijs op maat verzorgen aan universitair studenten maar ook aan niet-studenten, en die vaak zowel samenwerken met bedrijven en instellingen als met opleidingen Taal en Cultuur. In deze samenwerkingsverbanden vinden interessante ontwikkelingen plaats.

De positie van docenten Taalvaardigheid lijkt momenteel in ontwikkeling te zijn. Zo verwachten universiteiten vaak van deze docenten dat ze aansluiting vinden bij onderzoek, als onderdeel van een breder universitair beleid waarin promoties worden gestimuleerd. Deze ontwikkeling roept andermaal de vraag op wat de rol van de docent Taalvaardigheid is in een academische omgeving.

5. De toekomst

De interesse in het colloquium was groot en het colloquium werd als zeer zinvol ervaren. De tweede editie wordt daarom in juni 2014 georganiseerd, wederom in het Lipsiusgebouw in Leiden. Hiermee hoopt de organisatie een trend te zetten waarin genoemd type onderwijs meer aandacht krijgt en docenten Taalvaardigheid op universiteiten onderling meer ideeën zullen uitwisselen.

English as a medium of instruction in a non-English speaking context

Frank van Splunder

1. Introduction

English is increasingly being used as a language of instruction in a non-English speaking environment. That is, lecturers as well as students are native speakers of languages *other* than English. This also implies that different varieties of English are brought into the classroom, some of which have more prestige than others.

The context of the current research is higher education in Europe after the 1999 Bologna Declaration and the ensuing construction of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA, 2010). The irony is that, while Bologna stresses the *diversity* of languages and cultures[1] , English has clearly become dominant, which may be regarded as an unintended side-effect of Bologna. Yet it may be obvious that the internationalization of higher education goes hand in hand with its commercialization (that is, education is increasingly seen as a commodity) and the concomitant marketization of English ('English sells').

The focus of my research is the Dutch language area in Europe: the Netherlands and Flanders (the northern part of Belgium). This is an interesting case as both regions have a more or less similar language policy (instigated by the Dutch Language Union) but strikingly different language practices, due to historical and political circumstances. My case study is based on an advanced master's programme in Development Studies, taught in English for an international audience at the University of Antwerp (Flanders).

While English-medium instruction (EMI) is a relatively new phenomenon in Europe, it is well established in other parts of the world, in particular in countries with a colonial past. In these countries, indigenized varieties of English have emerged, which Kachru (1985)[2] referred to as the 'Outer Circle' of English (as opposed to the 'Inner Circle', where English is used as a native language, and the 'Expanding Circle', where English is a foreign language). Most countries in Europe belong to the Expanding Circle, which has by and large adopted Inner Circle norms (even though it may be about to develop its own norms). As I will argue in this paper, a 'clash' may be observed between norms promoted by the Inner Circle and language practices in the other circles.

This paper aims to explore the complex nature of EMI in an international academic context. It is based on research data obtained from questionnaires and interviews with students and lecturers, as well as the students' coursework. Although the paper is by no means exhaustive, its purpose is to show that the use of English involves more than just *language*. The next part contextualizes the use of English as a medium of instruction in Europe and in the Dutch language area in particular, while the last part focuses on English as a lingua franca in a non-English speaking context (Flanders). While the former is mainly concerned with language policy (and, to a certain extent, language practices), the latter focuses on actual language practices in a specific context.

2. English as a medium of instruction

2.1. Overview

The dominant position of English in Europe can be attributed to the dominant position of the United States in the world. This dominance can be traced back to the First World War, and it was consolidated after the Second World War. European integration after the Second World War led to a gradual and unplanned *Englishization* of the continent. After every enlargement of the European Community (renamed European Union after the 1993 Maastricht Treaty), English has become more dominant, even though new member-states are not English-speaking.

The use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education is clearly on the rise all over Europe (Brenn-White and Van Rest 2010: 21). Yet one may notice a north-south divide: countries in the northern part of Europe (and the Netherlands in particular) are in the vanguard of English-medium instruction. Most languages spoken in this part of Europe are 'smaller' languages lacking international appeal. Most of these languages are closely related to English, which is widely spoken as an L2. The rise of EMI is less spectacular in the rest of Europe, although it is quite considerable even in France and in the south of Europe.[3] Belgium has its own north-south divide: Flanders has more EMI than the French-speaking part of Belgium, but less than the Netherlands. The differences between the two Dutch-speaking regions can be attributed to differences in legislation, reflecting different views on language.

The Netherlands and Flanders share a language policy, as conceptualized by the Dutch Language Union[4]. The 1995 treaty, signed by the respective governments, states, inter alia, "[t]he Treaty Concluding Parties strive for mutual harmonization and coordination and, *if possible and desirable* [my emphasis], for a common policy" (Article 3). This *intended* common policy not only applies to Dutch, but also to English, in particular the use of English in higher education.[5] The Netherlands and Flanders recognize Dutch as their medium of instruction in higher education, yet allowing for the following exceptions: teaching foreign languages, teaching by foreign guest lecturers, and specific circumstances (e.g. foreign students). This seems rather vague and leaves the door open for many exceptions. Moreover, language practices do not always reflect language policy. Whereas the Netherlands appear to 'go English', Flanders is far more reluctant, reflecting the sensitive linguistic situation in Belgium. This does not mean that English-medium instruction is totally undisputed in the Netherlands[6], yet it is widely accepted and even politically encouraged, which is definitely not the case in Flanders. Overall, the Dutch and the Flemish attitude regarding language can be summarized as *instrumentalism* (language as a tool) versus *essentialism* (language as the expression of one's identity), both of which are rooted in history[7].

As far as language policy is concerned, a stark difference may be observed between French institutionalized policy (as embodied by the Académie Française) and Anglo-Saxon privatized (i.e. laissez faire) policy. Moreover, the French normative tradition (i.e. the stress on 'standard' usage and the doctrine of linguistic correctness) contrasts sharply with Anglo-Saxon aversion to 'linguistic engineering' (e.g. Woolard 1998: 21). Quite strikingly, Flemish language policy is related to French policy, whereas in Dutch language policy (or the lack of it) an Anglo-Saxon orientation is apparent.

2.2. The Netherlands

The Dutch instrumentalist attitude may be called pragmatic and even commercial. In other words, English is seen as a tool. In economic terms, English can be regarded as an import product which has been successfully marketed in the Netherlands and abroad, for instance as a means to attract foreign students. This tendency to market imported goods can be traced back to as early as the 17th century (Prak 2005: 89). It is tempting to compare the marketization of English today with the tulip trade in the 17th century[8]. Tulips were imported from the Ottoman Empire (today's Turkey), after which they were skilfully marketed in Holland as a consequence of which they have become a major Dutch export product. Although the ensuing *tulip mania* is commonly associated with speculative transaction and crashing stock markets, tulips may be regarded as one of the most lucrative Dutch products ever. Today's marketization of English reflects the internationalization and commercialization of higher education.

There may be some irony in the fact that today the Dutch are among the staunchest supporters of English as a language of instruction at Dutch universities. Simon Stevin, a Flemish engineer to the Dutch Prince Maurice of Orange-Nassau, founded an engineering school in Leiden (1600) which adopted Dutch instead of Latin as its language of instruction. Stevin justified this decision as follows: "[...] because those who will later be engaged in the profession of engineering rarely if ever speak Latin among themselves, but use the language spoken in their respective country, it follows that their classes should be taught not in Latin, French or any other language, but only in Dutch" (quoted in De Ridder-Symoens 2005: 6). Stevin wrote on principle in Dutch, which he thought should be the language of scientific discourse in the Netherlands (Prak 2005: 224). Simon Stevin (1548-1620) 'invented' many Dutch mathematical and military terms which are still being used today. Similar examples in areas other than the Dutch language area might be Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Robert Boyle (1627-1691), who argued that the most obscure problems, either in astronomy or in chemistry, could be discussed in their national language (i.e. Italian or English, respectively).

Since the 1990s, many universities in Europe have adopted English as an additional language of instruction, and some have switched to English altogether. This tendency is particularly salient in the Netherlands. Today's option for instruction in English is clearly market-driven and considered a strategic choice, as conceded by a former Dutch Education Minister (Ritzen 2003). This may explain why English is so prevalent in Dutch higher education, especially at master level, where most courses are taught in English (Oosterhof 2007).

2.3. Flanders

Flemish essentialist language attitudes can only be understood in the context of the 19th century *language struggle*. Belgium was constructed in 1830 as a French-speaking state, even though French was a minority language. Apart from being the language of power, French was also the (international) language of prestige and higher education in the whole country. It was not until a century later, after a long and bitter struggle for equal rights, that Dutch was officially recognized as the language of higher education in Flanders. The Dutchification (*vernederlandsing*) of Ghent University in 1930 is commonly seen as a milestone in Flemish linguistic and cultural emancipation (Donaldson 1983: 24-25). Even today, language remains a sensitive issue which is usually framed in a discourse of *threat* (of foreign languages, in particular French) and protection (of one's own language). English may be far more popular than French in today's Flanders, yet measures have been taken to curb the use of English in higher education.

Whereas the Dutch law regarding the medium of instruction in higher education is very concise[9], the Flemish law is very complex, reflecting conflicting discourses on language. 'Academic' discourses tend to be more pragmatic (that is, they aim to provide for more English), whereas 'political' discourses are more essentialist (aiming to protect Dutch). Academic discourses should be understood in an international or European context, while political discourses cater for the Belgian or the Flemish market.

The 2012 Flemish Higher Education decree[10] explicitly states that Dutch is the medium of instruction at all Flemish universities, and that 'another language' (interestingly, the law does not mention any languages by name) can be used in 'exceptional cases' only. At bachelor level this means a maximum of 18.33 % (30 credits), at master level a maximum of 50% is allowed.[11] In contrast to the Dutch law, Flemish legislation lists a whole series of additional requirements. To complicate matters, 'special programmes' may be taught entirely in another language (virtually always English). Although this law is more flexible than the previous law, Flanders may not be able to compete internationally. That is, a university which offers programmes which are taught entirely in English is far more attractive than a university whose programmes are only partially in English.

3. English as a Lingua Franca

3.1. From EFL to ELF

Although teaching and learning in a language which is not one's first language is not something new (Latin and French being well-known examples), the appeal of English as a medium of instruction is unprecedented. It is a worldwide phenomenon affecting all layers of education from kindergarten onwards. In Europe, English-medium instruction is a burning issue in the 'common market' of higher education. Universities have become market-driven institutions, and education is often perceived to be some kind of consumer article.

The worldwide use of English also raises the issue of which English is to be used. It has been argued that a 'relocation of English' (Saraceni 2010) is needed. That is, in a globalizing context, English should be reconceptualised from a foreign language (EFL) into a lingua franca (ELF). ELF might be described as an emergent variety of English, although this may be too confined a term as ELF should be seen as flexible and context-dependent (see Jenkins 2007). ELF also entails a shift from the native speaker (NS) to the non-native speaker (NNS) as a norm-provider, which ties in with the shifting 'ownership of English' (Widdowson 1994). Moreover, norms are to be seen as dynamic rather than static, and the focus is on function rather than on form. In other words, competence is not just linguistic, but also pragmatic and intercultural. This may be referred to as 'languaging' (Seidlhofer 2011: 98): the use of all linguistic and other resources available. As a consequence, there is more tolerance of variation and errors than in a prescriptive tradition. Thus one might argue in favour of, for instance, Dutch English as a variety in its own right, with its own phonology and morphology (Edwards 2010). Yet the question remains whether this is feasible or desirable.

The very concept of ELF remains controversial, especially in an educational context, and it is not readily accepted by most language learners and teachers. It is often regarded as 'deficient English', which, proponents of ELF might argue, reflects a reductionist view of language based on the ideology of standardization and NS-bias. On the other hand, norms are crucial in language learning and teaching. The problem, however, is: which norms and, also, whose norms are to be adopted? Current English language teaching is firmly based on NS-norms[12], and so are curricula, textbooks, and language tests. English is a lucrative business in the Anglo-Saxon world (Phillipson 1992), which obviously promotes varieties of native English (usually British or American English). Yet the very notion of native speaker is problematic: Who exactly is a native speaker? (Is the notion confined to British or American speakers? How about NNS who can use English more 'appropriately' than some NS?) What exactly does it mean to be an 'educated native speaker'? (How 'educated' does one have to be?). Therefore the notion of 'expert speaker' might be more appropriate as it turns away from the NS-NNS distinction. Yet the term may be fuzzy as well (Who is an expert? Who decides what is 'correct'?).

Although in language teaching and learning a gradual shift may be observed from linguistic competence based on native speaker models to actual language behaviour in a multilingual context (ELF), in academia (and in academic writing in particular) there still is a strong bias towards Anglo-

American norms. This bias not only relates to language as such, but to the supporting paradigms as well (ranging from, for instance, the format of a research paper to, ultimately, the way of thinking).

Set at the crossroads where major language areas meet (English, French, German), multilingualism is very much part of life in the Dutch-speaking language area. This is also reflected in education, which pays considerable attention to foreign language learning and teaching. Yet, English has clearly become dominant as a 'natural' second language at the expense of French and German. As a result of migration and increased mobility in general, the linguistic landscape has become even more complex, and English is often used as a lingua franca. Yet, the varieties of English used may be remote from 'native' English, the use of which is often restricted to an educational context (that is, education in general). Most teachers and learners of English appear to be largely unfamiliar with the notion of ELF, and so is the educational system (curricula, textbooks, tests, etc.), which prefers 'native' English.

3.2. Case study

The case study is based on questionnaires and interviews with 16 lecturers (most of whom native speakers of Dutch) and 112 students from more than 20 countries attending an advanced master's programme in Development Studies taught at the University of Antwerp. The focus of the case study is on the students' language profile and their written English. The data obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews were set off against a 3,500 words essay they had written in English (actually the first assignment they had to write for one of their obligatory courses). The assignments were analysed in terms of content, academic conventions (especially citing and quoting), and language (with a focus on readability, appropriateness, and correctness). They were marked by content lecturers (native speakers of Dutch) as well as language lecturers (native speakers of Dutch or English). The purpose of the case study was to identify the students' linguistic and other problems when writing in English. The data obtained from the questionnaire/interviews and the assignment complemented each other in that they provided an insight in different aspects of the students' language use (self-reported vs actual writing).

Background

The current Institute[13] has its roots in the colonial legacy. Set up in the 1920s for African students from the Belgian colonies, its language of instruction was French (the then language of higher education in Flanders as well as the main colonial language). In 2000, it was decided to introduce English as an additional language of instruction (alternating with French) in order to broaden the scope and to attract students from other parts of the developing world. This led to an influx of Asian students (initially mainly from China), most of whom had not been educated through the medium of English. Although most students had learned English as a second (that is, foreign) language, many of them were not very proficient in English. Therefore, English language classes were added to the curriculum.

After a couple of years, it was decided to abandon the French-language programme and to set up an English-only programme from 2007 onwards. In the meantime, students from French-speaking countries have become a minority, and English language classes (pre-sessional as well as in-course) are provided for those in need of additional language support.

Asked to reflect on the shift from French to English as a medium of instruction, the lecturers (mostly native speakers of Dutch) came up with a number of answers. Most obviously, English is referred to as the academic lingua franca. Most lecturers (especially the younger ones; that is, roughly under forty) perceive English as their L2 and even as their academic L1 (the language in which they write and teach). However, English is more than a language. It is also regarded as the carrier of the Anglo-American paradigm which has become dominant in academia (including Development Studies). Apart from this paradigm shift, the adoption of EMI is also attributed to the shift from French-speaking countries in Africa to other countries and continents, most of whom have adopted English for their international (and sometimes even internal) communication. The language shift may be commercially and politically motivated as well. Last but not least, teaching in two foreign languages (English and French) is more difficult and complex than teaching in English only. Moreover, teaching in French has become a linguistic challenge, especially for the younger lecturers. Several of them conceded they could not teach their course in French.

Even though all students meet the admission requirements[14], some have serious problems studying and particularly writing in English. Generally speaking, the students can be divided into two distinct groups: one group from the Outer Circle and one group from the Expanding Circle. One might expect students from the Outer Circle (who studied in English) to have better English than students from the Expanding Circle (who did not study in English), yet this is by no means always true. In this research, 'good English' is defined in a utilitarian way as readable English. That is, the writer manages to make effective use of lexical, grammatical, and other features, so that the text makes sense to the reader. This approach, however, may not be entirely unproblematic, as will be pointed out later. Virtually all students come from complex multilingual countries, which is reflected in their personal multilingualism (plurilingualism).

Outer Circle students

English is very prominent in all Outer Circle countries, most of which are former British colonies. In these countries, English is either (one of) the official/national language(s)[15] or (one of) the main 'other language(s)'. English is often used as a lingua franca, as no other language may serve this purpose. Yet, most students do not speak English as their 'home language' (informal language used with family and/or friends). English is part of their repertoire, but usually it is not their first or only language. Most students perceive English as their second language, while a minority perceives English as a first language. As already indicated, most students speak several other (usually 'local') languages/dialects as well.

English is the main or exclusive medium of instruction. Yet, there are striking differences between the levels of education. In primary education, languages other than English may play a significant role (e.g. in Ethiopia and Bangladesh), whereas in secondary and higher education English is the medium of instruction. In practice, however, there may be a lot of code-switching and bilingual practices. For instance, concepts may be introduced in English, but explained in the local language. One of the students (reporting on his teaching practices in Ethiopia) conceded, "If I explain something in English, students ask me to repeat in Amharic[16]". Sometimes a course is taught in English, but the exams are in the local language. It should be noted that many students are not familiar with writing assignments or other forms of academic writing. As stated by several students, "we don't do a lot of writing at our university". This may explain why many students have considerable problems with their first assignment, as they are not familiar with the *genre* (including conventions) and the *register* (appropriate language use) of academic writing. Moreover, the varieties of English used by the students reflect Outer Circle norms (Kachru 1985 defines the Outer Circle as 'norm-developing') which may be perfectly acceptable in a 'local' context, but which may cause considerable problems in an international context. A common complaint is that the lecturers do not understand their students' written English. There may be some irony in the fact that students who were educated in English have difficulties to make themselves understood for an international audience, while their lecturers (most of whom have not studied in English) may be more successful. This may be due to the fact that the lecturers' native language is related to English, and they were taught Inner Circle norms. These norms may be called dominant in an international and academic context. The students appear not to be familiar with these norms: "I don't know if I'm speaking right or wrong", as conceded by a student from India.

Expanding Circle students

'Expanding Circle' may be regarded as a cover term for very different countries in which English is not an official/national language. Yet, even in these countries English is often referred to as the main 'other language', which may indeed reflect the current status of English in the world. This is for instance the case in Vietnam (as reported by the interviewees), in spite of the country's French colonial past and anti-American sentiments after the Vietnam War (1955-1975). Most Expanding Circle students perceive English as their second language, although they speak several other languages as well, reflecting societal and personal multilingualism. Although English is usually taught as a foreign language, it is sometimes used as a medium of instruction as well (especially in higher education). Most students have attended courses taught in English, either in their home country or abroad. For some students, however, it is their first experience with EMI. Yet, many of them have had work experience with NGOs or international organizations, in which English is commonly used as a lingua franca.

Writing in English proves to be problematic for this group as well. One of the main problems is L1 interference. Speakers sharing an L1 tend to easily understand each other's English, whereas for other speakers it may be incomprehensible. This is not only due to the language used, but also to the way ideas and concepts are literally 'translated' into English (e.g. metaphors), as conceded by the students. This may also hold for the Outer Circle.

For some students from the Expanding Circle, English is hugely problematic. This is particularly the case for students whose L1 or medium of instruction is not related to English (e.g. Indonesian, Vietnamese). Not all students from the Expanding Circle face the same problems, and some perform quite well. This is mainly the case for students whose L1 or medium of instruction is related to English, for instance Dutch-speaking students. These students speak and write English as an L2 based on Inner Circle norms. Although they were mostly taught British English, there is more exposure to American English in their daily lives (e.g. the role of popular culture, street signs, etc.). Moreover, these students share a linguistic and cultural background with their lecturers. As for the assignment, this may imply they implicitly know what is expected. They tend to be more familiar with basic assumptions and notions (such as the 'Western' concept of critique) and with the format of a research paper. Their English tends to be quite readable for the lecturers, with whom they share the same variety of (Dutch) English. Even 'mistakes' (e.g. Dutchisms) may go unnoticed.

4. Discussion

It should be noted that there are huge individual differences between the students (Outer Circle as well as Expanding Circle), depending on one's language aptitude, socio-economic background (some have more access to English than others), the level of the school attended, the school system (e.g. public vs private), ministerial and other policies regarding English-medium instruction, etc. Some students have studied or worked in an international environment (either in their home country or abroad), which may affect their English as well. For example, a student from Kazakhstan with excellent English had actually studied at an American university in her home country, and had never lived in an English-speaking country.

Students from both Circles were asked which variety of English they preferred. Overall, there was a slight preference for American English (perhaps the variety they are most familiar with). Some also mentioned their own variety of English (sometimes generically referred to as, for instance, 'African English'). Regarding non-native varieties of English, 'northern European' English was preferred. Especially speakers of Dutch, German, and the Scandinavian languages were seen as good examples. The students' preference for speakers of English whose first language is Dutch may not come as a surprise, taking into account this is the variety which is spoken by most of their lecturers and which they hear in their daily lives while studying in Antwerp. As one student from Ecuador remarked, "I'm quite surprised by Belgian [Flemish?] people speaking English", by which he meant that most of them can get by in English quite easily, which is obviously not the case in his home country. It should also be noted that these varieties are closely related to 'native' English, which could make it easier to understand them. Interestingly, several students pointed out they find it far more difficult to understand some Outer Circle or even Inner Circle ('native speakers') users of English.

To sum up, the students' written English appears to be determined by their linguistic, cultural and educational background as well as their ability to use English appropriately in an international academic context. The fact that students from the Outer Circle have studied in English does not necessarily mean their English is appropriate in an international context. Yet, these students are often exempted from taking English language tests and/or courses, which may be unjustified. Many students (from both Circles) are not familiar with academic writing in general and with the format of the assignment in particular. This may be less of a problem for 'Western' students who share a cultural and linguistic background with their lecturers.

5. Conclusion

Today's use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education all over Europe can be attributed to the internationalization as well as the commercialization (commodification) of higher education. English has a unique selling position in that it has become the global lingua franca. Although English may be regarded as a threat to other languages and cultures, its use has widely been accepted in academia. This is also the case in the Dutch language area, where English is firmly ingrained in education and in society at large. Yet there are striking differences between the Netherlands and language-sensitive Flanders where measures have been taken to protect Dutch.

The question remains which variety (or varieties) of English should be taught, especially in an international context. A pragmatic approach may be needed, and therefore the idea of English as a lingua franca is tempting. In the era of globalization, English can no longer be considered the exclusive property of a relatively small and ill-defined group of native speakers, but of a much larger group of English language users all of whom bring in their own varieties of English. Yet not all varieties have the same prestige, and some may be more successful than others. It appears that varieties of English which are linguistically and culturally related to native English are more successful in an academic context which is still very much dominated by the West. For instance, Dutch English may be more acceptable internationally than, say, Chinese English. This may be most obvious in phonology (pronunciation), but morphological and lexical features may be involved as well (e.g. word and sentence structure, metaphorical language), not to mention different ways of conceptualizing the world.

In an international and English-speaking academic context, the focus appears to be on communicative competence rather than on correctness. Yet, in order to communicate effectively, one cannot do without norms and models. However fuzzy the concept may be, the expert speaker can be regarded as a 'fine myth' (a term coined by Davies 1996 to refer to the native speaker) to provide the necessary norms. In a globalized educational context, the expert speaker can be a native speaker or, perhaps more likely, a non-native speaker of English. Apart from linguistic competence, the expert speaker needs intercultural communicative competence as well.

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1 The Bologna Declaration stresses the need to achieve "a common space for higher education within the framework of the diversity of cultures, languages and educational systems" (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf)

2 Kachru (1985) distinguishes three circles of English: the norm-providing Inner Circle, which refers to the traditional bases of English (e.g. UK, USA), the norm-developing Outer Circle, which refers to regions where English plays an important role as a second language, often in a multilingual setting (e.g. India), and the norm-dependent Expanding Circle, where English is taught as a foreign language, and which acknowledges the importance of English as an international language (e.g. the Netherlands).

3 English has also been gaining ground in Central and Eastern Europe since the collapse of Communism and the waning influence of Russian.

4 The Dutch Language Union (*Nederlandse Taalunie*) treaty was signed by the Dutch and Belgian governments in 1980. As a result of the Belgian federalization process, a new treaty was signed by the Dutch and Flemish governments in 1995.

5 More recently (11 June 2012) the Dutch Language Union organized a public hearing in the Dutch Parliament regarding the use of Dutch and English in higher education in both regions (see http://taalunieversum.org/taalunie/hoorzitting_over_nederlands_en_engels_in_het_hoger_onderwijs/)

6 For instance, petition addressed to the Dutch Education Minister, signed by Dutch academics from various universities, 23 June 2009. Available at http://voxintro.com/overig/NederlandsVoertaalWetenschap.pdf). See also Commissie Nederlands als Wetenschapstaal (2003)

7 For a discussion of the terms instrumentalism/essentialism, see May (2008)

8 A commemorative plaque at Leiden University reminds us of the tulip mania. It can be found at Rapenburg, close to the Hortus Botanicus where the first bulbs were planted around 1593.

9 http://maxius.nl/wet-op-het-hoger-onderwijs-en-wetenschappelijk-onderzoek/artikel7.2

10 http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2011-2012/g1655-2.pdf

11 The Dutch law does not impose any restrictions as to the number of courses that may be taught in 'another language'.

12 For instance, the highest level of the CEFR (Common European Framework, level C2) is described as follows: "At this level, the learner is approaching the linguistic competence of an educated *native speaker* [my emphasis], and is able to use the language in a range of culturally appropriate ways."

13 See http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.IOB

14 TOEFL paper-based 500-550, internet-based 61-79; IELTS 5.0-6.0.

15 Ethnologue (http://www.ethnologue.com) does not distinguish between official and national language.

16 The main language spoken in Ethiopia as well as the lecturer's L1.

Explicit Intercultural Education in Foreign Language Courses at Introductory Level

A Methodological Challenge

Tatiana Bruni

1. Introduction

University College Utrecht (UCU) is the international Honors College of Utrecht University. UCU offers an academic education in the spirit of liberal arts and sciences in a small-scale educational setting. It was opened in 1998, offering courses taught in English to selected Dutch and international students. At the time it was the first modern Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) international honors college on the European continent.

Over 650 students are currently enrolled in the program, representing more than 50 nationalities.

Table 1: Student body composition at UCU

- 68% Dutch
- 8,6% Double nationality
- 20,1 % Non-Dutch European
- 7,7% Non-European (Asian 3,2%; Middle East 1,5%, American and Canadian 1,2%, African 1,2%; Latin American 0,4%, Australian 0,2%)

When University College Utrecht was founded, the design of the foreign language program was based on the idea that a foreign language is an important academic skill that students in higher education should acquire together with many other academic skills as part of a broad education. The new challenges in our global world require more and more "greater mutual understanding and acceptance of difference in our multicultural and multilingual societies". (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 5)

The educational philosophy of University College Utrecht incorporates this goal. Foreign languages should be more than a skill; they really are a 'window to culture' and therefore learning a foreign language contributes to the achievement of the aforementioned goal.

The team of foreign language teachers at UCU is facing an experimental phase, in which the courses are reviewed and redesigned to also meet specific learning outcomes related to intercultural competence.

2. Features of the Bachelor Program

A UCU education is characterized by its broad and interdisciplinary nature. This means that the curriculum does not have a fixed structure; instead students combine different courses to assemble a personal study program. To understand the position of language education at UCU it is important to understand what our educational philosophy entails and how the curriculum is built up, which I will shortly illustrate in the two subsections below.

2.1. LAS educational philosophy

According to the Educational Philosophy of UCU "...intellectual growth occurs as both broad and deep learning challenge previously held beliefs.[...] The broad and interdisciplinary character of the college means students gain depth in one or more disciplines and the ability to think beyond paradigms." (UCU)

Key words of this educational philosophy as applied in the academic setting of UCU are:

Teaching and Learning Process

- Mutual commitment
- Talent development
- Active learning
- Interdisciplinary thinking
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Assessment as part of the learning process

Social, international and intercultural development

- Social growth
- Social engagement
- World citizenship
- International approach

Participating in a social community

- Social development
- Social engagement
- Tight community (because of residential setting: campus)

2.2. Curriculum design

Most students opt for a broad *major* in one of the three Departments: Humanities, Sciences or Social Sciences. A *major* consists of at least 10 courses in one department (for a Bachelor of Arts) or 12 (for a Bachelor of Sciences). Within one department students are required to take courses up to the advanced level in at least two different disciplines. Other graduation requirements are the *Breadth requirement* (courses in the two other departments) and the *Language & Culture requirement*. This latter requirement should, together with the international approach and the multicultural international setting, help achieving the goal of educating world citizens (being world citizenship one of the key words listed above).

The Language & Culture courses that UCU offers are the following:

- Beginner level:

  Introduction to Dutch /Chinese / Italian / Hispanic studies

  exit level[1] Intermediate Low

- Elementary level:

  Dutch / Chinese / French / German / Italian / Spanish
  Language & Culture I

  exit level: Intermediate Mid

- Intermediate level

  Dutch / Chinese / French / German / Italian / Spanish
  Language & Culture II

  exit level: Advanced Low

The courses at UCU have two class sections of 1:45 hours for 14 weeks, and a weekly work load of ten hours.

3. Language Education at UCU

3.1. Language requirement

Until the academic year 2009-2010 students had to fulfill a foreign language requirement: they had to take a third language (other than their mother language and English) to a level equivalent to Advanced Low on the ACTFL[2] scale of proficiency (ACTFL, 2012). There were a number of reasons why this system was felt to be in need of revision. Languages were primarily considered academic skills, and thus pretty much isolated from the rest of the curriculum. Furthermore, even if most students spoke more than two languages already, assessing their proficiency level in languages not taught at UCU proved very problematic. This meant that students often had to learn an additional language at UCU, while they would rather have taken content courses instead. Finally, students cannot major in one foreign language; neither was possible, in the past, to take a minor in a foreign language. Therefore most students experienced the language courses as an imposition, and gave a low priority to them, which often led to underperforming.

Consequently, the *Language Requirement* was replaced by two different requirements:

Language & Culture requirement for students who speak at least a mother language different from English and English: they are required to take one Language & Culture course (either L&C1 or L&C2, depending on their assessed proficiency. The beginner courses can be used to start learning a new language, but cannot fulfill this requirement).

Second Language Requirement for students who only speak English. They are required to learn a second language up to the exit level of Advanced Low (ACTFL standard): this means that they have to complete a L&C2 course.

During the academic year 2008-2009 the courses were incorporated in the Humanities department and the year after, the Head of the Humanities department asked the language instructors team to redesign the courses into 'Language and Culture courses'. The new Language & Culture courses would have to become a platform where students learn skills that contribute to achieving some of the educational objectives of UCU, such as speaking different languages; relating cultural differences to disciplinary knowledge; using the knowledge of cultures in explaining actual problems in society; understanding and appreciating cultural differences and being able to live with different value systems in daily life, and reflecting on one's own value system. In this way the L&C courses would contribute to the achievement of one of the goals of the Liberal Arts educational philosophy of UCU, which is to educate world citizens.

3.2. From academic skill courses to intercultural skills courses

The task that the team of language instructors was given was to make the 'cultural component' of our language courses visible, that is: to define specific learning outcomes and to translate those outcomes into course content and assessment. The courses should include academic reflection on culture, but we were not provided with a clear and measurable definition of what was intended with culture. In collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning of the University Utrecht in the academic year 2010-2011 we started a pilot period of three years, in which we would design and test different course designs and activities, before we would agree on a model.

The intended learning outcomes for the cultural component

The starting point for the discussion on what our students should learn in the Language and Culture (L&C) courses is the UC educational philosophy. The official document sums up UC's cultural ideal:

> "UCU students bring different talents, styles and cultural backgrounds to the college. These differences are part of the rich learning environment UCU has to offer. This environment offers a unique place for students to learn to respect, communicate and live with people from all over the world. Living at UCU clearly stimulates this, allowing students to experience other cultures morning, noon and night. Also in the courses students are encouraged to look beyond their own cultural beliefs. UCU aims to create graduates who are world citizens and will contribute to society, wherever they work and live." (UCU), section 2.1'World citizenship'.

This means that our graduates should be able to "speak their languages; relate cultural differences to disciplinary knowledge; use the knowledge of cultures in explaining actual problems in society; understand and appreciate cultural differences and be able to live with different value systems in daily life, and reflecting on one's own value system". (UCU), "section 3, International and intercultural orientation". The international setting, the curriculum, the interdisciplinary approach, the group work and finally the interaction with students from many different backgrounds provide our students with many chances to arrive at the required level of intercultural competence. The document mentions no fewer than 11 types of skills that a UC graduate may be expected to possess, but nowhere does it mention how exactly s/he is supposed to learn cross-cultural or intercultural skills. This ideal, of course, would need to be worked out into measurable objectives: intended learning outcomes.

The Faculty of Education of Utrecht University started a project to support us in the process of defining what 'culture' we wanted to teach and how to do it. Together with the colleague that led the project, dr. Annemieke Meijer,[3] we agreed that what was needed was a focal point where the student experience is made explicit and reflected on, and is placed in an intellectual context. The intercultural experience that UCU actively organizes needed to be raised to a meta-level if it was to work to its full advantage. According to Jones & Brown (eds.):

> It is important to recognize that a cross-cultural capability agenda is not simply about *accommodating* differences in our student body. It is about the even more complex task of *challenging* all students and staff to be capable of recognizing, of making informed responses towards, and of living and working comfortably with the diversity they encounter now and in the future. Students who are not challenged to recognize and evaluate their own values, beliefs and behaviors and those of their discipline and its application are unlikely to be able to recognize or lay claim to world-wide horizons. (p. 204)

We decided it was exactly the Language and Culture courses that could provide the platform and the moment to organize this. As such, the L&C courses would be at the core of the UC experience.

3.3. Cultural and intercultural competence

According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) cultural competence consists of *affective*, *cognitive* and *behavioral* components. When it comes to educational design, however, *behavioral competence* is a highly problematic concept. It is the intended learning outcome that educators hope but can never be sure to reach, as it will only manifest itself in real life. For this reason, we decided to formulate the learning objectives of the L&C courses in terms of *cognitive* and *affective competence*.

Table 2: Description of the 5 basic objectives of L&C courses

A student who has fulfilled the L&C requirement

1. has improved his or her competence in the language s/he has been studying by at least one level (compared to entry); for a student who learns a new language s/he has fulfilled the L&C requirement if the exit level is at least intermediate mid (ACTFL standard)
2. is familiar with the most important contemporary characteristics of the culture s/he has been studying
3. has the intercultural communication skills needed for everyday contact with members of the culture s/he has been studying

4. is familiar with the main historical developments and issues that are needed to understand contemporary culture
5. has the tools needed for the ongoing reflection on intercultural contact and the further development of intercultural skills in general

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From intended learning outcomes (ILOs) to the content of the courses

For the pilot, a (grade) breakdown of 60% for the language acquisition and 40% for the cultural component was agreed. Successfully translating the intended learning outcomes into the content of our courses meant that several factors had to be taken into account. Questions that arose were, for example: Should we use the target language or English in the beginner level courses to reflect academically on culture; how to describe and 'quantify' the cultural ILOs for assessment purposes; should we assess knowledge or skills (what skills?), and finally, if we devote more class time to 'culture', will the level of the language proficiency that the students reach decrease and if so, is this acceptable?

4. The Italian Language Courses at UCU

4.1. Learning outcomes: my choices

When faced with the challenge of redesigning my own Italian courses I knew that most UCU students have a multicultural background and speak more than two languages. The question that I asked myself was if this meant that they are also able to reflect on intercultural experiences and encounters from an academic perspective.

In a document of the Council of Europe that was created to develop the intercultural dimension in language teaching, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey write:

> The 'Common European Framework of Reference' [...] introduces the 'Intercultural Dimension' into the aims of language teaching. Its essence is to help language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors. It is the hope that language learners who thus become 'intercultural speakers' will be successful not only in communicating information but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures. (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 7)

In this light I decided to focus on the aspect of reflecting on and enhancing intercultural awareness and intercultural competence. To achieve this I wanted to engage students in cultural projects and in (inter)personal (inter)cultural reflections.

4.2. Course design

My teaching philosophy is communicative and learner-centered. In my view this means that students should be stimulated to actively participate, not only in class activities, but also in the entire learning process by taking responsibility for their individual learning as well as that of the group. I make use of collaborative tasks that integrate different skills, and I believe in the instrument of peer consultation to enhance the learning experience.

Table 3 below shows some aspects of the course design of the courses ITA10 - Introduction to Italian Studies (in the left column) and ITA11 - Italian Language & Culture 1 (in the right column) for the academic year 2011-2012.

My focus on intercultural reflection does not show only in the choice of the materials and of the type of activities that I use, but also in the assessment instruments that I decided to use, as described below.

Table 3: Course design ITA10 and ITA11

Introduction to Italian Studies - UCHUMITA10		**Italian Language & Culture 1 - UCHUMITA11**	
Course materials			
Language acquisition	- Course book - Grammar book	**Language acquisition**	- Course book - Grammar book
(Inter)cultural reflection	- *La Bella Figura. An Insider's Guide to the Italian Mind* (by Beppe Severgnini) - Extra materials	**(Inter)cultural reflection**	- Online materials (through a **webquest**) - Extra materials
Cultural assignments (self-study, discussion in class)			
Personal Guide to Italy and Italians (cultural magazine)	Guided assignments (some freedom in topic choice)	**Cultural project of the history of eating habits in Italy**	- Readings as preparation for a group presentation - final essay
Cultural group project	Expansion of one discussed aspect (intercultural reflection)	**Web quest** about teenage culture in Italy	Different types of individual and collaborative assignments with a video production as final task
Assessment			
Language acquisition	- Grammar & Vocabulary tests (30%) - Writing Proficiency Test (holistic, 15%) - Oral Proficiency Interview (holistic, 20%)	**Language acquisition**	- Grammar & Vocabulary tests (30%) - Writing Proficiency Test (holistic, 15%) - Oral Proficiency Interview (holistic, 20%)
Culture	- Personal Guide (25%) - Cultural Group project (10 %)	**Culture**	- Project (25%) - Webquest about teenage culture in Italy (15%)

4.3. The beginner course: Introduction to Italian Studies

One of the key points of our educational philosophy is the concept of world citizenship:

> This environment offers a unique place for students to learn to respect, communicate and live with people from all over the world. [...] in the courses students are encouraged to look beyond their own cultural beliefs. UCU aims to create graduates who are world citizens and will contribute to society, wherever they work and live. (UCU, p. 4)

For the beginner course I decided that our starting point would be 'Italy today': analyzing current society and the issues it faces. As I described in the course manual, "We will explore in particular the image of Italian society as seen from an external and an internal point of view, focusing on topics like stereotypes, cultural differences both among Italians and between Italians and non-Italians, and on the contribution that Italy gave and still gives to Western culture." (Bruni, 2011, p. 3)

My aim is to train students in applying an intercultural perspective to their reflection; therefore it is necessary for students to familiarize themselves with the model of Intercultural Communication (ICC) of Michael Byram. According to him "the components of intercultural competence are knowledge, skills and attitudes, complemented by the values one holds because of one's belonging to a number of social groups. These values are part of one's social identities." (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 7)

- Intercultural attitudes (*Savoir être*)
- Knowledge (*Savoirs*)
- Skills of interpreting and relating (*Savoir comprendre*)
- Skills of discovering and interaction (*Savoir apprendre/faire*)
- Critical cultural awareness

I developed two types of activities. Firstly, we read and discussed the book *La bella figura. An insider's guide to the Italian* mind by Beppe Severgnini. Beppe Severgnini is a columnist for Italy's largest-circulation daily newspaper, *Corriere della Sera,* and covered Italy for *The Economist* from 1993 to 2003. According to the *New York Times*:

> Mr. Severgnini presents his guide as a tour that is partly geographical and partly conceptual. Over the course of 10 days, he travels from Milan to Tuscany to the far south: Sicily and Sardinia. But the places are merely excuses for little treatises on beaches, restaurants, cell phones, condominiums, gardens and offices, all sprinkled with clever observations and telling statistics. (Grimes, 2006)

For each chapter of the book I created guided reflection activities. The outcomes of those activities were presented in class, usually by small groups that discussed their individual reflections on a specific issue first, and presented an overview to the rest of the students.

Secondly, students were expected to take part in a cultural project by gathering materials on specific contemporary cultural topics outside the classroom, and build a personal 'Guide to Italy and Italians' (a sort of cultural magazine), while reflecting on their own expectations and cultural assumptions. They could choose from a great variety of cultural aspects: I selected some of the categories (domini) listed by Paolo E. Balboni in his book Parole comuni culture diverse (Balboni, 2003) in chapter 7.1: 'Uno strumento per l'osservazione culturale' and chapter 7.2: Uno strumento per l'osservazione interculturale'.

Both kinds of activities will be presented more in details in the following two sections.

Activities related to the book La bella figura

During the semester, students read and reflected on Severgnini's book. Severgnini presents his guide as a tour that is geographical (he visits thirty places from north to south in ten days) but at the same time conceptual:

> "Although *La Bella Figura* will take you to big cities and scenic regions, your real destinations are the places where Italians are at their best, worst, and most authentic: the chaos of the roads, the anarchy of the office, the theatrical spirit of the hypermarkets, and garrulous train journeys; the sensory reassurance of a church and the importance of the beach; the solitude of the soccer stadium, and the crowded Italian bedroom; the vertical fixations of the apartment building, and the horizontal democracy of the eat-in kitchen" (Scheda libro *La Bella Figura*).

The course activities related to this book included at least one research task on topics presented in the chapter, and some reflection questions. Students were free to select the topic to do research on. In the next class, students were divided into groups on the basis of the topic they selected, and together they prepared an overview of the topic and presented it to the class. In this way, students had to negotiate their ideas and findings. Furthermore each student was informed about the topics he or she did not select.

Table 4: Sample of an activity related to the book *La Bella Figura*

Attività culturale 1
'La bella figura': Friday (1-23)

Leggi il capitolo 1: *Friday* (pagine 1-23).

Rifletti:

- In how far does the information and analysis in this chapter confirm your idea and experience of Italy and in how far does it differ?
- What new facts and habits did you learn?
- What did strike you the most?

Ricerca (su Internet):

- find pictures, ads, commercials, videos, cartoons, texts that support or contradict in your opinion what told by the author.
- find out what 'Carabinieri' exactly are (add a picture) and what's their place in the Italian society.
- find out what Gannon exactly says about Italy (Severgnini quotes him on page 19). And does he describe your country as well in his book (see Google books)? How?
- If possible, add pictures, ads, commercials, videos, cartoons, texts that in your opinion support or contradict what told by the author.

Cultural magazine

In addition to the discussion of the book, students had to engage in a cultural project: they were asked to create a portfolio, a 'personal guide to Italy'. A portfolio would be an instrument

> "to assess ability to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange (*savoir être*), to step outside their taken for granted perspectives, and to act on a the basis of new perspectives (*savoir s'engager*). [...] If however, assessment is not in terms of tests and traditional examinations, but rather in terms of producing a record of learners' competences, then a portfolio approach is possible and in fact desirable." (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 23)

For this cultural magazine, students were free to choose topics from an extensive list. The topics were typical ones, chosen for the fact that they might cause intercultural misunderstanding. Students were guided in their reflection by the instruction they received. See table 7 for the categories students could reflect upon.

Students wrote their reflections in English until the mid-term break, which occurred after 7 weeks. After the break they were supposed to answer the reflection questions in Italian, while they could still present the topic in English. In my instruction I addressed the subject of intercultural competence and listed the skills, knowledge, attitude and critical awareness that individuals need to acquire to become 'intercultural speakers' (as outlined above).

Students were encouraged to collect materials of different kinds, so not only (online) articles, but also songs, images, videos and more; to make use of the great opportunities offered by social networks to get into contact and follow Italians, and to collect material both from non-Italian and Italian sources, so that they could compare differences and similarities in point of view or habit.

The reflection questions were the following:

- Why did I choose this material?
- What topic [of the list shown in table 7] is it related to?
- What does this tell us about Italy and Italians?
- Is this similar or different to my own cultural habits and values? How?
- Does this sustain my image of Italian society so far? If not, what could be the reason?
- How does this relate to what Beppe Severgnini tells about Italy, if applicable?
- How do I think about it? Write a personal comment.

Most of the students succeeded in writing short reflective reports in the target language in the second part of the course, conveying their intended message in an understandable way. During class discussions, they were able to express some basic ideas and feelings in the target language, but we switched to English when their language skills were inadequate to sustain a deeper level of discussion.

It was very interesting to see how students selected their topics. Sometimes they become curious after reading *La Bella Figura*, some other times they jumped into a topic that had struck them either on television or on the Internet, and at other times they had dealt with a topic in another course and wanted to investigate it further. Often the same topic was presented from different angles, or triggered very different expectations and reflections. The assignments were provided with feedback on the quality of reflection and if written in Italian also on the language. In class, students who worked on similar topics were grouped to present their reflections after each other. This stimulated not only class discussion, but it put also intercultural awareness in practice, as students had to acknowledge different point of views and feelings on the same issue.

To assess the cultural magazine the following aspects were taken into account: the variety and relevance of the collected material, the level of reflection, and the way in which the collected materials were connected with the student's own experience and with the course material and class discussions.

Table 5: List of categories for (inter)cultural reflection (not complete)

The cultural topics you can explore could include, among others:

1. **Social relations**
    a. Attitude towards a foreigner
    b. Relationship between younger and adults
    c. Attitude towards superiors
    d. Sentimental relation; courtship
    e. Homosexual relation
    f. Habit of offering drinks, cigarettes, etc.
    g. Ways to apologize, to make up for a mistake, etc.
2. **Home and family**
    a. Size of the family
    b. Roles in the family
    c. Relationship parents/children
    d. Age of independence of the children, age when children leave the parental house
    e. Typology of the house
    f. Sorts of houses (city/village/country/holiday house)
    g. Tradition and innovation in the house
3. **Social Organization**
    a. Transport
    b. Mass media
    c. Religion(s)

d. Criminality

To sum up: in this course, students are presented with a book (in English) that would be the starting point for reflection on Italian culture in comparison with the own culture and on individual (pre)assumptions about Italy. Guided assignments on the book would help students deepen the topics presented, reflect and engage in discussions. Furthermore, students are expected to reflect on chosen topics (from given categories of intercultural sensitive topics). This would give them the chance to connect the course with their (academic) interests, take responsibility for their own learning and therefore enhance their motivation.

Evaluation of the course

Although in general I was very happy with both the students' participation in class discussions and the progress they made in their language proficiency, there are of course issues that I would like to improve. One of the biggest challenges my team and I faced when we started discussing the new course design was our fear that having to use the English language for reading, discussion and reflection, in particular in the beginner level courses, would decrease the exposure to the target language, and therefore the chance for students to master the required proficiency exit level. This would mean, in the long run, that we would have to revise the exit level of the entire track. This would hit in particular students who take a specific language in preparation for an exchange program in countries such as Italy or Spain, where they would not be able to take courses in English. In my course design, I tried to balance the use of English and Italian by asking students to write their reflection in Italian after the mid-term break, and to use Italian as much as possible for class discussion. Still, many students found it quite difficult to discuss complex issues in Italian, and turned to English very often. In the official course evaluation, many students declared that they liked the cultural part and the discussion the most, but that at the same time their priority was to learn the language. In their perception, they learned less than expected.

A second problem I faced, because of my own design, was the heavy work load, both for the students and for me. The courses at UCU have two class sections of 1:45 hours for 14 weeks, and a weekly work load of ten hours. Students wrote in their evaluation that they spent most of the time preparing the cultural activities (portfolio entries and oral presentation) whereas those assignments, altogether, only counted for 10% of the final grade.

Reading and giving feedback to so many different cultural reflections was quite intensive for me as well. I had to keep track of the different topics to be able to organize a class discussion on a specific topic from different point of views. I also had to assess oral presentations and to read and grade final papers, all in the final two weeks.

4.4. The follow-up course: Italian Language & Culture 1

In the follow-up course the students explored two cultural topics more in depth: the history of eating habits and the (sub)cultures of teenagers in Italy. The reason for choosing the first topic is that Italian food and cuisine are one of the first aspects that people mention when they think of Italy. I wanted my students to get a historical perspective on what is perceived as national, while there is a huge amount of regional differentiation derived not only from geographical differences but also from historical reasons. As for the second topic, I wanted students to work on a topic they could easily connect with, as it is related to people of more of less the same age. Furthermore, it connects with some of the topics dealt with in our course book: clothes, fashion, and (Italian) style. In this way they would expand the vocabulary on these topics by researching authentic material, learning how Italian teenage express themselves and use their acquired skills to act like Italians, putting their knowledge into practice.

The first cultural project was centered on the book *Delizia. The Epic History of Italians and their food* by the British historian John Dickie.[4] Students read the introductory chapter in which the author challenges the common view on Italian cuisine. They were asked to write before and after the reading a reflection in Italian on a class blog that I created.[5] Before the reading they were expected to think about their image of the Italian cuisine and eating habits. After the reading they were asked to reflect on if and how their image has changed.

The second assignment was a collaborative one. Some of the other chapters of the book were divided among groups of students, who had to present their chapter to the class. As each chapter of the book contains more subchapters, each student was assigned one subchapter, but the responsibility of the final product would lie with the entire group. Each member of the group was also expected to evaluate the group work. The presentations were in Italian, and altogether covered the history of food from the Renaissance to contemporary society.

As their final assignment, students wrote an individual essay (in English): they had to pick an Italian painting or image in which food consumption or eating habits were portrayed, and to analyze the image not from an artistic point of view, but as a narrative, using the notions acquired so far.

For the second cultural project I created a webquest about the cultures of teenagers in Italy, with the title *Faccio tendenza* (which can be translated as 'I set the trend').

> A webquest is an assignment which asks students to use the World Wide Web to learn about and/or synthesize their knowledge a specific topic. A "true" webquest, as originally designed by Bernie Dodge and Tom March, requires synthesis of the new knowledge by accomplishing a "task," often to solve a hypothetical problem or address a real-world issue' (Webquest 101 – Putting Discovery into the Curriculum). [6]

Creating a webquest means defining the desired output (the final product), making a first selection of appropriate material on internet, and designing subtasks that make use of those materials and that lead the student to the completion of the final product. A webquest consists therefore of several steps. Each step can involve one or more tasks, and both individual and group work. Students had to engage with authentic material (blog posts, YouTube clips, posters and pictures put on the Internet by Italian teenagers, and materials that deal with the topic like for example news items and magazine articles. All the materials are in Italian, and in the case of the materials produced by Italian teenagers the language and the orthography often reflect slang (MSN and Internet). The webquest was connected to a reflection blog where students are expected to post reflections in Italian on what they were learning.

The aims of the webquest are:

- Review and expand vocabulary about clothes, style, hobby
- Discover on internet different teenage groups and describe them (analyze & understand)
    - Their style
    - Their slang and way of communicating
    - The competition among the groups
- Discover what group you could belong to (by means of a test)
- Act as a group member!

Types of tasks that students had to perform were creating vocabulary lists; writing an article to compare features and attitudes of the different groups and comparing those groups with teenage groups in the students' own countries and discovering which groups they could potentially belong to. The final product was a video presentation in Italian of one teenage group. Students had to work with peers and act as group members, which is: using the appropriate slang and visual features of the chosen group. The different tasks of the webquest were assessed as follows: individual and group work assignments: 60% (a rubric was provided), personal reflection on group work (10%), comments and reflections on the blog (30%).

I think there are several benefits of using a webquest. This education instrument is designed from the perspective of the learner, to trigger curiosity; for learning through the active construction of meaning, to enhance cooperative learning, to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation and finally to be exposed to meaningful and real (linguistic) materials. By focusing on learning the relevant vocabulary in advance and by engaging in tasks in the target language, such a webquest connects language acquisition with cultural literacy and intercultural reflection.

In this level 2 course students can further develop the intercultural skills that they have acquired in the beginner course. Those skills enable them to reflect on their own culture in comparison to the Italian culture; to be aware of their individual view on the target culture and of the process that creates such a view; to be open to challenge their point of view. Of course the choice to focus more in depth on only two aspects of the Italian culture can be risky, as some students may not be particularly interested in the chosen topics. However I believe that these two topics provide them with both a historical and a contemporary insight on the target culture, which are both learning outcomes of our Language and Culture courses.

5. Discussion

During the three years' pilot for integrating academic reflection on culture in the foreign language courses, teachers are experimenting with course designs and assessment instruments. While the experiences of the first two years are mostly positive, there are still two issues that require a further, in-depth discussion.

The first issue is related to questions such as: do we aim to assess (inter)cultural knowledge or (inter)cultural competence, and how can we perform such an assessment at the different levels?

The second issue is related to the question of how to effectively introduce culture and cultural reflection to beginner learners. To what extent do we want to make use of the English language? When and how do we introduce tasks in the target language? Furthermore, can we and do we want to strive for uniformity among the different languages both in terms of course design and of type of assessment?

To answer these question each Language and Culture instructor will have to evaluate their choices in detail during the pilot project, in order to find agreement on learning outcomes, course design and type of appropriate assessment.

6. Conclusion

The model presented in this paper is a first experiment to incorporate explicit intercultural education at the introductory and elementary level, in this case for Italian language courses in the setting of the bachelor program of University College Utrecht. The courses were designed for a pilot project. The aim of this project is to create Language & Culture courses where the student's intercultural experience is made explicit and reflected on, and is placed in an intellectual context.

The focus of the cultural component of the two courses described lies in the intercultural awareness and the activities are designed to enhance reflection on the student's own culture as well as on foreign cultures.

The biggest challenges I faced as the instructor of these courses was linked to the choice of using the English language to a great extent in the course Introduction to Italian Studies, because of the beginning proficiency level of the students. Students greatly appreciated the reflection on and discussion of themes from Italian society, but their priority was learning the language and they felt this goal was not always reached.

So far, the foreign language teachers would prefer not to adjust the exit levels of the different courses to the slower pace in the language acquisition process caused by the impact of the new explicit cultural component.

A second, more generic issue is the assessment of the cultural component: what instruments are the most suitable? The answer depends to a great extent on the intended learning outcomes, but at the same time the individual preference of the instructors should also be taken into account.

During the first two years of the pilot my colleagues of the Language & Culture department and I have been positive about the learning outcomes we defined and about how we managed to translate those outcomes in course content. Those best practices will be used to evaluate the pilot. This evaluation, together with an extensive discussion of the challenges presented in this section will have to lead to agreement among the instructors about the future of the Language and Culture program at UCU.

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1 The exit levels refer to the ACTFL Guidelines for Proficiency. These Guidelines, provided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, present the levels of proficiency as ranges, and describe what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired... They are an instrument for evaluation of functional language ability (A language user's ability to accomplish real world communicative tasks such as handling a simple social transaction or resolving a situation with a complication.). From: http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org , retrieved on June 7, 2012.

2 When UCU was founded, it was decided to adopt the ACTFL Guidelines for the various language skills because these guidelines are the result of a very well documented and researched curriculum and testing endeavor that was derived from and linked to the ILR, the Interagency Language Roundtable conference's level descriptors that offered rubrics for describing levels from zero to very well educated native speaker/writers/listener/reader proficiencies. Those descriptors were in use for all official business in the US and a point of reference for all language teaching in the US and beyond. The ACTFL Guidelines would thus help us in setting up a non-language specific set of level and course descriptions.

3 Dr. Meijer discussed the desired changes with the Head of the Humanities Department and the Director of Education and interviewed the foreign language instructors. She then wrote a discussion document called Language as a window to culture: Language & Culture courses at UC - a concept. This document has been extensively discussed by the instructor of the language courses. I use a large part of this document to present the background of our courses and the process we went through in designing the new Language and Culture courses.

4 John Dickie Delizia. The Epic History of Italians and their food, Hodder & Stoughton Ldt., London, 2007

5 Class Blog 'Campus Italia', see https://campusitalia.wordpress.com/corso/

6 Webquest Faccio tendenza!, see http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=106636

Studying the effects of non-nativeness in a business communication context
Experimental studies as input for an advanced level bachelor course

Frank van Meurs, Berna Hendriks, and Brigitte Planken

1. Background

Due to the increasing importance of English as a global language, the number of non-native speakers of English has expanded dramatically (Crystal, 2003). As a result, the relevance of interactions in English between non-native speakers, and between non-native and native speakers, has increased. This is also true for the specific domain of business communication. As a result of the continuing globalization of trade, more and more business organisations around the world have adopted English as a lingua franca (ELF) in communication with their internal and external stakeholders.

Many researchers have observed that English as a lingua franca in international business contexts is widespread (Charles, 2007; Garzone & Ilie, 2007; Louhiala-Salminen & Charles, 2006; Nickerson, 2005). However, research has also shown that using English as a lingua franca may be problematic for business professionals who are not native speakers of English (Chew, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005; Nickerson, 2000; Rogerson-Revell, 2007, 2008). When non-native speakers (NNS) communicate in English, their English is likely to deviate from the native speaker (NS) norm, i.e. the standard set by speakers belonging to the inner circle of World Englishes, such as British English and General American (Kachru, 1985, 1992). The question is to what extent these deviations have an effect on their audiences, whether these be native or non-native.

Language Expectancy Theory proposes that "[u]se of language that negatively violates societal expectations about appropriate persuasive communication behavior inhibits persuasive behavior and either results in no attitude change or changes in position opposite to that advocated by the communicator" (Burgoon & Burgoon, 2001, p. 86). Non-native speakers who deviate from the native speaker norm in their communicative behaviour could plausibly be seen as violating expectations of appropriate correctness, which could consequently diminish the persuasiveness of their communication. In communication studies, persuasiveness is commonly studied in terms of attitudes towards the message, attitudes towards the sender of the message, and behavioural intentions in response to the communicative goal of the message (see e.g. Hornikx & O'Keefe, 2009) .

Within the context of an academic department of business communication, any foreign language programme should sensitize its students to differences between nativeness and non-nativeness, and raise awareness of the potentially harmful effects of non-nativeness on (the persuasiveness of) their foreign language communications. In this paper, we will discuss how in our department of business communication studies (the Department of Communication and Information Sciences, Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands) we try to make students aware of such aspects of non-nativeness. In addition to incorporating information about (British English) native norms for grammar, pronunciation, and writing conventions in our language proficiency courses in the first two years of the bachelor programme, our curriculum also includes courses in the second and third year of the bachelor aimed at raising students' awareness of the effects of (their) non-nativeness. In these courses, students study research papers about different areas of non-nativeness research and then conduct their own small-scale experimental study in which they investigate the potential effects of one particular aspect of communication by non-native speakers. In this paper, we will discuss studies from the areas of non-nativeness research that our students investigate as part of one particular third-year bachelor course in our curriculum.

2. Areas of non-nativeness research in business communication

In the third-year bachelor course that will be the focus of this paper, studies from the following five areas of non-nativeness research are dealt with: non-native pronunciation, non-native writing errors, non-native politeness, non-native writing style, and non-native choice of textual and visual elements. Each of these will be presented in some detail below.

2.1. Non-native pronunciation

Students read Nejjari, Gerritsen, Van der Haagen, and Korzilius (2012) about the effects of Dutch-English pronunciation characteristics on native speakers of British English and in particular the effect of different gradations of non-native accent. In the study, 144 highly educated British professionals evaluated a telephone sales talk recorded by Dutch native speakers (all women) with a moderate and a light accent in English, and by native English speakers (all women). The degree of accentedness in the samples was determined prior to the experiment by a trained phonetician with extensive experience in teaching English pronunciation to Dutch students, and by 50 undergraduate Dutch students of English Language and Culture. Participants were asked to evaluate the comprehensibility of the samples, and to evaluate the different speakers in the sales talk with regard to personality characteristics such as friendliness and competence. The findings indicate that the native-speaker sample was considered more comprehensible than the Dutch-accented samples. More importantly, the native English speakers were evaluated as more competent than the Dutch-accented speakers of English. The moderately accented Dutch speakers of English were evaluated as less friendly than the slightly accented Dutch speakers and the native British speakers.

For students, the findings of this study illustrate the importance of getting rid of any strong traces of Dutch they might have in their English accents. In addition, it sensitizes them to the fact that this type of non-nativeness may not just impede their comprehensibility but may potentially create a bad personal impression, at least with native speakers of (British) English.

2.2. Non-native writing errors

Students read Van Meurs, Planken, and Maria (in preparation) about the effects of Dutch non-native writing errors on two groups of readers: native speakers of English and German non-native speakers of English. The study investigated the effect of non-native errors on readers in terms of attitude towards the text, author evaluation and behavioural intention. For the study, 21 native speakers of Dutch (with at least a bachelor degree) wrote a petition in English to make free downloading legal. Authentic errors from these petitions were then selected and included in a composite petition, the stimulus text for the experiment. Errors that were used in the stimulus text included tense errors, preposition errors (*convince for* instead of *convince of*), punctuation errors (the hyphen in *music-and film industry*; the full stop in *10.000*), vocabulary errors (as in *sites as YouTube*), and spelling errors (*benefittal* instead of *beneficial*; *aspect to* for *expect to*). Subsequently, two versions of the text were presented to 133 participants in a 2 (errors vs. no errors) by 2 (native vs. non-native judges) between-subject experimental design. Using seven-point Likert scales and semantic differentials, the two groups of judges were asked to evaluate the text (attractiveness and comprehensibility) and the author (trustworthiness, friendliness and competence), and to indicate their intention to sign the petition. It was found that text version (with or without errors) and participants' mother tongue (English or German) had no effect on attitude towards the text, author evaluation or behavioural intention.

This paper shows students that, contrary to what may be expected on the basis of language expectancy theory, language errors may not necessarily have a negative impact. However, one of the reasons for this may be that the errors selected did not interfere with comprehension. Another reason for the lack of negative impact of the errors is that the text as a whole may have been perceived as reasonably clear and attractive, despite the errors. This means it is premature to conclude that errors generally have no negative effect on readers' perceptions.

2.3. Non-native politeness

Students read Hendriks (2010) about the effects of the non-native use of politeness strategies in English. This study investigated the effect of the lack of syntactic modification (e.g., past tense modals) and lexical modification (e.g., downgraders such as *possibly*) in English e-mail requests written by Dutch learners. In two online experiments, 268 highly educated native speakers of English, aged between 21 and 60, who were recruited via message boards online, were asked to evaluate the comprehensibility and reasonableness of the e-mail requests as well as personality dimensions of the sender of the e-mail (power and agreeableness). The findings indicate that underuse of request modification in e-mails only had a negative effect (in only one of the two experiments) on the evaluation of the agreeableness of the sender of the e-mail.

This study shows students that deviation from native speaker politeness norms in writing may have limited detrimental effect on how a non-native writer is evaluated as a person, but would not seem to affect comprehensibility of the email and reasonableness of the request.

2.4. Non-native writing style

Students read Hendriks, van Meurs, Korzilius, le Pair, and le Blanc-Damen (2012) about the effects of non-native use of style conventions. The study investigated whether adjusting (or not) to the preferred style in a country in business newsletters influences the persuasiveness of these newsletters. Theories about cross-cultural differences in communication styles (such as Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988) claim that preferences for particular communication styles can be linked to cultural value orientations. The implication of this is that members of different cultures have different preferences in communication styles. On the basis of British scores on Hofstede's value dimensions (2001), Hendriks et al. expected British individuals to have a preference for an elaborate writing style (long sentences, adverbs of intensity, adjectives, and dependent clauses) and an instrumental (i.e. sender-oriented) writing style. In contrast, on the basis of Dutch scores on Hofstede's dimensions, Dutch individuals were expected to prefer a succinct writing style (relatively shorter and elliptical sentences, fewer adverbs of intensity, fewer adjectives and no dependent clauses) and an affective (i.e. receiver-oriented) writing style. In two experiments, 344 business-to-business customers of a company in the Netherlands and Great Britain evaluated differently styled versions of a newsletter with respect to comprehensibility, attractiveness, and intention to order the goods promoted in the newsletter. The findings indicated that there were only very few differences between the Dutch and British participants in their preferences for communication styles: as expected, the British participants were more inclined to order goods after reading the (British-style) instrumental newsletter than the Dutch participants. Also, as expected, the Dutch participants thought the (Dutch-style) succinct letter was more attractive than did the British participants.

This study draws students' attention to the fact that there is more to writing according to target language native norms than the accuracy of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation, and that, theoretically, deviations at the stylistic level might also affect the reception of messages, although this was only shown to be the case to a very limited extent in the study.

2.5. Non-native choice of textual and visual elements

Students read De Groot, Korzilius, Gerritsen, and Nickerson (2011) about non-native deviations from native-speaker preferences for textual elements and visual elements in annual reports. This study specifically compared the effectiveness of texts and photos in the management statements of annual reports (i.e. written introductory statements by the CEO at the beginning of annual reports) composed according to what is typically found in annual reports written in English by Dutch companies and what is typically found in UK annual reports. The study was based on a corpus analysis (De Groot, Korzilius, Nickerson, & Gerritsen, 2006) which revealed that UK annual reports typically contain different textual elements (e.g., use of headings and information about shifts in composition of the company's board) and visual elements (e.g., photographs with individuals looking away from camera). In the experiment, different versions of the texts were evaluated by 35 British financial analysts. The typically British communication features yielded more positive attitudes than the features that are typical of the Dutch-based statements with regard to corporate reputation and text comprehensibility. When explicitly asked to choose between the two text versions, the British analysts also showed a greater preference for the British-based statement than for the Dutch-based statement. Similarly, the British analysts preferred British-style photographs of managers looking away from the camera to Dutch-style photographs of managers looking into the camera.

This study alerts students to the fact that choices in textual and visual elements may vary across countries and that non-native writers may need to adjust their texts to textual and visual preferences in the target country.

After students have read and discussed the articles about aspects of non-nativeness in business communication, they carry out their own experimental studies on one of the aspects of non-nativeness discussed. Usually, these constitute small-scale variations on or replications of the studies dealt with in the course. In addition to raising students' awareness of the effects of non-nativeness, the purpose of these research projects is to familiarise students with the different stages in the research process: reviewing the literature, formulating a research question, developing materials and instrumentation, collecting data, analysing data using appropriate statistical tests and interpreting statistical test results, linking findings to the literature and theoretical framework, reflecting on the limitations of the experimental study, and making suggestions for further research. Students are required to report on their study in an English academic paper in which they apply style and content conventions for experimental papers written in English (as discussed in e.g. Weissberg & Buker, 1990). The articles they have read not only provide them with relevant topics, but also with literature they can build on, and with methodologies and statistical tests they can apply in their own studies.

3. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of an increase in the number of non-native users of English, research into aspects of non-nativeness has become highly relevant. For students to become successful communicators in a foreign language (in this case English), they first need to be aware of potentially harmful effects that their non-nativeness might have on the (non)native speaker recipient of their messages. In this paper, we have illustrated a way of doing this. A follow-up to such an awareness-raising course would be to give students exercises aimed at improving their language proficiency in areas that research has shown to be problematic in terms of communicative effectiveness, such as strong Dutch pronunciation. However, since we have not compared groups who have and have not taken part in the course with regard to their foreign language proficiency, we cannot say whether the research they do in the course actually does contribute to their language proficiency.

A limitation of most of the studies dealt with in the course is that they focus on *native speaker* responses to non-native English, by using native speaker judges. In the literature on English as a Lingua Franca, it has often been pointed out that global communication in English takes place more and more between non-native speakers, as a result of increased internationalization in various domains of society, including business and education (e.g. Charles, 2007; Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009; Jenkins, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). In order to make sure that studies on the impact on audiences of aspects of non-nativeness (and ELF) remain relevant to real life, it is therefore essential that such research investigates how non-native aspects of speech and writing affect not only native speakers' attitudes, but particularly fellow non-native speakers' attitudes. Findings from such studies can provide directly relevant insights on international communication for our students, whose future international careers (as e.g. trainers, business professionals or communication consultants) are perhaps more likely nowadays to involve work - and communication - with fellow non-native speakers, than with native speakers of English. It may even be that some non-native features are in fact received more positively than features of English. For instance, a non-native accent may be clearer to fellow non-natives - and even to natives - than a strong regional native English accent. Another limitation of most of the studies dealt with in the course is that the native judges were mainly from only one of the inner circle countries, i.e. Great Britain. Future studies should also focus on responses to non-native English by native speakers other than British speakers.

The research-based course described here not only aims to make students more sensitive to the possible effects of non-nativeness that are relevant to their future communicative needs and practices. In addition, the course also aims to enhance students' language awareness by having them develop experimental materials with clearly native and non-native features for their own research projects, for instance a text with and without grammatical errors, or a recording with and without features of accented speech. Furthermore, the English academic paper students are required to write about their research project provides them with further training in English academic writing skills and conventions. In this way, the course also serves as preparation for their BA and MA theses; it introduces them to potential research themes they can explore in their theses; it gives them a grounding in experimental research methods, and it provides them with knowledge of and practice in academic register, style and conventions.

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Met FAM (Freiburg-Amsterdam-Model) intercultureel leren in een academische context

Britta Bendieck & Annelies De Jonghe

Het Bologna-beleid streeft naar de opbouw van een concurrentieel attractieve en dynamische hogeschool- en onderzoeksruimte in Europa. De hierdoor beoogde mobiliteit verlangt van de studenten dat ze behalve meertalig ook intercultureel competent worden (Gutjahr 2006: 112). Interculturele competentie wordt intussen gezien als één van de kerncompetenties in het (academische) vreemdetalenonderwijs, nu studenten steeds meer internationale contacten via internet of via uitwisselingsprogramma´s verwerven (Byram/Fleming: 1998). In dit artikel schetsen we aan de hand van het Freiburg-Amsterdam-Model (FAM) welke opties mogelijk zijn om binnen het kader van de academische taalverwerving interculturele competentie te verwerven.

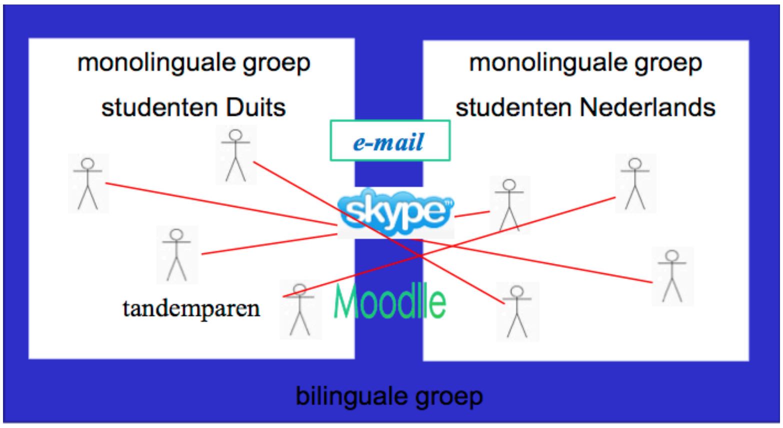
1. Wat is het concept achter FAM?

FAM ontstond in 2005 naar aanleiding van het project *Internationalisation-at-home* aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA) in samenwerking met het toenmalige lectoraat Nederlands aan de Universiteit van Freiburg in Duitsland. De opzet was een bilinguale taalcursus met als algemene doelstellingen de verbetering van productieve taalvaardigheden, academische vaardigheden en interculturele competentie. Sinds 2009 is FAM vast onderdeel van het curriculum binnen het vak Duitse Taal en Cultuur aan de UvA. Na een eerste piloteringsfase traden het lectoraat Nederlands van de Ruhr-Universität Bochum en de Duitse afdeling vertalers en tolken van de Artesis-Hogeschool in Antwerpen toe tot het interuniversitaire samenwerkingsverband. Die realisatie was mogelijk door de ondersteuning van de Taalunie. En dankzij de bemiddeling van het Goethe-Institut in Bangkok werd FAM ook succesvol buiten de Europese hogeschoolruimte geïmplementeerd in het curriculum van de afdeling Duitse Taal aan de Thammasat-Universiteit in Bangkok en in het curriculum van de studierichting Thais aan het Afrika-Azië-Instituut van de Universiteit Hamburg.

> "FAM is een raderwerk van tandemleren met behulp van ICT en contactonderwijs, waarbij academische leerdoelstellingen, bilinguale groepsdynamische processen en de leerautonomie van elke student apart bijzondere aandacht verdienen." (Bendieck/de Jonghe 2009: 120)

Een ruim aanbod aan diverse leermethodes, communicatieve interactie en leeractiviteiten zet de studenten aan tot veelvuldige authentieke taalhandelingen. In zowel virtuele als reële communicatieve situaties reflecteren ze daarbij op hun intercultureel handelen en kunnen ze hun interculturele competentie verruimen.

Het FAM-model stoelt op de leertheorie van het sociaalconstructivisme: de student reflecteert binnen een rijke leeromgeving zoveel mogelijk autonoom, actief en coöperatief op het eigen leerproces. Het didactische scenario is opgebouwd volgens de basisprincipes van blended-learning (Kranz / Lüking 2005: 1). waarbij online-leerfases afgewisseld worden met contactonderwijs.



Afbeelding 1: FAM

In de praktijk leren twee monolinguale groepen studenten van twee verschillende universiteiten telkens de moedertaal van de andere groep en worden beide groepen tot een gemeenschappelijke bilinguale groep aan elkaar gekoppeld. Binnen elke monolinguale groep worden tandemgroepjes gevormd die gedurende de hele cursus tijdens één volledig semester nauw met elkaar samenwerken (zie afbeelding 1). Buiten de intensieve samenwerking in de individuele tandemgroepjes om, nemen de studenten in hun eigen monolinguale groep deel aan lesmodules samen met de docent. Tijdens de overkoepelende bilinguale leerfase, waaraan de twee monolinguale groepen gezamenlijk deelnemen, kunnen de studenten bijvoorbeeld meewerken aan leeractiviteiten zoals groepsdiscussies op het leerplatform, tijdens een videoconferentie of tijdens een gemeenschappelijke excursie.

Het tandemleren zelf kent al een lange traditie in internationale uitwisselingsprogramma´s op academisch niveau[1]. FAM is gebaseerd op het concept van Brammerts:

> "Sprachenlernen im Tandem ist Lernen durch authentische Kommunikation mit einem *native speaker*, der dem Partner als Modell dienen, ihn korrigieren und ihn bei eigenen Ausdrucksversuchen unterstützen kann. Da beide Partner zumindest schon Grundkenntnisse im Bereich von Sprache und Kultur des Anderen haben, haben sie mehr Möglichkeiten, sich gegenseitig zu helfen, etwa durch Erklärungen in der Fremdsprache oder durch Vergleiche. Da Lernen im Tandem immer Kommunikation zwischen Angehörigen verschiedener Sprachgemeinschaften und Kulturen ist, ermöglicht es auch interkulturelles Lernen." (Brammerts 1996: 2)[2]

FAM ziet daarbij het interculturele leren niet als een positief neveneffect. Veel meer legt FAM het interculturele leren vast als een gelijkwaardig leerdoel met volgende aandachtspunten:

- ontwikkelen van interculturele sensitiviteit;

- theoretisch inzicht verkrijgen in eigen cultuur en de cultuur van de ander;
- herkennen dat cultuur dynamisch is.

Om dat te bereiken, werken de studenten in afzonderlijke tandemgroepjes of in bilinguale groepstandems en kunnen ze samen met de docent in de monolinguale groep hun interculturele competentie en hun taalvaardigheden verder uitdiepen. Vaak zijn er juist tijdens de tandemfasen vragen over interculturele, grammaticale of lexicale vragen waarop de tandempartner op dat moment nog geen afdoend antwoord kan geven. Hiervoor zijn juist de momenten in de monolinguale groep van groot belang. De tandempartners ondersteunen elkaar in hun leerproces, maar de docent is verantwoordelijk voor een goede vakkundige en didactische begeleiding. Er duiken nogal eens cultuurwetenschappelijke onderwerpen op of interculturele conflicten die het beste direct met de docent kunnen worden besproken. Ook maakt de docent gebruik van de monolinguale fasen om bilinguale ontmoetingen, zoals debatten over actuele onderwerpen via videoconferentie of in groepsdiscussies op het leerplatform, voor te bereiden.

De moderne communicatie- en informatietechnologie maakt grensoverschrijdende interactie mogelijk zonder fysieke mobiliteit waardoor het autonome leren nog in ruime mate kan worden versterkt.

Afbeelding 2 laat zien welke informatiemiddelen in de verschillende fasen van de leeractiviteiten worden toegepast.

Afbeelding 2: didactisch scenario FAM

	Leeractiviteiten	**ICT-gebruik**
I	partner zoeken voor individuele tandems	leerplatform ‚Moodle‘,Skype‘
II	taalopdrachten uitvoeren binnen taalverwervingsmodules onderwerp vastleggen voor een intercultureel onderzoek met tandempartner	Moodle , skypen , e-mail
III	intercultureel onderzoek uitvoeren bilinguale presentatie voorbereiden schriftelijke taalproductie binnen taalverwervingsmodules	Moodle, skypen, e-mail, wiki, videoconferencing
IV	presentatie van het intercultureel onderzoek	Moodle, skypen, videoconferencing

2. Cultuur en interculturaliteit als proces

Zoals hierboven aangetoond gaat taalverwerving in het model FAM altijd gepaard met het interculturele leren. Vanuit die optiek is het ontwikkelen van interculturele vaardigheden net zo belangrijk als het competentiegericht verbeteren van taalvaardigheden. FAM gaat uit van een processueel cultuurbegrip.

„Da in der globalisierten Welt geographische und kulturelle Räume nicht mehr zwangläufig zusammenfallen, wird auch ein territoriales Verständnis von Kultur zunehmend aufgekündigt, auch wenn die traditionelle Verknüpfung von Nation und Kultur weitgehend präsent bleibt. Zunehmend werden statt Nationen aber auch andere Einheiten als Identifikationsangebot präferiert, [...]." (Gutjahr 2006: 138)[3]

Opvattingen over 'Duitse' en 'Nederlandse' cultuur worden tegenwoordig mede bepaald door categorieën als jeugd- en stadscultuur, ondernemingscultuur, wooncultuur, muziekcultuur en eetcultuur. Vanuit een 'nationale' hoek is dat allemaal moeilijk onder één noemer te brengen. Natuurlijk manifesteren zich binnen deze cultuurvormen nog nationale trekjes, maar die worden tegenwoordig anders geclassificeerd of in andere coderingssystemen geplaatst (Werner 2012:11). Dankzij het uitermate dichte netwerk en de vervlechting van verschillende culturen zijn er pluriforme culturele identiteiten ontstaan die het onderscheid tussen eigenheid en vreemdheid en daarmee de voorstelling van autonome culturele systemen ter discussie stellen (Lüsebrink 2008:17). Volgens Löffelholz (2002:191) zijn vier factoren voor een modern cultuurbegrip van betekenis:

„(1) Kultur entsteht durch Kommunikation, also in einem sozialen Prozess. (2) Kultur gerinnt in Form sozialer Standardisierungen und kognitiver Schemata. (3) Kultur stabilisiert Orientierungen, führt also zur Ausbildung zeitlich relativ überdauernder Interpretations- und Verhaltensmuster. (4) Kultur bleibt dennoch ein dynamischer Prozess, ist also keine statische Gegebenheit, sondern zeitabhängig, generierbar und wandelbar."[4]

Wat voor rol speelt dit cultuurbegrip in FAM? Geen lesjes over hoe een andere cultuur moet worden opgevat, maar door interactie met de tandempartner erachter komen dat cultuur pas door contact met andere culturen ontstaat. Daarbij wordt cultuur dus opgevat als een rijk geschakeerd betekenisveld. Het gaat er niet om zogezegd duidelijk omlijnde culturen van elkaar te onderscheiden, wat eigenlijk ook een contradictie zou zijn ten opzichte van de vooropgestelde procesdynamiek. Cultuur en interculturaliteit moeten volgens Gutjahr (2006:138) en Löffelholz (2002:191) veeleer worden opgevat als een proces. In dat proces ontstaat tijdens de interactie een soort intermediair veld met nieuwe inzichten. Op basis daarvan kunnen wederzijdse verschillen worden waargenomen en andere identificatiemogelijkheden opduiken.

3. Methodiek

Intercultureel leren bij FAM is in de eerste plaats het van elkaar leren in een persoonlijke interactie tussen de studenten uit twee verschillende monolinguale groepen. Interculturaliteit onstaat door de wederzijdse bewustmaking van waarnemingsprocessen waarbij beeldvorming over bepaalde culturen en identiteiten een open proces blijft. Methodisch staat de autonome leerervaring centraal ten opzichte van de klassieke kennisoverdracht.

Er wordt een onderwijssetting opgezet volgens het drie-fasen-model *Awareness – Knowledge – Behaviour* (Bendieck / Denzel 2003: 8) zoals dat bij veel interculturele trainingen gebruikelijk is. Aan de grondslag van dit model en dus van alle taakomschrijvingen binnen FAM liggen affectieve, cognitieve en gedragsbepalende leerdoelen.

De eerste fase – *Awareness* – gaat terug op de affectieve dimensie waarin het *inleven in* en *het sensibiliseren voor* de nodige aandacht krijgen Culturele vanzelfsprekendheden worden tijdens interculturele tandemsessies in twijfel getrokken, want door de contrastervaring wordt het ogenschijnlijk vanzelfsprekende van de eigen cultuur expliciet. Door veelvuldige waarnemingsoefeningen tijdens het samenwerkend leren krijgen de studenten gaandeweg inzicht in de randvoorwaarden voor de interculturele waarneming en bewustwording.

In de tweede fase – *Knowledge* – komt de kennisoverdracht van algemene culturele waarden en specifieke culturele bijzonderheden aan bod. Zonder deze cognitieve dimensie is er geen echt inzicht in de andere cultuur mogelijk en kan het bewustwordingsproces ook niet in gang worden gezet. Tijdens de derde en laatste fase – *Behaviour* – kan de opgedane kennis worden toegepast in face-to-face- of online-ontmoetingen.

Hieronder worden twee voorbeelden van leeractiviteiten binnen FAM geschetst, waarbij 1) een voorbeeld is van fase 1 (*Awareness*) en 2) een voorbeeld is van de fasen 2 (*Knowledge*) en 3 (*Behaviour*).

Voorbeeld 1: oefening i.v.m. taalbeïnvloeding

Bij deze oefening krijgen de studenten uit beide monolinguale groepen begrippen uit de eigen en de vreemde sociaalhistorische context voorgeschoteld, waarbij ze telkens binnen één minuut tijd zoveel mogelijk associaties moeten opschrijven. (Bendieck/Denzel et al. 2003:43) In het klassikale gesprek achteraf worden de associaties opgetekend en in groepen ingedeeld. Alles wat vaker wordt vermeld, wordt extra gemarkeerd. Dan volgt de tweede stap tijdens de online-tandemfase waarbij alle tandemparen contact opnemen met elkaar via de internettelefoon Skype en de resultaten van het associatie-onderzoek in de eigen monolinguale groep aan elkaar voorleggen. Deze oefening maakt duidelijk hoe collectieve en individuele beeldvorming cultuurverschillen beïnvloeden. Bij het begrip *koning* gaan Nederlandse studenten vooral associëren rond de parlementaire monarchie en het Nederlandse koningshuis terwijl de Duitse studenten het begrip *koning* verbinden met sprookjes en de romantiek. De overkoepelende leerdoelstelling bij dergelijke oefeningen bestaat uit het herkennen van de socio-culturele beïnvloeding van de individuele waarneming. Bovendien worden de studenten gevoelig gemaakt voor het feit dat woordassociaties ook hoogstpersoonlijk door de individuele vorming (in tegenstelling tot de collectieve vorming) kunnen zijn en historische processen weerspiegelen - dus dynamisch zijn – en tenslotte dat elk betekenisveld beoordelingen inhoudt. Het inzicht in de culturaliteit van communicatieve handelingen gebeurt op het affectieve vlak en stimuleert behalve het cultuur- en taalbewustzijn ook de eigen emotionele kijk op de thematiek.

Om het autonome en coöperatieve leren te bevorderen, worden communicatieve handelingen geplaatst in een ruimere onderwijsopzet: de individuele tandemgroepjes krijgen de opdracht om samen een intercultureel onderzoekje uit te voeren. Deze aanpak zorgt ervoor dat de interactie zo authentiek mogelijk blijft, wat in klassikaal en traditioneel vreemdetalenonderwijs nauwelijks mogelijk is.

Het empirische onderzoek gaat door in de tweede en de derde fase van het zogenaamde drie-fasen-model.

Voorbeeld 2: Onderzoek naar een intercultureel onderwerp

Het gemeenschappelijke interculturele en empirische onderzoek zet de studenten ertoe aan om elkaar tijdens het leerproces te ondersteunen, met elkaar en ook van elkaar te leren en niet alleen de verantwoordelijkheid voor het eigen leren, maar ook voor dat van de tandempartner te dragen. De tandempartners overleggen samen welk onderwerp ze kiezen voor een empirisch onderzoek en kunnen gedurende de gehele cursus eraan werken. Aan het eind presenteren ze in twee talen de resultaten van hun onderzoek voor de bilinguale groep of in de vreemde taal voor hun eigen monolinguale groep. De kwalitatief hoogstaande presentaties laten zien dat deze vorm van samenwerkend en intercultureel leren de studenten erg motiveert en tot goede leerresultaten leidt.

4. Hoe studenten in competentiegericht taalonderwijs beoordelen?

Dat is geen gemakkelijke en eenduidig te beantwoorden vraag. Er moet daarbij een onderscheid worden gemaakt tussen evalueren (met een cijfer als eindbeoordeling) en reflecteren op eigen taalhandelingen en interculturele competentie en tussen leerprestatie en leerproces. Voor FAM werd een stappenplan voor effect- en toetsmeting opgesteld om de evaluatie en de reflectie van leerprocessen en leerprestaties zo transparant mogelijk te maken. Belangrijk uitgangspunt is naast de beoordeling (evaluatie) door de docent ook de zelfbeoordeling (reflectie) van de student. Sinds de invoering van het ERK (Europees Referentiekader) bekleedt de zelfbeoordeling een belangrijke positie in het vreemdetalenonderwijs.

Om bijvoorbeeld een beter overzicht te krijgen van het leerproces van de studenten werd voor de docenten een mini-databank opgesteld met gegevens van 40 studenten op basis van individuele taalopnames (mp3 of video) van zogenaamde instroom- en uitstroomgesprekken en van feedbackformulieren. De instroomgesprekken vonden plaats vóór het begin van de cursus en de uitstroomgesprekken na de culturele presentaties aan het einde van de cursus. Telkens moesten twee studenten uit één monolinguale groep voor de anderstalige docent een drietal communicatieve taaltaken in de vreemde taal uitvoeren die qua inhoud en vorm zowel in de instroom- als in de uitstroomgesprekken identiek waren (bijvoorbeeld: elkaar of de tandempartner voorstellen, een foto beschrijven, een programma voor een excursie opstellen of elkaar feedback geven over de cursus en het eigen leerrendement). Tijdens de interactie tussen de studenten bleef de docent zoveel mogelijk op de achtergrond als observator van het gesprek. In de anonieme feedbackformulieren beoordeelden de studenten de cursus, de leeractiviteiten, de gebruikte leermiddelen en hun leerrendement.

Gevorderde taalstudenten beoordelen hun eigen leerrendement meestal erg kritisch. Ze reflecteren steeds meer op hun eigen taalgebruik en stellen vaak nogal sceptisch vast dat taalleren niet zo vanzelf gaat. Toch laat de cijferbeoordeling uit de feedbackformulieren zien dat de meerderheid van de studenten met het eigen leerrendement over het algemeen tevreden is. Op een schaal van 1 (ontevreden) tot 5 (heel tevreden) kruiste slechts één student5 aan dat hij/zij ontevreden was. Sommige studenten noteerden in een schriftelijk commentaar dat ze meer leerrendement hadden verwacht, maar te weinig tijd hadden geïnvesteerd. Ze beseften dat het enorme taalbad en rijke taalaanbod pas echt vruchten afwerpen als ze de verantwoordelijkheid voor het eigen leerproces ook zelf dragen. Natuurlijk helpt hierbij ook de druk van de tandempartner die steun zoekt bij het oplossen van taaltaken en het uitvoeren van het intercultureel onderzoek.

Tijdens de opnames kregen de studenten voor de beoordeling van hun leerrendement een aantal beoordelingscriteria aangereikt zoals vlotheid in spreken, beter verstaan, uitbreiding woordenschat, uitdrukkingen omgangstaal, verruiming interculturele kennis en competentie. Na een luister- en inhoudsanalyse van de gesprekken blijkt dat alle studenten meer dan tevreden waren over de vooruitgang in spreek- en gespreksvaardigheid en ook meer begrip hadden gekregen voor de culturele achtergrond van de tandempartner. De gesprekken leidden ertoe dat de studenten heel bewust en nauwkeurig over hun vooruitgang gingen nadenken. Vaak merkten ze op dat ze ook een beter inzicht in de eigen culturele achtergrond hadden gekregen door interessante opmerkingen en vragen van de tandempartner. Bovendien kregen de studenten de rol van bemiddelaar toebedeeld bij semantische en lexicale vragen door de tandempartner. Meestal leidden dergelijke vragen tot een intensieve discussie over de socio-culturele achtergrond van woordbetekenissen. Het valt erg op hoe de meeste studenten in het instroomgesprek zich nogal onzeker gedragen in de interactie met hun gesprekspartner. Ze vragen de docent vaak naar een vertaling. In de uitstroomgesprekken is die houding radicaal veranderd. De studenten treden veel zelfverzekerder op en zijn de aanwezigheid van de docent blijkbaar helemaal vergeten. Ze klampen zich niet meer vast aan vertaalwoorden, maar praten vrijuit over alle mogelijke onderwerpen uit de eigen en de vreemde cultuur.

5. Balans

FAM levert een bijdrage tot academische mobiliteit zoals die in het kader van een te ontwikkelen Europese universitaire gemeenschap wordt geëist. Door het samenspel van *Blendend Learning*, bilinguale groepsdynamische processen - zonder de individuele leerautonomie uit het oog te verliezen – en van het samenwerkend leren vanuit zo authentiek mogelijke sociale handelingen, kan intercultureel handelen worden gereflecteerd en de interculturele competentie steviger worden. FAM nodigt de studenten uit hun steentje bij te dragen tot deze Europese hogeschoolruimte door ze als transnationale bemiddelaars te laten optreden. Voor hen is immers de omgang met interculturele variatie en verschillen vanzelfsprekend geworden.

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1 Een van de belangrijkste impulsen ging uit van het Europese ODL-project (Open Door Learning: Telematics for Autonomous and Intercultural Tandem Learning) tussen 1996 en 1999 waaraan twaalf Europese universiteiten deel namen onder de leiding van de Ruhr Universität Bochum/Duitsland.

2 Taalleren in tandems is leren door middel van authentieke communicatie met een native speaker die voor de tandempartner het goede voorbeeld is, kan corrigeren en bij mondelinge en schriftelijke taalproductie kan ondersteunen. Omdat de partners allebei op zijn minst over een basiskennis beschikken op het gebied van de taal en de cultuur van de tandempartner, hebben ze meer mogelijkheden om elkaar te helpen door uitleg in de vreemde taal of door vergelijkingen te geven. Omdat het leren in tandems altijd communicatie tussen leden van verschillende taalgemeenschappen en culturen betekent, maakt het ook intercultureel leren mogelijk. (AdJ)

3 Omdat in een globale wereld geografische en culturele gebieden niet meer automatisch samenvallen, wordt ook een territoriaal begrip van cultuur steeds meer overboord gegooid, ook al blijft de tradtionele verbinding van natie en cultuur over het algemeen actueel. In toenemende mate wordt er in plaats van aan naties ook aan andere entiteiten als identificatiemogelijkheid de voorkeur gegeven, [....]. (AdJ)

4 (1) Cultuur ontstaat door communicatie, dus in een sociaal proces. (2) Cultuur loopt spaak op sociale standaardiseringen en cognitieve schemata. (3) Cultuur stabiliseert oriëntatiepunten, leidt dus tot de vorming van tijdelijk relatief gangbare interpretatie- en gedragspatronen. (4) Cultuur blijft desondanks een dynamisch proces, is dus geen statisch gegeven, maar wel tijdsgevoelig, in ontwikkeling en veranderlijk. (AdJ)

5 van 48 studenten in totaal.

TaalVaardig aan de STart
Gerichte ondersteuning van academische taalvaardigheid aan de KU Leuven

Lieve De Wachter & Jordi Heeren

1. Inleiding

De democratisering en flexibilisering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen is al geruime tijd aan de gang en wil kansen bieden aan groepen die ondervertegenwoordigd zijn in het hoger onderwijs. Dat resulteert in een toename van het aantal eerstejaarsstudenten en ook een toename van de diversiteit in de studentenpopulatie. Het gevolg daarvan is onder meer dat niet alle studenten met de verwachte bagage naar de universiteit komen waardoor de natuurlijke kloof tussen secundair en hoger onderwijs soms moeilijk te overbruggen is. Een van de elementen die van belang zijn bij het overbruggen van die kloof is de taalvaardigheid van de student. Taalzwakkere studenten hebben moeite met de cognitief veeleisende (instructie)taal in het hoger onderwijs: "hun leerprobleem is ook een taalprobleem of is gedeeltelijk een gevolg daarvan" (Peters en Van Houtven 2010, 16). Die jongeren hebben dan minder slaagkansen omdat ze in het hoger onderwijs tegen een taalbarrière stoten. In de literatuur wordt taalvaardigheid namelijk gezien als een eerder zwakke, maar significante factor voor studiesucces (McNamara 1996 21-22 en Van Dyk 2010, 280).

Omwille van deze problematiek gaan er de laatste jaren steeds meer stemmen op om de taalvaardigheid van studenten al bij het begin van hun hoger onderwijscarrière te toetsen. Zo heeft de Vrije Universiteit (VU) van Amsterdam bijvoorbeeld ingezet op een taalvaardigheidstoets met vooral elementgerichte vragen (Van Beersum & Van Stralen 2010). Aan de KU Leuven is ervoor geopteerd om binnen het aanmoedigingsfondsproject 'Taalvaardig aan de start' (TaalVaST) een taaltoets te ontwikkelen die de functionele en strategische taalvaardigheden van studenten test (De Wachter & Cuppens 2010; De Wachter & Heeren 2011). Functionele taalvaardigheid wordt begrepen als de visie waarbij taal gezien wordt als middel om een 'communicatief doel' te bereiken. Het project gaat dus uit van een brede visie op taal die niet beperkt wordt tot grammatica of spelling maar waarbij kennis, vaardigheden en attitudes één geheel vormen (Stoof 2005). Daarmee sluit de test ook aan bij het probleem van taalachterstand en leerachterstand. De studenten krijgen al een signaal bij het begin van het academiejaar en kunnen er voor kiezen om begeleiding te krijgen. De test is met andere woorden ingebed in een begeleidingstraject waarvan hij de eerste fase vormt. De bedoeling is dus niet om studenten uit te sluiten of om een volledig 'taalprofiel' van de student te schetsen. De test heeft enkel een signaalfunctie.

In dit artikel zal eerst de taaltest besproken worden, vertrekkende van de ontwerpfase tot de uiteindelijke implementatie, de resultaten en de correlatie met de resultaten van de eerste examenperiode. Daarna zal er dieper ingegaan worden op de begeleiding. Die is gebaseerd op een uitgebreide behoefteanalyse die de basis vormde voor het uiteindelijk ontwikkelde taalmateriaal. De begeleiding zelf volgt twee sporen: ten eerste wordt er ingezet op een elektronisch leerplatform dat beschikbaar is voor alle studenten van de associatie; ten tweede wordt een reeks workshops ontwikkeld voor de studenten die niet geslaagd waren voor de taaltest.

2. De taaltest

2.1. De ontwerpfase: inhoud en vorm

Het ontwerpen van een taaltest gebeurt in verschillende recursieve fasen. In de ontwerpfase is het belangrijk om een duidelijk beeld van verschillende aspecten van de test te krijgen, zoals het doel van de test, de inhoud, het doelpubliek en een inventaris van de praktische mogelijkheden (Sercu et al. 2003, 27). Onze test kan geklasseerd worden onder wat McNamara (2000) en Davies (1990) een *proficiency test* noemen, een test die nagaat of een bepaalde persoon de capaciteiten heeft om in een toekomstige situatie te functioneren (McNamara 2000, 7). Sercu et al. (2003, 28) gebruiken de term *bekwaamheidstest*. Brown en Hudson (2002) maken ook het onderscheid tussen *norm-referenced* en *criterion-referenced* testen. De TaalVaST-test behoort dan duidelijk tot de *norm-referenced* categorie: “Any test that is primarily designed to disperse the performances of students in a normal distribution based on their general abilities, or proficiencies, for purposes of categorizing the students into levels or comparing students’ performances of the others who formed the normative group” (Brown & Hudson 2002, 2). *Criterion-referenced* testen gaan meer uit van doelstellingen of vastgelegde niveaus binnen een bepaald curriculum (Brown & Hudson 2002, 3).

De taaltest toetst de academische taalvaardigheden van de student, wat wil zeggen dat de test die vaardigheden moet weerspiegelen of toch ten minste de essentiële karakteristieken daarvan moet bevatten (McNamara 2000, 8). Van den Branden (2010, 216-217) geeft als eerste kenmerk van het academisch register dat het “een hoog gehalte aan niet-frequente woordenschat” bevat. Ook “complexe grammaticale structuren” in syllabi en hoorcolleges met “onpersoonlijk en abstract” taalgebruik vol “impliciete verbanden” horen daarbij. Bij het testen moeten we dus nagaan of de student die moeilijke constructies en abstracte taal kan gebruiken en of hij (nieuwe) academische woorden (her)kent. We willen met andere woorden de kennis en talige strategieën van de studenten testen, daarbij uitgaande van het construct ‘academische taalvaardigheid’, waarbij we een representatieve steekproef nemen uit “het taalmateriaal [...] dat op een bepaald niveau van taalvaardigheid verworven verondersteld mag zijn” (Sercu et al. 2003, 29).

Om dat taalmateriaal in de test representatief te maken is authentiek materiaal gebruikt dat zich situeert in de context van het academisch taalgebruik. Zo komen fragmenten van cursussen uit het eerste jaar aan bod, net als meer populair-wetenschappelijke artikels. De moeilijkheidsgraad van de test bevindt zich daarbij niet enkel op wat Sercu et al. (2003) het kennisniveau noemen, maar ook op het transferniveau. Daarbij moeten studenten hun kennis transfereren naar een nieuwe context of situatie (Sercu et al. 2003, 49). Om dat moeilijkheidsniveau concreter te bepalen, is voor de teksten onder meer gebruik gemaakt van de Flesch-Douma formule, een leesbaarheidsindex die de moeilijkheidsgraad van teksten bepaalt aan de hand van de zins- en woordcomplexiteit. Deze formule is natuurlijk niet helemaal representatief voor de volledige complexiteit van teksten (Jansen & Lentz 2008), maar geeft wel een indicatie (Hacquebord & Lenting-Haan 2012). Voor de woorden en teksten zijn frequentielijsten en corpora gecombineerd met een aan het Instituut voor Levende Talen (ILT) samengestelde academische woordenlijst in een elektronische tool die de frequentie van die verschillende woorden in een tekst weergeeft[1] .

Twee keuzes in het ontwerpproces van de taaltoets hebben de testvorm bepaald. Ten eerste is er om praktische redenen gekozen voor een digitale test. Op die manier kunnen grotere groepen de test gemakkelijker afleggen. Ook de verwerking van de resultaten verloopt vlotter dan bij een test op papier (McNamara 2000, 80). Sercu et al. (2003, 25) geven uitvoerbaarheid aan als een belangrijk criterium voor de bruikbaarheid van een test. Een groot nadeel van dit medium is echter het strakke keurslijf van de computer dat vrije taalproductie beperkter toelaat. Daarom moet het type vragen zorgvuldig bepaald worden, zodat authenticiteit, betrouwbaarheid en validiteit niet in het gedrang komt. Ten tweede is ook de tijdslimiet een element dat de testvorm bepaalt. De pretest (zie hieronder) bewees dat 30 minuten voor de meeste studenten voldoende is om de test te maken. Door de tijdsdruk zal hij of zij ook metacognitieve en strategische vaardigheden moeten inbrengen, wat verantwoord is wanneer meer academische taalvaardigheden getest worden. De test bevat drie soorten testitems: vragen over woordkennis, leesvragen en indirect ook schrijfvragen.

Er zijn drie soorten woordenschatvragen in de test opgenomen:

- Eén woord voor drie contexten: hierbij krijgen de studenten drie contexten waarin eenzelfde woord ontbreekt. Ze moeten dan uit een lijst van woorden kiezen welk woord het best in de opgegeven contexten past.
- Het juiste synoniem: de studenten krijgen twee contexten waarin hetzelfde woord vetgedrukt aangeduid staat. Zij moeten uit vier opties het juiste synoniem van dat woord kiezen.
- Vul de juiste woordvorm in: bij deze vraag moeten de studenten het woord in een andere vorm in een context invullen. Ze krijgen bijvoorbeeld het woord 'impliciet' en moeten daar 'implicaties' van kunnen afleiden.

De vragen over lezen proberen vooral na te gaan of de student inzicht heeft in een tekst:

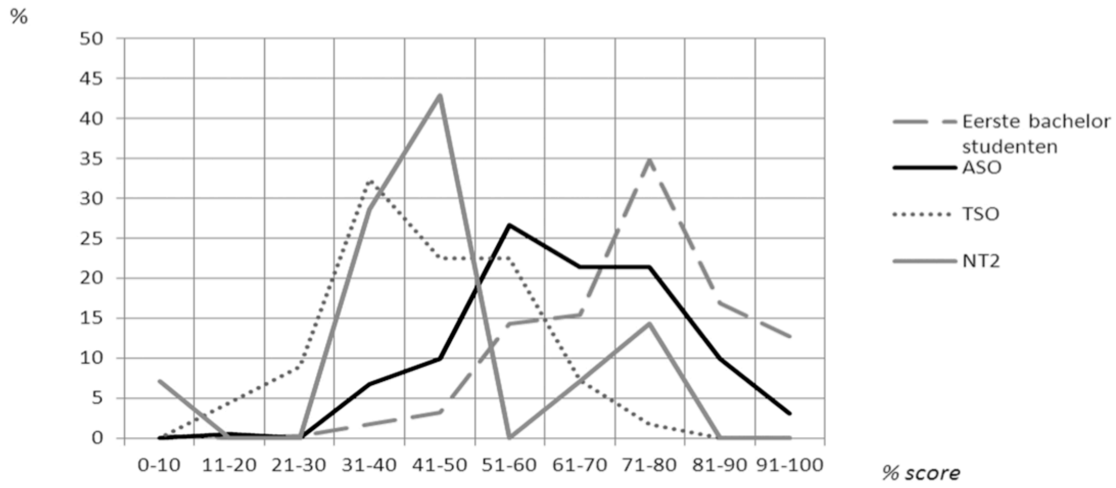
- Lezen op tekststructuur: de studenten moeten grotere structuren zoals 'chronologie' of 'vergelijking' uit een tekst(fragment) kunnen afleiden. Ze krijgen vier opties via multiple-choice.

- Lezen op betekenis: de studenten krijgen een tekstfragment en moeten uit vier mogelijkheden de uitspraak kiezen die het fragment correct samenvat.
- Tekstopbouw: bij dit type oefening moeten studenten de verschillende delen van een tekst in de juiste volgorde slepen. Deze oefening toetst indirect ook een aspect van hun schrijfvaardigheid: kunnen ze een logische gedachtegang aanbrengen in een tekst, zien ze de verwijzingen en structuurwoorden die de volgorde van de delen aangeven?

Het project gaat dus uit van een brede visie op taal waarbij kennis, vaardigheden en attituden niet los van elkaar staan maar één geheel vormen (Stoof 2005). Na het construeren van de test was het belangrijk om de validiteit en betrouwbaarheid na te gaan, wat gebeurde in een pretest of pilootfase.

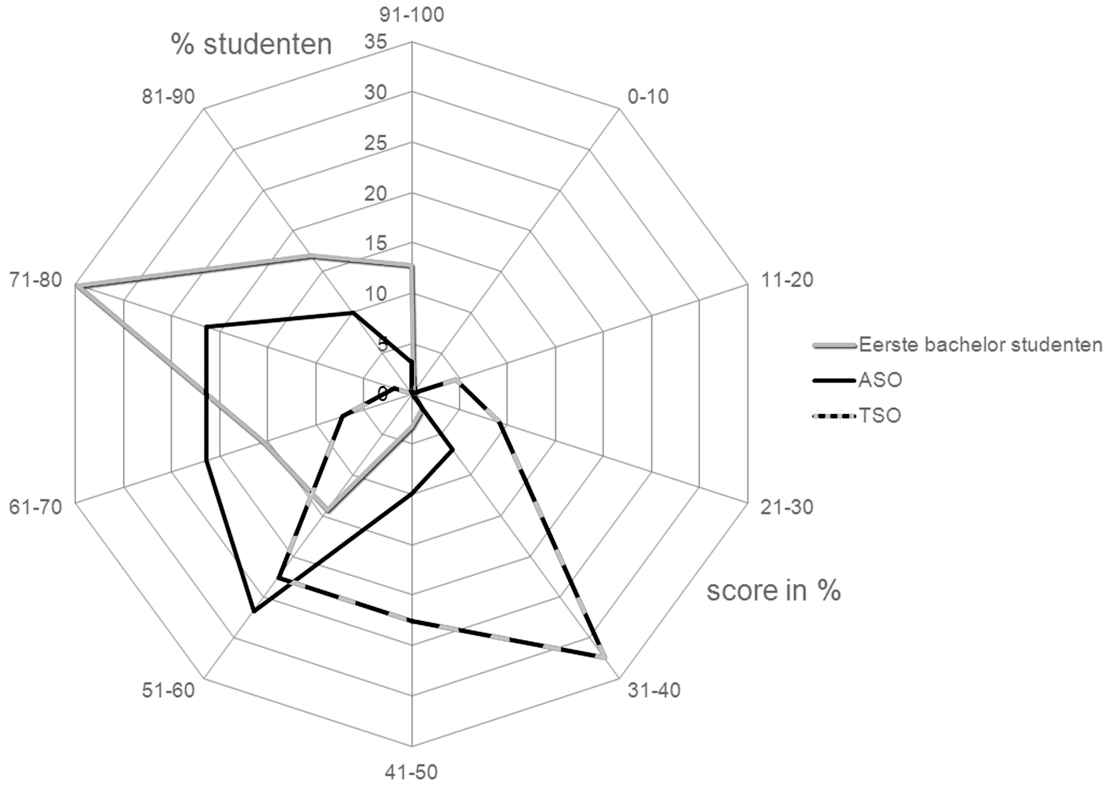
2.2. Pilootfase: validiteit en betrouwbaarheid

De pilootfase is noodzakelijk aangezien "however well designed an examination may be, and however carefully it has been edited, it is not possible to know how it will work until it has been tried out on students" (Alderson et al. 1996, 73). In De Wachter & Cuppens (2010, 261) wordt beschreven hoe verschillende versies van de test zijn afgenomen bij 652 leerlingen en studenten. Die groep bestond uit studenten uit de eerste fase van de bachelor (n=336), leerlingen uit het algemeen secundair onderwijs, vergelijkbaar met het Nederlandse vwo/havo (n=191), leerlingen uit het technisch onderwijs, vergelijkbaar met de Kaderberoepsgerichte Leerweg van het Nederlandse vmbo (n=111) en een klein groepje NT2-cursisten (14). De studenten en leerlingen die de test aflegden benaderden telkens het doelpubliek dat de test zou afleggen aan het begin van het academiejaar. Hun resultaten werden gebruikt om na te gaan welke items valide zijn en om de betrouwbaarheid van de test als geheel aan te tonen. Hieronder zal worden beschreven hoe de validiteit van de items en de betrouwbaarheid van de test zijn nagegaan. De scores van de verschillende groepen worden weergegeven in de onderstaande grafiek:



Figuur 1: resultaten per deelgroep

Uit de grafiek valt af te leiden dat de eerstejaarsstudenten opvallend beter scoren dan de andere groepen. Dat is gemakkelijk te verklaren aangezien niet alle aso-leerlingen nadien kiezen voor een academische opleiding. Bovendien hadden de eerstejaarsstudenten op dat ogenblik al een half jaar universiteit achter de rug. Er is ook een sterk verschil aanwezig tussen de tso en aso richtingen dat beter naar voor komt in de volgende weergave, waarbij de resultaten verder werden opgedeeld en het groepje NT2-studenten werd weggelaten. Deze weergave toont ook duidelijker de vlakken die de verschillende groepen met hun score bedekken, doordat het begin en het eindpunt van de verschillende grafieken samen genomen wordt:



Figuur 2: resultaten per deelgroep zonder NT2

Hier wordt duidelijk dat hoewel de eerstebachelorstudenten, de aso-studenten en de tso-studenten duidelijk onderscheiden groepen zijn, ze toch overlappende gebieden hebben en er dus ook binnen de deelgroepen een zekere spreiding te bemerken valt. De taaltest maakt dus een duidelijk onderscheid tussen verschillende groepen en kan ook binnen die groepen differentiëren. Op basis van de pretest werd de cesuur van de test op 60% gelegd. Later werd met behulp van de standaarddeviatie die cesuur bevestigd.

Onder de validiteit van testitems verstaat men dat de testitems meten wat ze beogen te meten. Een manier om dat te doen, is kijken of de items een onderscheid maken tussen de studenten die de vaardigheid onder de knie hebben en diegenen die de vaardigheid nog niet (helemaal) bezitten. Op dat principe is de "simple item discrimination" gebaseerd (Brown & Hudson 2002, 130). Daarbij wordt het percentage correcte antwoorden op een bepaald item van de 27% laagst scorende studenten afgetrokken van dat van de 27% hoogst scorende studenten. Het percentage dat overblijft, bepaalt het discriminerend vermogen van dat item. Is de uitkomst bijvoorbeeld negatief, dan beantwoordden de hoogst scorende studenten het item minder vaak goed dan de laagst scorende. Het item test dan niet wat je beoogt te testen en moet geweerd worden. Ligt het item tussen de 0% en de 25% dan moet het herzien worden omdat het niet genoeg discrimineert; ligt het tussen de 25% en de 40% dan is het item goed; ligt het tussen de 40% en de 100%, dan is het zeer goed. Omdat hier slechts een steekproef genomen wordt uit al het materiaal, wordt ook de "point-biserial correlation coefficient" berekend (Brown & Hudson 2002, 118). Daarbij wordt de correlatie berekend tussen het juist of fout beantwoorden van een item en de totaalscore van elke student. Deze berekeningen gaven aan dat 24 van de 25 items die in de uiteindelijke test terechtkwamen valide waren.

Naast deze analyses, die enkel met gegevens van de test zelf werken, moet echter ook gekeken worden naar de mate waarin de testresultaten het gebruik van de vaardigheden in de werkelijkheid weerspiegelt. Na de eerste afname van de taaltest in 2010 correleerde DUO, de Dienst Universitair Onderwijs van de KU Leuven (nu DOeL: Directie Onderwijs en Leren), de taaltestscores en de examenresultaten van 1292 KU Leuven studenten. Daarbij werd een significante correlatie gevonden tussen beide resultaten: $R=0.37$; $p<0.0001$ (Huyghe en Marx 2011). Over het algemeen geldt daarbij dat wie gemiddeld hoger scoort op de taaltest ook gemiddeld hoger scoort op de examens in januari. Er zijn echter veel uitzonderingen op die regel. Huyghe & Marx ontdekten dat de taaltest daardoor niet zozeer een exacte voorspeller van studiesucces is, maar wel de te remediëren doelgroep vrij accuraat selecteert: van de 164 van de 1292 studenten die onder de 50% scoren slaagt 87% niet voor de examens in januari. De resultaten komen overeen met ander onderzoek waarbij taal als significante, maar duidelijk niet de enige factor met betrekking tot slaagkansen wordt gerekend (Van Dyk 2010; McNamara 1996).

Ook de betrouwbaarheid van de test moet vastgelegd worden. In theorie zou dezelfde test bij dezelfde groep op een ander moment dezelfde scores moeten krijgen. In de praktijk is dat natuurlijk moeilijk doenbaar en daarom wordt een test vaak in twee gesplitst om te berekenen of de scores overeen komen. Deze "split in half"-methode is niet altijd even praktisch. Zo zit er in de taaltest een stijgende moeilijkheidsgraad waardoor de ene helft van de testitems moeilijker is dan de andere helft. Uiteindelijk is er gekozen voor de "Kuder-Richardson 20" formule (Davies 1990, 22): $rKR20=(K/K-1).(1-(\sum pq/\sigma^2))$, waarbij K staat voor het aantal testitems, p voor het aantal studenten dat een item correct beantwoordde en q voor het aantal studenten dat het item fout beantwoordde. σ^2 staat voor het kwadraat van de standaarddeviatie of de variantie. Deze formule geeft de betrouwbaarheid beter weer dan de "split in half"-methode omdat "it takes into account the inter-relationships among all items" (Brown & Hudson 2002, 166). Als het resultaat van de formule (rKR20) hoger ligt dan 0,70, dan is de test betrouwbaar. Het uiteindelijke resultaat van de pretest bedroeg 0,78. De test kan dus betrouwbaar genoemd worden.

3. Begeleiding

3.1. Behoefteanalyse

Bij de ontwikkeling van begeleiding werd er door een behoefteanalyse getracht in te spelen op de specifieke noden en behoeften van de studenten in de verschillende opleidingen. Enerzijds wordt op die manier het ontwijkingsgedrag van de doelgroep zoveel mogelijk beperkt: hoe beter studenten het nut en de relevantie van de begeleiding voor hun opleiding inzien, hoe groter immers de kans dat de oefeningen aanslaan. Anderzijds wordt door het gecontextualiseerde materiaal de transfer van de vaardigheden die ze in de oefeningen aangeleerd hebben, sneller gemaakt naar de echte taalsituaties. Eén van de 'opstappen' om de taalvaardigheid van studenten uit te bouwen die Hajer en Meestringa (2009) aanhalen is immers contextualisering: actieve, concrete en betekenisvolle ervaringen helpen om nieuwe abstracte kennis te plaatsen (Hajer en Meestringa 2009 in Van den Branden 2010, 218-219).

Het behoefteonderzoek bestaat uit twee grote stappen, onderverdeeld in verschillende kleinere fasen. Eerst is er een veldverkenning uitgevoerd, waarbij er verschillende ongestructureerde verkenningsgesprekken waren, o.a. met Dirk Berckmoes van het *Monitoraat op Maat* van de Universiteit Antwerpen (Linguapolis) en met de medewerkers van de studentenbegeleiding geschiedenis aan de KU Leuven. In diezelfde stap is ook een literatuurstudie uitgevoerd; zowel literatuur rond taalvaardigheid van studenten, als literatuur rond de remediëring daarvan in de context van het hoger onderwijs, zijn daarbij aan bod gekomen (bijvoorbeeld: Peters & Van Houtven 2010a, Peters & Van Houtven 2010b, Berckmoes & Rombouts 2009a, Berckmoes & Rombouts 2009b, Basstanie & Verelst 2010, Long 2005, Cajot 2010). De resultaten van de taaltoets aan de KU Leuven maakten ook deel uit van de veldverkenning. In de tweede stap zijn er verschillende bronnen en methoden aangesproken om de behoeftes van studenten in kaart te brengen. Er is onder andere een aantal interviews afgenomen van docenten, studiebegeleiders en assistenten uit verschillende opleidingen; er werden focusgesprekken georganiseerd met groepjes studenten van de faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen en de richting geschiedenis (faculteit Letteren); er is een enquête rond de vaardigheid schrijven afgenomen in die richtingen[2] en er werden zeventien schrijfopdrachten van eerstejaarsstudenten geschiedenis geanalyseerd.

Een volgende stap in de analyse was het trianguleren van de hierboven geschetste bronnen en methoden om dan de overeenkomsten en verschillen in de resultaten te verklaren en de belangrijkste knelpunten en behoeftes te selecteren. Een eerste probleemveld blijkt dan de vaardigheid schrijven en dan vooral tekstopbouw en samenhang. Eén van de geïnterviewde docenten probeert een reden te formuleren: "waar vroeger op papier gedacht werd voor het schrijven eigenlijk begon, groeit een tekst nu meer organisch". Basisstructuren zoals chronologie en tegenstelling, maar ook het structureren op microniveau, met ordeningspatronen en verbindingswoorden, bleken nuttige onderwerpen. Een tweede knelpunt is het hanteren van een wetenschappelijke stijl. De Wachter & Van Soom (2008) beschrijven het concept wetenschappelijke stijl als onpersoonlijk en neutraal. Ook wordt er verwacht dat de auteur van een wetenschappelijke tekst de taal uit zijn wetenschappelijk domein hanteert, zonder daarbij omslachtig te schrijven of informatie te geven die al te vanzelfsprekend is (De Wachter & Van Soom 2008, 76-77). Docenten merken op dat eerstejaarsstudenten vaak teruggrijpen naar een eerder journalistieke en meer persoonlijke stijl. Studenten die minder goed zijn in schrijven, vallen vaak terug, zowel op het gebied van stijl als op het gebied van structuur, op een meer verhalende tekst volgens een beschrijvend patroon (Ferrari et al., 1998; Braaksma et al., 2004).

Uit de behoefteanalyse kon ook een beeld geschetst worden over de remediëring waaraan de studenten de voorkeur gaven. Zo vinden de studenten het het nuttigst om oefeningen te maken op structureren en op het samenbrengen van informatie uit verschillende bronnen. Daarnaast willen ze graag in kleinere groepjes werken met concreet en liefst eigen materiaal. Hajer en Meestringa (2009) stellen dat door de interactie bij studenten het zelfstandig probleemoplossen gestimuleerd wordt (Hajer en Meestringa 2009 in Van den Branden 2010, 219). Op die laatste manier wordt ook het transferprobleem bij elementgerichte oefeningen, vermeden. Een laatste opmerking van de studenten was dat ze praktijklessen met concrete oefeningen, of toegepast op eigen materiaal verkiezen boven theoretische lessen of elementgerichte oefeningen. Berckmoes en Rombouts (2009a, 42) stellen dat taalbegeleiding maar effectief kan zijn als de student de aangeleerde en ingeoefende taalvaardigheid daarna in zijn studiegebied herkent en praktisch kan toepassen. Sterckx en Vanhoren (2010) vermelden ook dat taalondersteuning studenten pas motiveert als het hen iets concreets oplevert.

3.2. De digitale leeromgeving TaalVaST

De inhoud van de leeromgeving is ontstaan op basis van de hierboven geschetste behoefteanalyse. De grootste struikelblokken bleken structureren en de wetenschappelijke stijl, eerder dan spelling, woordgebruik of grammatica te zijn. Daarom komen die structurele en stilistische elementen in de TaalVaST-leeromgeving het meest aan bod. Daarnaast wil de website ook zo laagdrempelig mogelijk zijn door gecontextualiseerd materiaal, aangepaste terminologie, een logische indeling en een eenvoudige, aantrekkelijke lay-out te integreren. Daarbij is telkens gebruik gemaakt van tekst en audiovisueel materiaal dat aanleunt bij het materiaal dat eerstejaarsstudenten te verwerken krijgen. Zo worden er fragmenten uit cursussen, wetenschappelijke en populairwetenschappelijke artikels, schrijftaken van studenten en hoorcolleges gebruikt. In de onderverdeling van de verschillende vaardigheden is ervoor gekozen om linguïstische metataal te vermijden. Veel studenten worden bijvoorbeeld minder aangesproken door schooltaalwoorden zoals 'globaal lezen' en 'oriënterend lezen', maar wel door 'het lezen van lange teksten' of 'examenvragen', wat voor hen het doel en het nut van de oefeningen veel concreter maakt.

De website bestaat uit een statisch theoretisch gedeelte en een gedeelte met oefeningen dat daaraan gekoppeld is. De theorie is beknopt gehouden, zodat studenten in één scherm de noodzakelijke informatie te zien krijgen. Bij de tekst staat telkens een schema waarin de theorie wordt samengevat, dan hoeven studenten niet steeds de tekst te herlezen. De theorie wordt dan verder uitgewerkt en uitgediept in de oefeningen. Om de studenten gemotiveerd te houden is er gebruik gemaakt van multimedia en zijn de oefeningen interactief: naast bijvoorbeeld multiple-choice vragen zal de student ook delen van een alinea in de juiste volgorde moeten slepen en krijgt hij/zij vragen over fragmenten uit hoorcolleges door middel van streamingvideo's. De videofragmenten zijn telkens kort gehouden, om de aandacht van de student te behouden. De oefeningen krijgen ook een niveaubepaling door middel van een aantal sterren. Die geven de moeilijkheidsgraad van de oefening aan: één ster duidt op een relatief gemakkelijke oefening, een aanduiding met drie sterren geeft aan dat het om een moeilijke oefening gaat die meer wetenschappelijk materiaal zal bevatten. Het niveau werd bepaald door het type oefening en/of de moeilijkheidsgraad van de gebruikte teksten. Verschillende oefeningen worden ook gefaseerd aangeboden, zodat de student telkens een leerproces doorloopt.

Figuur 3: een theoretische pagina uit de leeromgeving

Omdat zij moeten inloggen met hun studentenlogin onthoudt de leeromgeving telkens de status van de oefeningen. Staat er een groen vierkantje voor de oefening, dan hebben ze de oefening met succes gemaakt. Hebben ze een oranje driehoekje, dan is ze wel gemaakt, maar nog niet correct opgelost. Een rood bolletje betekent dat de oefeningen nog niet gemaakt zijn. Op die manier is het ook mogelijk voor docenten om de studenten een leertraject te geven op basis van hun fouten of kan de student zelf een traject samenstellen dat aan zijn/haar leernoden voldoet. De verschillende figuren moeten aan studenten met kleurenblindheid duidelijk maken wat de status van de oefening is. De website kan worden ingezet in verschillende begeleidingsmodellen waarin de student dan begeleid of zelfstandig zijn (academische) taalvaardigheid bijspijkert. Daarnaast is ook de optie van leerpaden voorzien, waarbij een reeks oefeningen gegroepeerd wordt rond een bepaald onderdeel van een vaardigheid, bijvoorbeeld het leerpad rond 'de alinea', waarbij een student pas naar een volgende stap in de oefeningenreeks kan als hij de vorige oefening correct heeft opgelost. Theorie en oefeningen worden in deze reeksen afgewisseld.

3.3. Begeleidingssessies

Na de taaltest kregen de studenten die niet geslaagd waren, twee verschillende vormen van begeleiding aangeboden, naargelang de groep waartoe ze behoorden. De eerste groep studenten werd doorverwezen naar zowel de TaalVaST-leeromgeving als naar het boek Taal@hoger onderwijs van De Wachter et al. (2010), een boek dat de studenten vertrouwd wil maken met de talige verwachtingen in het hoger onderwijs. Op die manier worden de studenten gestimuleerd om bij een laag resultaat hun academische taalvaardigheid zelfstandig bij te werken. De tweede groep studenten, van de faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen en van de richting geschiedenis, werden gecontacteerd door de studentenbegeleiders om begeleidingssessies bij te wonen. De eerstejaarsstudenten krijgen in die richtingen namelijk al vanaf het eerste semester van het eerste jaar schrijfopdrachten en ze krijgen ook de meeste schrijfopdrachten. Daarom werd de begeleiding uitgetest in de tweede groep.

In totaal kregen de studenten Sociale Wetenschappen en de studenten geschiedenis drie begeleidingssessies van twee uur gedurende drie weken. De eerste sessie focuste op lezen, de andere twee op schrijven. Op basis van de behoefteanalyse werd er gewerkt naar het overbrengen van functionele vaardigheden en strategieën die de student zouden helpen om om te gaan met teksten en ze te construeren. Daarnaast is ook getracht om alle vaardigheden aan bod te laten komen in een samenvattende opdracht, wat de transfer tussen theorie en praktijk bevordert. De studenten kregen daarbij steeds feedback, zowel elektronisch via oefeningen op het leerplatform, van de docent als door hun peers. Voor de sessies werd steeds contact gehouden met de studiebegeleiders opdat de leerstof van de begeleiding complementair zou zijn met de studiebegeleidingssessies achteraf. Een andere reden was dat de studiebegeleiding materiaal kan aanleveren zoals cursussen en opdrachten voor schrijftaken. Zo voldeden we aan de wens van de studenten om concreet materiaal en voorbeelden uit de studieomgeving te gebruiken. Deze aanpak garandeert ook een leerlijn waarbij de sessies voorafgaan aan de workshops van de studiebegeleiding rond schrijftaken en de individuele feedback die studenten krijgen op de voorlopige versies van die opdrachten. De TaalVast-sessies spelen dan in op meer algemene talige vaardigheden, waarbij de sessies van de studiebegeleiding de schrijfopdrachten vanuit een inhoudelijk perspectief behandelen. Op die manier proberen we met een beperkte begeleiding toch een leertraject voor de studenten te creëren dat zij kunnen combineren met de digitale leeromgeving.

We proberen zo de valkuil van de kortetermijnoplossing te omzeilen en te evolueren naar een meer structurele aanpak (o.a. Van der Westen 2007 & Van den Branden 2004).

In een tweede reeks TaalVaST-sessies zal, vooral vanuit praktisch oogpunt, geopteerd worden voor de toevoeging van een onderdeel met observerend leren. Observerend leren is een concept uit de sociale leertheorie die werd ontwikkeld door Albert Bandura. Later werd ze verder uitgewerkt en toepasbaar gemaakt op bredere cognitieve domeinen zoals het schrijfonderwijs (Rijlaarsdam et al. 2008, 66, Raedts et al. 2009, 142-143). Een kernidee uit de theorie is de *imitatio* (Rijlaarsdam et al. 2008, 53) of beter: *modeling*, waarbij studenten een handeling leren door de activiteit bij anderen te observeren en vervolgens na te bootsen (Raedts et al. 2009, 142-143). Het cognitieve aspect van deze modeling houdt in dat de studenten niet enkel geconfronteerd worden met handelingen, maar ook met de gedachten van de studenten die de taak uitvoeren. Minet en Van Bruggen-Krijgsman (2010, 1) stellen ook dat observerend leren in het schrijfonderwijs de cognitieve overbelasting die het traditionele schrijfonderwijs bij minder goede studenten met zich meebrengt, doet vervallen. Rijlaarsdam (2005) geeft immers aan dat veel oefeningen "louter doe-dingen" zijn en dat er dan geen onderscheid gemaakt wordt tussen "'doen' en 'leren te doen'" (Rijlaarsdam 2005, 11). De observatieoefeningen willen de studenten meer inzicht geven in de meta-processen bij het schrijven en hen na de oefening beter in staat stellen hun eigen vaardigheid in te schatten (Raedts et al. 2009). Goede schrijvers hebben die processen al en leren wel uit het leren-door-doen.

Rijlaarsdam & Braaksma (2004) en Rijlaarsdam (2005) onderscheiden drie soorten leeractiviteiten. In een eerste leeractiviteit worden twee leerlingen die een schrijftaak uitvoeren geobserveerd en moeten de studenten de vraag beantwoorden welke student het minder goed doet dan de andere en waarom. In een tweede leeractiviteit maken de leerlingen zelf een schrijfoefening en de derde leeractiviteit werkt weer met observerend leren. Deze keer vergelijken de studenten hun geobserveerde collega's met de vraag welke van hen het beter doet dan de andere. Deze leeractiviteiten zijn sterk afhankelijk van het niveau van de individuele taalleerder (Rijlaarsdam 2005, 18). Zo zal een zwakke student best beginnen met de eerste taak, een sterke student kan onmiddellijk naar de tweede of zelfs derde taak gaan. Zwakke studenten leren immers meer van het reflecteren op de acties van de voorbeeldstudenten die minder goed schrijven, zeker als ze die kunnen vergelijken met de werkwijze van een goede schrijver (Braaksma Rijlaarsdam & van den Bergh 2002, 406). Om te bepalen wat nu net de kenmerken van die zwakke en sterke studenten zijn, is gebruik gemaakt van een studie van Ferrari et al. (1998) en het literatuuronderzoek van Braaksma et al. (2004). Sterke schrijvers kennen verschillende abstracte tekstpatronen die ze bij het schrijven kunnen invullen om zo meer gestructureerde en georganiseerde teksten af te leveren (Braaksma et al. 2004, 4-5). Zwakke schrijvers kennen deze macrostructuren vaak niet en vallen dan terug op eenzelfde vertellende en associatief opgebouwde tekststructuur (Ferrari et al. 1998, 483). In de begeleidingssessies zal eerst een oefening op observerend leren gemaakt worden, waarbij studenten twee schrijvers moeten vergelijken en verklaren wie de minst goede schrijver is en waarom. Daarna gaan ze zelf aan de slag met een soortgelijke opdracht.

4. Conclusie

Het project TaalVaST heeft met de taaltest een valide en betrouwbaar instrument gecreëerd dat de talig te remediëren doelgroep selecteert. De begeleiding die het project ontwikkelt, volgt twee sporen die beide rekening houden met de knelpunten en wensen die in een uitgebreide behoefteanalyse naar voor kwamen. Ten eerste is er de digitale leeromgeving waarop studenten uit de associatie KU Leuven hun academische taalvaardigheid zelfstandig of gestuurd kunnen bijwerken. De leeromgeving behandelt alle vaardigheden en bevat materiaal uit verschillende disciplines. Het wil door een laagdrempelig karakter en een functionele inhoud alle groepen studenten aanspreken. Ten tweede zijn er taalworkshops die specifiek rond lezen en schrijven werken en enkel voor de richtingen geschiedenis, communicatiewetenschappen en politieke en sociale wetenschappen ontwikkeld zijn. De sessies willen de lees- en vooral schrijfvaardigheid van de studenten stimuleren. Met dat doel worden ook de oefeningen en theorie gericht op strategieverwerving gecombineerd met gecontextualiseerd materiaal. We proberen de beperkte mogelijkheden tot begeleiding zo concreet en structureel mogelijk te maken door ze in een groter traject te plaatsen in combinatie met de workshops van de studiebegeleiding en vakgerichte feedback op schrijftaken.

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1 Een frequentielijst gegenereerd uit gegevens die beschikbaar gesteld worden door de de TST-Centrale (woordencorpus, PAROLE-corpus, corpus gesproken Nederlands, ANW-corpus) werd gekoppeld aan een academische woordenlijst samengesteld uit een corpus cursussen van de uitgeverij Acco , *Wijze woorden* (Giezenaar & Schouten 2002), de woordenlijst van de 'Stoomcursus woordenschat' aan het ILT en een lijst van Latijnse uitdrukkingen.

2 De enquête werd ontworpen door Elke Peters en Tine Van Houtven voor het OOF-project 'schrijfvaardig in het hoger onderwijs'.

Taalportaal: een elektronisch platform voor taalvaardigheidstraining op maat

Carmen Eggermont & Maaike D'hoedt

1. Inleiding

Aan de KU Leuven kiest de student taal- en letterkunde tijdens de bachelor-opleiding twee talen uit een aanbod van acht (Duits, Engels, Frans, Grieks, Italiaans, Latijn, Nederlands en Spaans), elk ter waarde van 56 studiepunten. Voor elke gekozen taal worden de studiepunten gelijkmatig verdeeld over de disciplines taalkunde, literatuurwetenschap en 'taal en tekst'. Daarnaast volgt hij ook algemene vakken en keuzevakken, die samen 68 studiepunten opleveren.

Binnen het programma van deze opleiding vormt de component taalbeheersing, met het vak 'taal en tekst', naast de taalkunde en de literatuurwetenschap dus een afzonderlijke pijler1. De naam van dit vak mag als een soort intentieverklaring worden opgevat. Het doel is de taalvaardigheidstraining ver boven het niveau van de conversatieklas te tillen en een kader te creëren dat de studenten helpt om complexe teksten te leren begrijpen en produceren, zowel mondeling als schriftelijk.

Het belang van het vak 'taal en tekst' tijdens de eerste jaren van de opleiding is bij de invoering van de BaMa-structuur sterk toegenomen en spitst zich intussen meer en meer toe op vaardigheidstraining en op de uitbreiding van de functionele grammaticale en lexicale kennis. Op deze manier wordt een antwoord geboden op de toenemende vraag bij de studenten taal- en letterkunde om zich ook vlot en correct te kunnen uitdrukken in de taal die ze bestuderen. De student taal- en letterkunde wenst vandaag inzetbaar te zijn in de meest verscheidene maatschappelijke domeinen, gaande van het onderwijs en allerhande overheidsinstellingen tot de bedrijfswereld. Slechts enkelingen leggen zich blijvend toe op de wetenschappelijke studie van taal en literatuur.

Binnen het vak 'taal en tekst' speelt het elektronische platform voor taalvaardigheidstraining Taalportaal een centrale rol. Taalportaal is het blijvende resultaat van het gelijknamige onderwijsproject van de KU Leuven, dat liep van 1 februari 2009 tot 31 december 2011 onder leiding van prof. dr. Dagmar Vandebosch en in nauwe samenwerking met het team taaldocenten van KU Leuven Kulak2. Welke de rol van dit platform is en hoe daarmee ook de grenzen van het vak 'taal en tekst' overschreden worden komt in paragraaf 1. aan bod. Paragraaf 2. gaat dieper in op de manier waarop Taalportaal voor de verschillende talen concreet gebruikt wordt in de eerste jaren van de opleiding. Paragraaf 3. geeft een overzicht van de bevindingen van zowel studenten als docenten en de opvolging hiervan. Tenslotte vat paragraaf 4. de resultaten van het project samen binnen het ruimere kader van het taalvaardigheidsonderwijs aan de KU Leuven.

2. De rol van Taalportaal

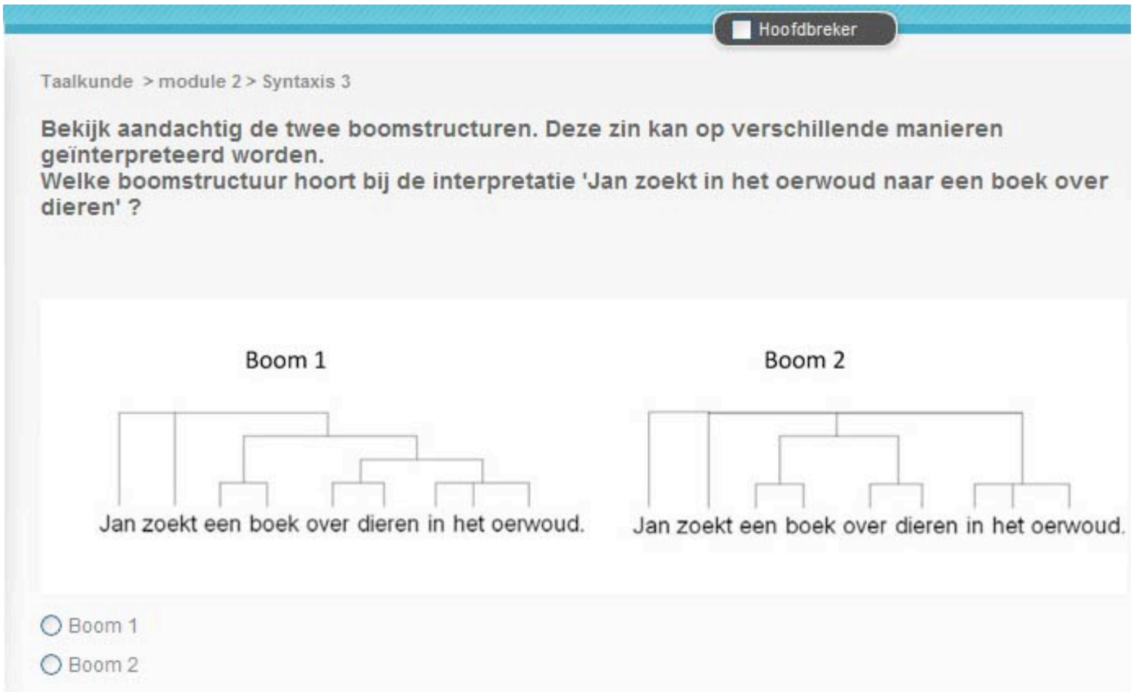
De eerste bedoeling van Taalportaal is om aan beginnende studenten taal- en letterkunde een online oefen- en testomgeving te bieden die hen toelaat op eigen ritme en in functie van individuele noden te trainen op taalvaardigheid. In een eerste fase van de ontwikkeling van Taalportaal werd het bestaande elektronische oefenmateriaal voor de verschillende talen, dat afkomstig was uit verscheidene auteurssystemen, binnen een en hetzelfde auteurssysteem Edumatic3 ondergebracht. Dit om te vermijden dat studenten, wanneer ze online willen oefenen, per taal in verschillende elektronische omgevingen terechtkomen, vaak elk via een eigen loginprocedure en afzonderlijke interface. Naderhand werd ook al het nieuwe materiaal verder binnen dit systeem ontwikkeld.

Elke student krijgt bij zijn inschrijving aan de KU Leuven toegang tot een elektronisch informatieplatform, een Learning Management System, genaamd Toledo ("Toetsen en Leren Doeltreffend Ondersteunen")4 en nu kan hij ook, heel eenvoudig vanuit Toledo, doorklikken op Taalportaal zonder een afzonderlijke gebruikersnaam of wachtwoord te moeten opgeven (via de single-sign-on procedure) en dit voor alle aangeboden levende talen, namelijk Duits, Engels, Frans, Italiaans, Nederlands en Spaans.

Een dergelijk oefenplatform is vanzelfsprekend ook zeer geschikt voor de studenten taal- en letterkunde in de verdere fasen van hun opleiding, waarin geen afzonderlijk vak taalbeheersing meer in het curriculum is voorzien. Deze studenten behouden de toegang tot de Toledo-community Taalportaal en kunnen zo verder blijven oefenen om hun taalbeheersing op peil te houden.

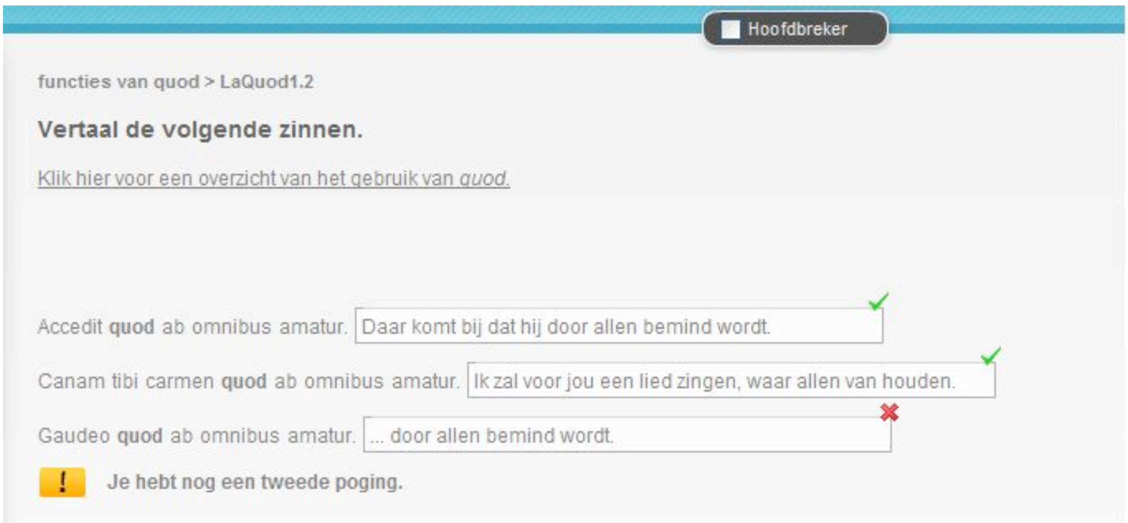
Een derde doelgroep bestaat uit de toekomstige studenten taal- en letterkunde die zich een beeld willen vormen van de opleiding en haar vereiste niveau en die zich eventueel willen voorbereiden op hun nieuwe studie. Voor deze toekomstige studenten werd bij Taalportaal een extern onderdeel voorzien (http://www.kuleuven.be/taalportaal), vrij toegankelijk voor iedereen, na het aanvragen van een automatisch gegenereerde gebruikersnaam en een wachtwoord. Voor deze groep werd ervoor gekozen het aanbod taaloefeningen uit te breiden met oefeningen op de theoretisch gerichte vakken algemene literatuurwetenschap of algemene taalkunde, om zo een evenwichtig en volledig beeld te bieden van de hele opleiding.

In onderstaande oefening wordt bijvoorbeeld aangetoond hoe de voorstelling van een zin met behulp van boomstructuren, zoals die in taalkundige beschrijvingen gebruikt worden, toelaat haar verschillende interpretaties te formaliseren:



Afbeelding 1

In het pakket voor toekomstige studenten komen ook Latijn en Grieks aan bod. De aanpak verschilt hier van die bij de levende talen, al richt een heel aantal oefeningen zich ook op een betere taalbeheersing (zie afbeelding 2). Voor Grieks werd een onderscheid gemaakt tussen oefeningen voor studenten met en zonder voorkennis, zoals dat ook het geval is bij het begin van de opleiding.



Afbeelding 2

3. Blended learning

Hieronder wordt verder ingegaan op de manier waarop de online leeromgeving Taalportaal concreet gebruikt wordt tijdens de eerste twee fasen van de bacheloropleiding. Taalportaal maakt er namelijk deel uit van een blended learning aanpak5, wat betekent dat het face-to-face onderwijs en de online Taalportaal leeractiviteiten volledig in elkaar overvloeien. Taalportaal wordt zowel gebruikt tijdens de contactmomenten (c-learning) als daarbuiten (e-learning) waardoor er een ononderbroken leerproces ontstaat dat bij het aanleren van een taal onontbeerlijk is. Naast deze virtuele integratie van oefensessies en zelfstudie versmelten c-learning en e-learning aan KU Leuven Kulak[6] ook materieel in het multimediale talencentrum, dat tegelijk als leslokaal en als open leercentrum fungeert. Tijdens de lessen en ook daarbuiten heeft de student er toegang tot allerlei authentiek elektronisch video- en audiomateriaal, naast elektronische naslagwerken, corpora en oefenomgevingen. Beeld en geluid kunnen er ook gemakkelijk digitaal worden opgenomen. Bovendien is het talencentrum uitgerust als een taallab : de docent kan vanuit de docentenpc elke activiteit op de studentenpc's monitoren en de studenten kunnen onderling of met de docent communiceren via hun pc.

Concreet vertaalt de blended learning aanpak zich in een of meerdere scenario's per taal. Het meest klassieke scenario is datgene waarbij de taaldocent tijdens een oefensessie doorverwijst naar bijkomend oefenmateriaal op Taalportaal. Een student die moeilijkheden ondervindt bij een bepaald onderdeel van de stof of die zich er verder wil in perfectioneren, kan na de sessie terecht op Taalportaal. Zo worden de uitspraakregels van het Italiaans kort behandeld tijdens de colleges en achteraf kunnen zij die dat wensen op Taalportaal de bijbehorende oefeningen maken. De oefening in afbeelding 3 helpt hen bepaalde accentregels onder de knie te krijgen. De student kan met het rode pijltje een geluidsbestand opstarten om de woorden die in de lijst onder het pijltje staan te beluisteren en vervolgens, naargelang het accent, naar de juiste kolom te slepen:

Afbeelding 3

Het is echter ook mogelijk om de studenten op voorhand online oefeningen te laten maken over de stof die tijdens een contactmoment verder behandeld zal worden. De lesgever kan dan, via de backoffice, waar hij de resultaten en progressie van elke student kan bekijken, nagaan bij welke oefeningen de meeste fouten gemaakt worden. Zo weet hij op voorhand welke items de belangrijkste problemen stellen en kan hij daar rekening mee houden bij de voorbereiding van het werkcollege. Uit afbeelding 4 blijkt bijvoorbeeld dat het globaal behaalde resultaat voor het eerste item (kolom F) van oefening 227 (kolom D) van het vijfde hoofdstuk (kolom C) 31% is (kolom G, cijfer onderaan de tabel). Bij verdere analyse van de tabel stellen we vast dat slechts 3 studenten op de 24 dit item in 1 enkele poging (kolom H) correct hebben opgelost.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Last name	**First name**	**Tree name**	**Branch name**	**Exercise ID**	**Exercise label**	**Percent age**	**Attempts**
X1	X1	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	1
X2	X2	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	1
X3	X3	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	1
X4	X4	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	2
X5	X5	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	2
X6	X6	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	2
X7	X7	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	100%	5
X8	X8	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	50%	2
X9	X9	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X10	X10	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X11	X11	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X12	X12	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X13	X13	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X14	X14	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X15	X15	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X16	X16	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X17	X17	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X18	X18	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	1
X19	X19	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	2
X20	X20	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	3
X21	X21	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	4
X22	X22	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	4
X23	X23	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	4
X24	X24	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169252	1	0%	5
						31%	

Afbeelding 4: behaalde resultaten op oefening 227, item 1.

Wanneer de docent dergelijke resultaten vaststelt, zal hij tijdens een contactmoment terugkomen op de oefening. Op die manier kan hij nagaan of deze zwakke score werkelijk te maken heeft met een gebrek aan kennis of vaardigheid bij de studenten, dan wel met de vraagstelling of met een verkeerd gekozen oefentype. Een juiste diagnose kan de studenten helpen om hun resultaten beter te interpreteren en kan de docent ertoe aanzetten, in het geval van problemen die eerder technisch of praktisch van aard zijn, de oefening aan te passen.

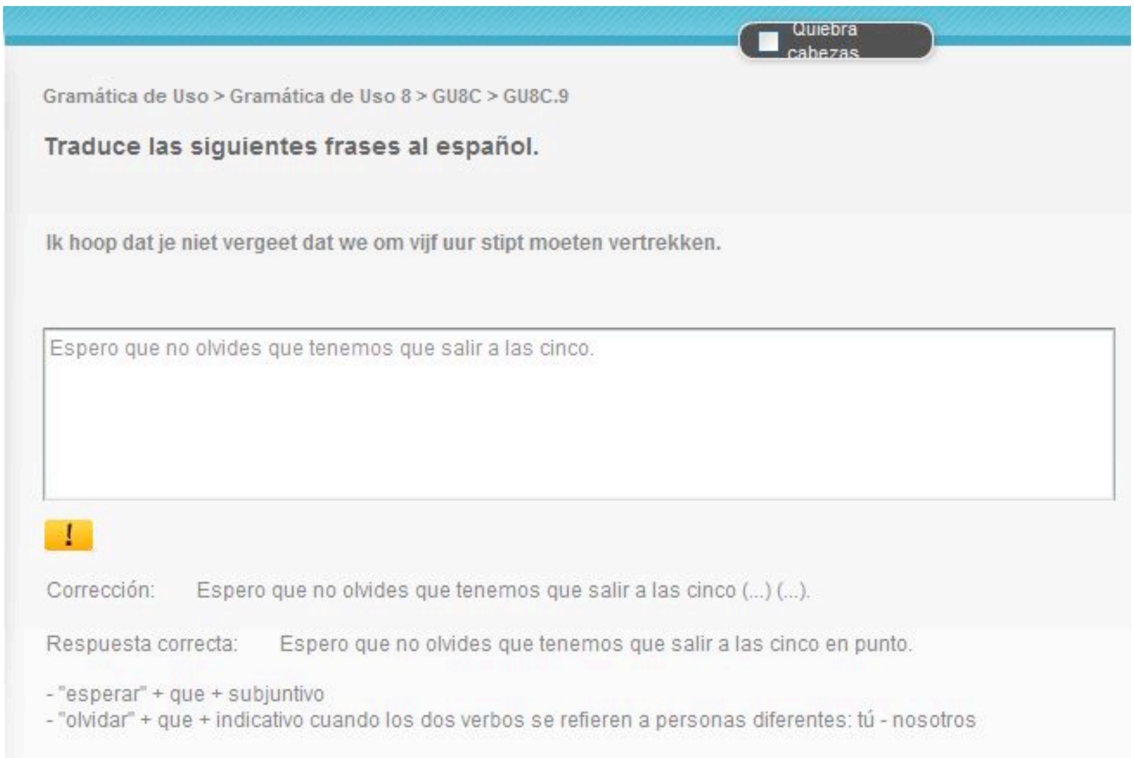
Het tweede item van dezelfde oefening (afbeelding 5) blijkt daarentegen veel minder problemen op te leveren en hoeft tijdens het contactmoment wellicht niet meer expliciet aan bod te komen.

Dit tweede scenario biedt twee grote voordelen. Enerzijds verhoogt het de efficiëntie van het contactmoment aanzienlijk, aangezien de docent op voorhand de moeilijkheden van de studenten kent en dus meer tijd kan besteden aan de onderwerpen die voor een meerderheid van de studenten problemen stellen. Op die manier wordt vermeden dat enkel problemen worden behandeld die door studenten worden aangebracht in werkcolleges. Anderzijds stimuleert deze aanpak alle studenten om wel degelijk zoveel mogelijk elektronische oefeningen te maken, want ze weten dat hun activiteit op Taalportaal de lesinhoud mee bepaalt.

X1	X1	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X2	X2	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X3	X3	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X4	X4	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X5	X5	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X6	X6	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X7	X7	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	1
X8	X8	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	2
X9	X9	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	100%	3
X10	X10	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	50%	1
X11	X11	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	50%	1
X12	X12	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	0%	1
X13	X13	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	0%	2
X14	X14	Cinquième unité: L'ORDRE, L'OPINION, L'EVALUATION,	exercice 227	169253	2	0%	2
						71%	

Afbeelding 5: behaalde resultaten op oefening 227, item 2.

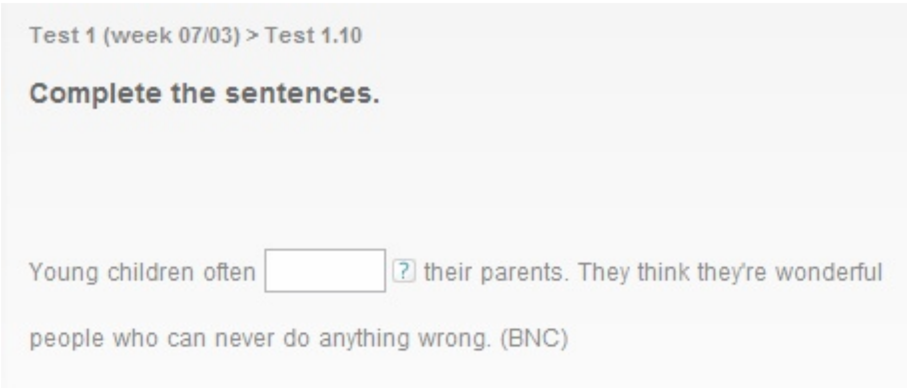
Een derde scenario bestaat erin Taalportaal ook tijdens het contactmoment intens te gebruiken. In plaats van oefeningen klassikaal op te lossen, waarbij sommige studenten eventueel niet aan bod komen, werkt elke student op eigen ritme op Taalportaal in aanwezigheid van de taaldocent. Voor Spaans wordt onder andere het gebruik van de subjunctief op deze manier aangebracht, zoals in afbeelding 6 te zien is.



Afbeelding 6

Dit derde scenario combineert de voordelen van e-learning en c-learning: enerzijds kunnen de studenten op eigen ritme werken en krijgen ze individueel onmiddellijk online feedback (zie 3.1.), anderzijds zitten ze in een omgeving waar van gedachten kan gewisseld worden met de taaldocent en de studiegenoten, waardoor iedereen ook kan leren uit de fouten van de anderen.

Ten slotte blijkt de testmodus één van de door de studenten meest geapprecieerde werkvormen op Taalportaal. Dankzij elektronische tests kan de student op regelmatige basis zijn persoonlijke vooruitgang nagaan en ook preciezer evalueren in hoeverre hij bijvoorbeeld op een examen is voorbereid. Het gaat hier vanzelfsprekend over formatieve testen7, die volkomen vrijblijvend gemaakt kunnen worden. Af en toe worden dergelijke elektronische testsessies op vraag van de studenten op een vast moment op de campus ingericht. Opvallend is dat voor deze testsessies in groepsverband haast alle studenten komen opdagen. Voor Engels wordt de lexicale kennis op deze manier op regelmatige basis geëvalueerd (zie afbeelding 7).



Afbeelding 7

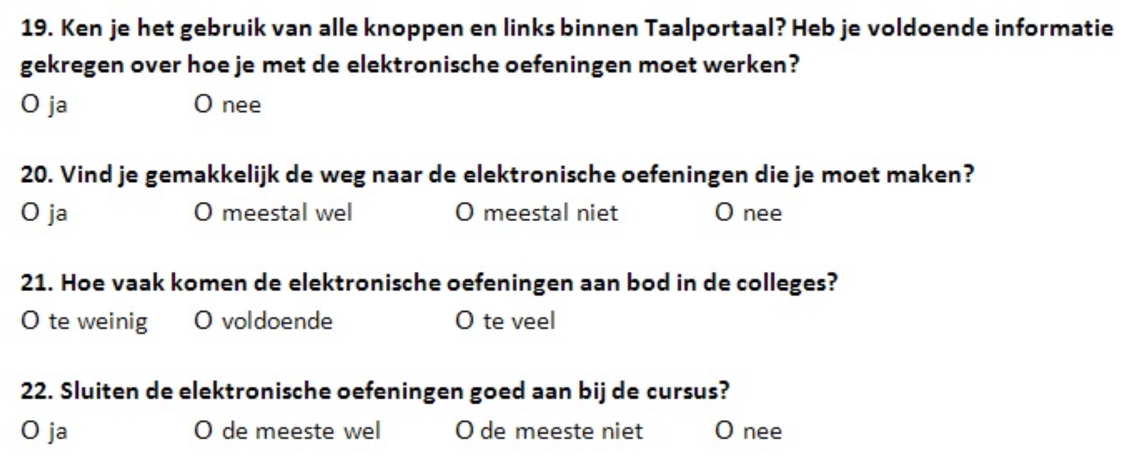
De testmodus kan ook als instaptest dienst doen. Zo wordt bij het begin van het academiejaar voor de studenten Frans een instaptest Passage à niveau georganiseerd. De studenten kunnen in een sessie van twee tot drie uur op Taalportaal hun opgedane grammaticale kennis uit het secundaire onderwijs evalueren en tegelijk hun positie in de groep beter inschatten. Indien nodig oefent elke student tijdens het jaar individueel verder op Taalportaal indien hij bij zichzelf lacunes vaststelt.

Voor Spaans wordt bij het begin van het academiejaar via de instaptest mee bepaald of een student tot de groep beginners behoort, dan wel tot de meer gevorderden. Tijdens de eerste weken van het academiejaar volgen deze twee groepen afzonderlijk les tot ze beide een vergelijkbaar niveau bereikt hebben.

4. Bevindingen en opvolging

4.1. De enquête

Jaarlijks wordt bij zowel de studenten als bij de lesgevers die Taalportaal hebben gebruikt een enquête afgenomen over de verschillende aspecten van dit online oefenplatform (zie afbeelding 8). De bedoeling is na te gaan in welke mate Taalportaal effectief gebruikt wordt en hoe het nog beter kan aansluiten bij de concrete behoeften van de studenten.



19. Ken je het gebruik van alle knoppen en links binnen Taalportaal? Heb je voldoende informatie gekregen over hoe je met de elektronische oefeningen moet werken?

O ja O nee

20. Vind je gemakkelijk de weg naar de elektronische oefeningen die je moet maken?

O ja O meestal wel O meestal niet O nee

21. Hoe vaak komen de elektronische oefeningen aan bod in de colleges?

O te weinig O voldoende O te veel

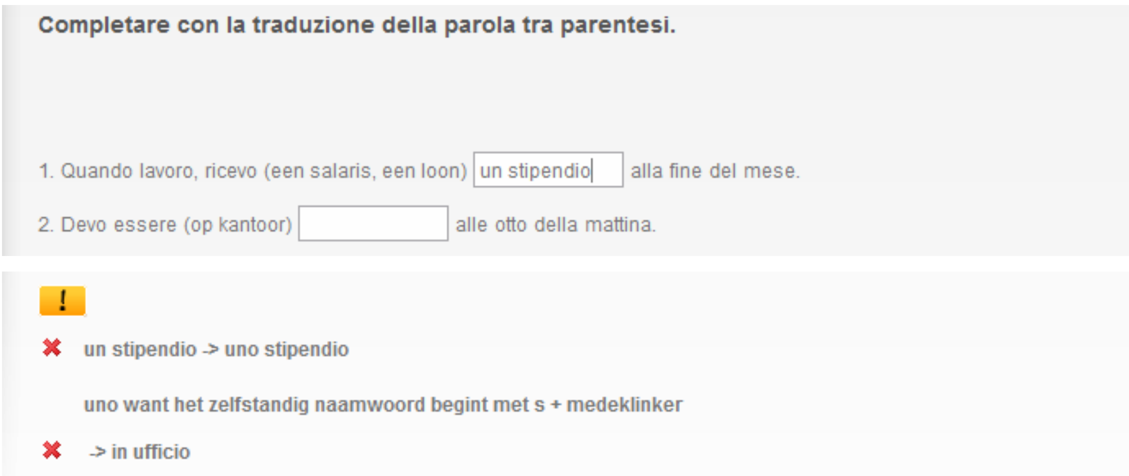
22. Sluiten de elektronische oefeningen goed aan bij de cursus?

O ja O de meeste wel O de meeste niet O nee

Afbeelding 8

4.2. Het voordeel van individuele feedback

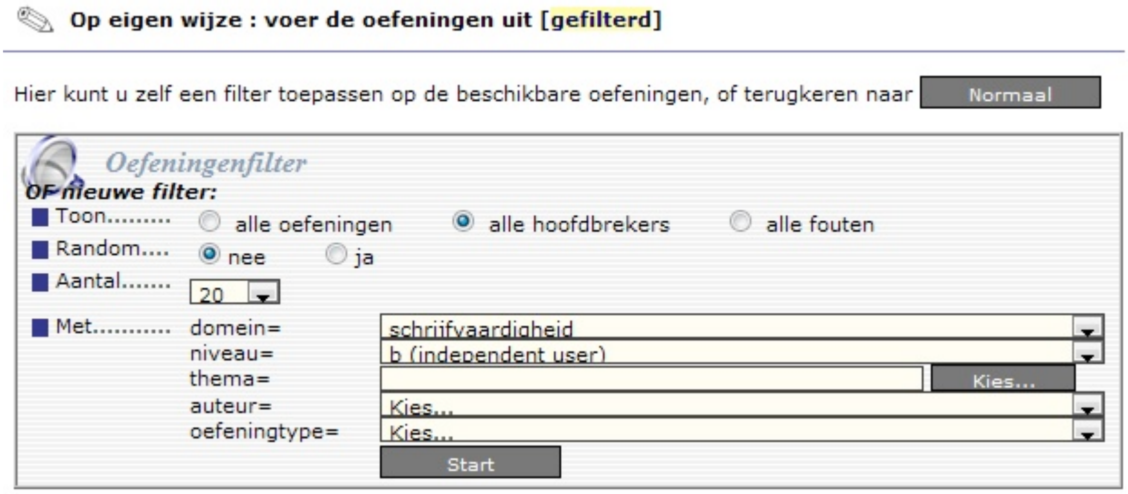
Een van de aspecten van de elektronische oefeningen die door de studenten erg gewaardeerd worden is de onmiddellijke feedback die ze krijgen bij een foute oplossing. Het voorbeeld hieronder illustreert dit voor Italiaans.



Afbeelding 9

4.3. Het voordeel van het gebruik van een filter

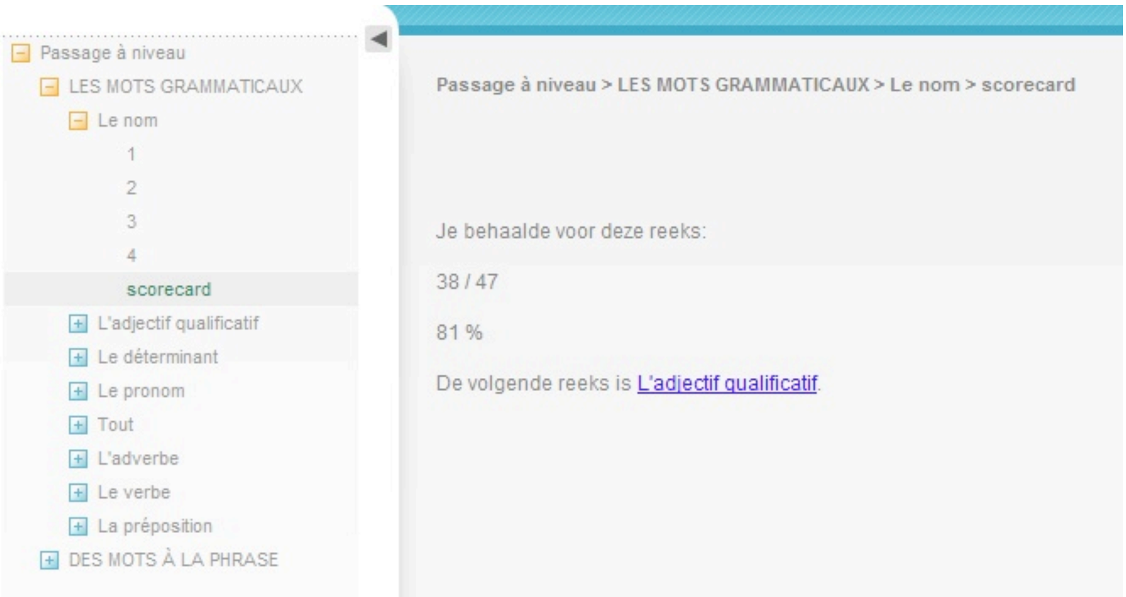
Ook de mogelijkheid om een filter te gebruiken blijkt een pluspunt te zijn. Aan de hand van een filter kunnen moeilijke oefeningen (hoofdbrekers) of oefeningen over een bepaald thema of in een bepaald domein achteraf opnieuw opgevraagd worden (zie afbeelding 10). Net voor een examen is het niet altijd zinvol of mogelijk om alle elektronische oefeningen opnieuw te maken. Het werken met zorgvuldig geselecteerde oefeningen is dan veel interessanter.



Afbeelding 10

4.4. Het voordeel van het gebruik van scorecards

Daarnaast bestaat voor de lesgever ook de mogelijkheid om scorecards toe te voegen aan oefeningen. Na een reeks oefeningen krijgt de student een scorecard te zien met een richtlijn: indien te weinig oefeningen juist werden opgelost, wordt doorverwezen naar een herhalingsreeks; indien een voldoende hoge score werd behaald, mag de student overgaan naar het volgende item. Deze differentiatie wordt door de studenten als zeer nuttig ervaren.



Afbeelding 11

4.5. De elektronische werkvorm en zijn invloed op het *face-to-face* onderwijs

Het is onmogelijk om hier uitvoerig in te gaan op alle commentaren uit de enquête, noch op de aanpassingen van Taalportaal die eruit voortvloeiden. Samenvattend kunnen we stellen dat de houding tegenover Taalportaal globaal positief is, waarbij ongeveer een derde van de studenten toch de klassikale oefensessies blijft verkiezen boven het individuele oefenen op Taalportaal. 8% van de studenten verkiest de elektronische vorm en bijna twee derden van de studenten vinden beide werkvormen even leerrijk. Deze resultaten pleiten duidelijk voor een nog verder doorgedreven blended learning, waarbij explicieter wordt nagedacht over strategieën om een optimaal evenwicht tussen e-learning en c-learning te bereiken.

Enkele jaren na aanvang van het project wordt duidelijk dat het werken met Taalportaal niet enkel vragen oproept in verband met online leren maar in grote mate ook de aandacht richt op de effectiviteit van het face-to-face onderwijs. In sommige gevallen zijn contactmomenten tijdrovend en worden ze als nutteloos ervaren door een groot aantal studenten. Het werken met blended learning kan een nieuwe impuls zijn voor de lesgever om de contactmomenten voor de studenten interessanter te maken nu de student een grotere betrokkenheid voelt, bijvoorbeeld in het geval van scenario's 2 en 3 die hierboven behandeld werden. Bij het tweede scenario kan de docent op voorhand over de resultaten van de elektronische oefeningen beschikken en er rekening mee houden wanneer hij een contactmoment voorbereidt. In het geval van het derde scenario, waarbij elektronische oefeningen gemaakt worden tijdens het contactmoment, kan elke student op eigen tempo werken en is hij vaak veel actiever dan wanneer oefeningen klassikaal gemaakt worden.

5. Besluit

Taalportaal combineert als eindproduct een heel aantal troeven. Studenten en docenten werken er doorgaans graag mee. De overgang tussen secundair en hoger onderwijs wordt beter ondersteund, de samenhang tussen de werkcolleges en de individuele studiemomenten neemt aanzienlijk toe en het platform kan vermoedelijk de effectiviteit van de contactmomenten in belangrijke mate verhogen. Elke individuele student kan, net als de docent, concreter en gedetailleerder de gemaakte vooruitgang meten. En in hogere jaren kunnen studenten individueel blijven oefenen op taalvaardigheid.

Maar er is meer dan dat. Naast het eindproduct dat werd afgeleverd, situeert Taalportaal zich in de ruimere context van het taalvaardigheidsonderwijs aan de KU Leuven. Tot die context behoort niet alleen de Blackboard-omgeving Toledo, het platform bij uitstek voor online communicatie tussen docent en student, maar ook het talencentrum (zie 2.) , dat de allerlaatste technologische evoluties op de voet volgt. Daarnaast wordt ook de bibliotheekinfrastructuur onophoudelijk gemoderniseerd en omgebouwd tot een druk bezochte studie- en ontmoetingsruimte, toegankelijk op elk moment van de dag.

Er is bovendien de toenemende internationalisering waardoor de contacten tussen de verschillende Europese universiteiten intenser worden. De aanpak van het taalbeleid vormt hier vanzelfsprekend een centrale kwestie en het taalvaardigheidsonderwijs profiteert daarvan. Zo lopen aan de Kortrijkse campus KU Leuven Kulak jaarlijks twee e-tandemprojecten met de universiteiten UMons en Lille3[8], waarbij elke Nederlandstalige student die

Frans studeert als partner een student toegewezen krijgt die Franstalig is en Nederlands studeert. Het voordeel van de ligging van de Kortrijkse campus vlakbij de Franse grens zorgt ervoor dat de studenten elkaar ook verschillende keren kunnen ontmoeten.

Taalportaal is dus een schakel in een taalvaardigheidsbeleid dat onophoudelijk in beweging is en steunt op onderzoek binnen het domein van de taaldidactiek, dat ook aan de eigen universiteit intens wordt gevoerd.

Waarschijnlijk is een van de belangrijkste verdiensten van het online oefenplatform trouwens dat het heeft bijgedragen tot een versterkte groepsdynamiek binnen het team van de taaldocenten. Het samenwerken aan deze tool heeft niet alleen de globale uitwisseling van informatie rond het lesgebeuren bevorderd, maar de kritische kijk van collega's op de didactische aanpak van elke taaldocent heeft geleid tot inzichten die de vernieuwing op taaldidactisch vlak verder zullen stimuleren.

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1 Hoewel deze opleidingsonderdelen op didactisch vlak een grote autonomie genieten, is het vanzelfsprekend dat er allerlei raakvlakken zijn en dat vakken zoals taalkunde of literatuurwetenschap, die theoretisch van aard zijn, de studenten een achtergrond bieden die zeer verrijkend en gedeeltelijk zelfs bepalend kan zijn voor de uitwerking van sommige aspecten van het vak 'taal en tekst'.

2 Voor een gedetailleerde beschrijving van Taalportaal verwijzen we naar Gevaert C., Vandebosch D. & D'hoedt M., 2010.

3 Edumatic is een oefen- en toetsplatform dat vanuit KU Leuven is ontwikkeld en intussen verder uitgebouwd en verspreid wordt door Televic Education. Meer info op www.edumatic.com.

4 Op dit moment maakt Toledo gebruik van de Blackboard-software.

5 Voor een bespreking van blended learning verwijzen we onder meer naar Desmet P., 2006.

6 De Kortrijkse campus, Kulak, waar de studentenaantallen kleiner zijn dan in Leuven, is van bij de aanvang van het project volledig uitgerust met de nodige infrastructuur, waardoor deze campus als proeftuin voor Taalportaal kon dienen.

7 Formatieve testen hebben geen invloed op de eindbeoordeling van de student. Maar ook summatieve testen of examens kunnen elektronisch afgenomen worden, op voorwaarde dat het systeem voldoende beveiligd wordt. Zo wordt het oefen– en toetsplatform Edumatic voor summatieve evaluatie gebruikt bij SELOR, het selectiebureau van de Belgische Federale Overheid.

8 Zie in dit verband: Eggermont C., Noske R., 2009.

Technology as a tool towards educational reform
Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia

Natalia Edisherashvili and Dick Smakman

1. Introduction

The advances in digital technology have dramatically changed the way people live in the twenty-first century. Off-line tools are making way for online ones. In the last five to ten years in particular, the number of - oftentimes interconnected - tools that the internet offers has been growing fast. This ongoing digital revolution is affecting the speed and manner with which we communicate and with which we organise our lives. Even our friendships are becoming organised through digital media. Personal and professional relationships are often dealt with in similar ways and simultaneously, and physical presence is no longer a requirement for maintaining contact with those around us in our professional and personal lives.

In teaching settings, too, this revolution is taking place. Schools need to keep up with major developments. Unfortunately, not every school has the funds to do so. Differences between quality of education are often determined by the amount of money assigned to schools for technical adjustments.

In the sovereign state of Georgia, at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, this issue of technical developments and funding is very topical. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia looked irreversibly towards the West, and this paved the way for a newly found self-assurance. In the move towards modernization, the educational system received a high priority. The European and American teaching approaches have since been important models that Georgian education policy makers have been looking up to and trying to emulate. Teaching foreign languages has become one of the top priorities; knowing western languages is considered an invaluable tool that will help open up the doors and help Georgian youth share in the experiences of the Western world. As Communicative Language Teaching is the unofficial western way of teaching, Georgian schools have been trying to adopt this approach and, to further modernize the language teaching system, support it with the digital tools available nowadays.

This article will review the digital opportunities that have become available in Georgia recently, and what benefits and challenges technology application in Communicative Language Teaching brings along in the Georgian context. Suggestions will be made as to how to deal with the existing obstacles and make technology-enhanced language teaching work in Georgia and thus reform education.

2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and digital aids

Technology and the opportunities it offers for language teaching/learning are very much in line with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. The primary purpose of this method is to equip learners with the communicative competence and skills to function in various situations and communication modes, which these days embraces personal as well as digital interactions.

Communicative Language Teaching is claimed to be an approach maximally oriented at satisfying the practical language needs of the learner. The needs named these days are writing e-mails, navigating the Web, finding information online, chatting online, to name a few. Technology makes it possible to practice the language to meet these needs. For example, while students in the past would practice their writing by producing a letter addressed to an imaginary person, now an e-mail format is recommended for informal writing purposes; instead of reading a text from a course book, there is a possibility to get online and read updated, recent information which would match the learner's needs and current interests. All of these possibilities make the learning/teaching process more authentic and reflect students' real life needs.

3. Technology-enhanced teaching in Georgia

Georgia has traditionally emphasized the importance of education. The country's orientation towards the western education system was underlined when it joined the Bologna process in 2005 and the transformation of the Georgian educational system began. Western-oriented courses in education have been developed and maintained ever since (Japaridze, 2008: 1).

Part of the western approach to teaching seems to be to eagerly latch on to technical developments taking place by implementing physical changes in the classroom which enable teachers and pupils to make use of the latest technical advancements as much as possible. Fortunately, whilst the various sound and film carriers in the past sometimes necessitated serious and expensive changes to the classroom, nowadays any digital tool can be used if computers or laptops are available, and any changes in these tools will not necessitate technical changes. In Georgia, efforts have been made to open up the teaching rooms to the digitization that the western model requires. Once computers, laptops and internet connections have been installed, Georgian schools can freely keep up with the powerful flow of digital improvements.

Integrating new technologies in teaching, and especially in language teaching, has been one of the priorities of the education policy makers in the past few years. Georgia might not be very far ahead in the area of technology-enhanced teaching at this point, but much progress can be observed in this direction (Asatiani, 2011: 38). Education professionals in Georgia say that children will learn better if more technology is brought into the teaching process (Tabula, 2012: 1). The awareness of the usefulness and inevitability of having modern technology opportunities duly exploited in communicative language teaching is growing rapidly (Nafetvaridze, 2011: 55).

An early sign of such awareness surfaced when the Government of Georgia initiated a project which aimed at providing first-grade pupils of public primary schools of Georgia with locally produced mini laptops called "Buki", which have also been exported to some countries abroad (Tabula, 2012: 1).

Picture 1: First-graders at a public school in Georgia, using mini computers, called "Bukis"[1].

This initiative was widely welcome by schools, as well as by pupils and their parents and, starting from 2011, within the framework of the National Presidential "My First Computer" Program, "Buki" laptops have been provided to all first-graders in Georgia. The computers offer pupils language practice programs together with other educational teaching resources, some of which are already installed on the computer while others can be downloaded from the website created to provide additional study materials for the Buki laptop. The Internet connection on these laptops enables learners to reach out to resources and learning opportunities available online, most of which are in English.

Schools need to prepare the students for modern-day challenges by exposing them to modern day technologies (Tabula, 2012: 2). The introduction of Netbooks is not the only sign of the efforts made toward implementation of technology-enhanced teaching in Georgia. Since 2011 the so-called "Classes of the Future" have been in place. In these computer labs, which are equipped with the latest hi-tech teaching resources, there is no need for pens, pencils or books. Interactive White Boards and monitors are used instead. Students can retrieve electronic versions of past lessons, without going through stacks of papers. All Classes of the Future are connected digitally, and students can compare work and chat about the subjects they study.

The project aims at preparing young learners for a full integration and functioning in the computer-dominated world, where they will need to have computer skills and computer literacy (Tabula, 2012: 1).

Together with technology and the omnipresence of the Internet comes the importance of knowing a foreign language (Ingorokva, 2011: 15). For a Georgian person to retrieve and understand the information presented on the World Wide Web, it is important to have competency in a foreign language (most notably English). Thus, together with extensive support provided to technology integration into teaching (http://www.taoba.ge), education policy makers in Georgia placed emphasis on intensive language education (Ingorokva, 2011: 15).

Picture 2: A "Class of the Future", showing advanced technology-enhanced teaching[2]

The introduction of modern technologies into teaching since 2011 has been accompanied by teacher training sessions in general computer use (Ingorokva, 2011: 15). However, it seems that teacher preparation and the quality and quantity of the technologies available presently at schools in Georgia are still an issue. Teachers and learners need to demonstrate readiness to accept the teaching paradigm shift towards more technology integration in their teaching/learning practice. As the integration of computer-based teaching is a recent change in the education system of Georgia, there is not much research available to answer the question whether teachers and learners are adapting to the change. However, there are some comments and feedback available on teaching experiences in Georgia by foreign teachers. One American teacher comments on his experience teaching English in Georgia. He says that he faced considerable obstacles in his teaching practice, which was mainly related to the lack of classroom equipment and material (Heyn, 2011: 1)[3]. "Classrooms are ill-prepared, the only tools being a chalk and a book. Printers are non-existent. As for the visual aids – well, only if the teachers want to carry their laptops to school every day," remarks another English instructor. Even though the schools that these teachers are referring to are located in rural areas, and the comments cannot be automatically applied to the schools in the bigger cities of Georgia, the examples provided illustrate the fact that there is still much to be improved and provided in order to support technology-enhanced teaching in Georgia (Mirren, 2011: 1).[4]

Countries, especially developing ones, cannot afford to stay passive to Information and Communication Technology if they are to compete and strive in the global economy (Jhurree, 2005: 467). As Jhuree further concludes, developed countries have more resources, knowledge, skills and experience in the sphere of technology-enhanced teaching, and developing countries can just "adopt, adapt and apply" the "ready-made" expertise with much fewer efforts (2005: 468). Georgia will need to follow this advice.

4. Georgian expert views on technology enhanced teaching in Georgia

Jhurree (2005) points out that while research data related to technology-enhanced teaching in developed countries abounds, only very few statistics and scientific data are available from developing countries (468). Georgia is not an exception in this respect. Some expert views are nevertheless available.

Perceptions of the principles underlying teaching methods have been changing slowly but steadily in Georgia since Soviet times. According to the Georgian education expert Giunashvili (2009), learning is considered to be a process of "knowledge construction" while being in contact with the social environment rather than a planned and pre-determined plan where a teacher takes the main lead. From this perspective, the role of technology use in education today is invaluable, as these tools help learners and teachers construe their knowledge more effectively than before (Giunashvili, 2009: 9). ICT use in language teaching is especially important in the Georgian context, where access to authentic materials and learning environments is not readily available. ICT helps increase learners' motivation while learning languages, as the need to be linguistically competent in a foreign language goes beyond the classroom boundaries and takes on a much broader and practical character (Giunashvili, 2009: 9); since most of the information that Georgian learners find on the web is in English or another foreign language, it helps Georgian learners see the direct need to learn foreign languages for communicative purposes, and this language becomes a means for learners to become part of the online community (Labadze, 2011: 20).

Other computer-based tools, the benefits of which Georgian education experts have been discussing, include educational computer games. According to Labadze, computer games, which are widely used in the study process in Western Europe, should be actively adopted in the Georgian context as well. According to Labadze, computer games help boost the learners' motivation, making them more independent and involved in the study process. Also, such games offer teachers alternative ways and extra techniques to make their lessons more diverse and entertaining (2009: 39).

Nafetvaridze (2012) discusses social networking sites, which could help teachers make their teaching practice aim at developing learners' independence and self-sufficiency (54). Social networking tools offer learners an opportunity to get connected and interact outside the school for study purposes, which facilitates the implementation of such activities as online project work and joint research. Outside-school study opportunities help teachers save much classroom time, which is often a problem for Georgian teachers, especially for the ones using more communicative methods of teaching (Nafetvaridze, 2012: 54).

The same researcher discusses how social networking tools help teachers move beyond the role of a traditional language teacher, the sole knowledge provider in the study process. She also talks about "the melting red ice", referring to Soviet times and the strict didactic methods of teaching in Georgia those days. With the help of technology, teachers are now given a chance to act as guides and facilitators, and help learners in the learning process (Nafetvaridze, 2012: 55). This view is shared by Labadze (2011), who discusses the changed role of a teacher and the shift towards more communicative methods of teaching in Georgia, and how technological progress has contributed to all that (21).

Nafetvaridze, while talking about the advantages of social networking in the teaching process, also mentions some of the drawbacks associated with this tool. In the language teaching process, for example, the use of social networking does not offer sufficient speaking and listening practice. She points out the difficulty of maintaining the right balance between the educational and non-educational social interaction opportunities that this tool provides (2012: 55). To solve the problem, Nafetvaridze suggests using American educational networking sites, such as "Edmondo"[5], which is a perfect tool to connect teachers, students and their parents. One more educational value that Nafetvaridze attributes to "Edmondo" is an easy-to-use test-creation function (2012: 56). Another website is "Iearn"[6], which is also recommended by the Ministry of Education of Georgia as a Communicative Language Teaching tool for teachers at Georgian schools.

Another use of technology in teaching is Internet-based simulations. Giunashvili elaborates on the positive, motivational effect that simulation activities have on learners and the learning process and how they help transform lecture-style teaching into a more communicative, interactive mode of instruction. Learners take on the challenge and are immersed in a sea of authentic educational work (2011: 14). He further points out the potential of computer simulation in teaching: "High quality computer simulations create a real-life environment, which, in some cases, can even serve as a substitute for missing resources" (2011: 16). Even though Giunashvili does not speak specifically about Communicative Language Teaching, the wide spectrum of opportunities he considers encompasses language teaching aspect as well.

Labadze also discusses the paradigm shift in the current education system in Georgia. He comments on the need to follow in the footsteps of the western world and the need to share some of their practices, such as the application of more communicative methods of teaching and basing the teaching/learning experience on the concepts of social constructivism. Integration of modern technology in the teaching process contributes to a great extent to achieving such goals (2011: 18).

5. Advantages and challenges of digital aids in CLT

5.1. The available tools

The most common resources available today, offline and online, which might be used in a Communicative Language Teaching class are: language practice software, multimedia simulation software, language games, Word, PowerPoint, teaching/learning sites, virtual worlds. e-mail, Web fora, logs, Instant Messaging, Skype, Facebook, Wikipedia, podcasts, YouTube, and Interactive White Boards. Georgia, like any other country, has the opportunity to implement such tools and needs to negotiate their pros and cons and select the tools that help the modernisation of education.

5.2. Advantages of digital teaching tools

The above-named tools potentially contribute positively to the quality of teaching. Below follows a summary of the benefits these tools offer for Communicative Language Teaching.

Advantage #1. Learners are more engaged in the study process
Integration of technology in the process of language teaching helps to transform classrooms from teacher-centred into student-centred learning environments (Pitler, 2006: 41). The teacher no longer assumes the role of the sole knowledge-provider. Knowledge is constructed through real task completion, which is very much in line with CLT principles.

One of the teachers involved in the technology-related study of Ertmer et al. (2012) summarized his attitude towards truly communicative language teaching in the following way: "If you walk into my room and you are not sure if I am even there, but the kids are engaged, then I feel like I am being successful because it really has to be student-centred" (431). Technology is a useful tool that might help create such a learner-centred environment in the process of teaching.

Advantage #2. The teaching is more communicative and interactive
Rozgien says that Internet has become a great tool for communication in teaching, and a medium for collaboration. The Internet is especially useful for language teaching, as communication takes place through a language, which, within a technology-enhanced language teaching format, is a means to achieve communicative tasks and, at the same time, a study object. Social networking, blogging, and chatting are some of the Internet-based tools which greatly contribute to a highly communicative and interactive mode of language instruction (2008: 35).

Advantage #3. More learner autonomy
With the aid of technology, students can make more choices and take on a

more active role in their own learning (Mize & Gibbons, 2000; Page, 2002; Waxmal et al., 2002). They can propose, create, and test independent learning experiences in a foreign language; for example, create their own blogs, post their comments, and make videos. In all of these tasks, language use plays an instrumental role; learners are immersed in purposeful communication, which contributes greatly to the improvement of their overall language proficiency (Ertmer et al., 2012: 430).

Advantage #4. Inexhaustible source of authentic materials

When a language is taught in a country where this language is a non-native tongue of the local population (e.g. when English is taught in a non-English-speaking country such as Georgia), the availability of adequate and appropriate teaching materials is often a problem.

Even though some researchers (e.g., Hémard & Cushion, 2002) think retrieving online teaching materials through the Internet and tailoring them to the existing needs of language learners can be a time-consuming experience, it is hard to find a course book which would cater to most of learners' diverse individual needs and interests. Under these circumstances, exploiting web-based resources can be an invaluable solution to the problem. Also, the authenticity of Internet-based resources makes them more attractive and motivating for learners and can better prepare them for real-life communication experiences (Sharma & Barrette, 2007: 42).

Advantage #5. Motivating and encouraging effect

Students are more interested in the type of learning which involves activities that reflect their daily life experiences. This way learners see the benefits of their learning practices and the direct application of the knowledge they are trying to gain, which is motivating and encouraging. Motivation is paramount to student success and one of the contributing factors to a more efficient learning process (Valentinm, 2013: 57; Engin, 2009: 1035). Krashen, in line with this, observes that learners with a high motivation do better in second language acquisition (1982: 31). Thus, the motivational role of technology use in Communicative Language Teaching has to be duly recognized.

Advantage #6. Relaxing learning atmosphere

In any aspect of education it is always important to create a low-anxiety environment in which a productive learning process can take place. In language education this may be especially important since in order to take in and produce language learners need to feel that they are allowed to make mistakes and take risks. This relates directly to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982). According to Krashen, learners must be non-anxious in the process of learning so as to enable them to acquire the language (1982: 30). Technology is non-judgmental and does not involve direct personal evaluation, and this contributes to lowering the affective filter factor, resulting in more productive language learning. Shy learners who might feel intimidated in face-to-face communication are offered a wider range of interaction modes, where they might feel less stressed and freer to interact (Pilter, 2006: 41).

Advantage #7. Integrated-skills development

Such activities as online projects and research contribute greatly to natural language skills development, as in order to complete authentic tasks collaboratively students speak, listen, write and read at the same time. A process of multiple skills acquisition thus takes place and this is accompanied by a recycling of vocabulary and grammar, which is equally significant (Dooly & Masats, 2011: 49).

More importantly, while working on such authentic, collaborative tasks, learners use their language skills for learning purposes: they read to learn, they listen to learn, they speak to learn - experiences that prepare them for life-long learning. This outcome goes far beyond the classroom boundaries and becomes an important life experience for language learners (Stroller, 2006: 26).

Technology-enhanced learning also provides a multisensory and multi-format environment (Pilter, 2006: 41) which greatly supports learners with different learning styles, preferences and abilities. According to Gardner (1983), in order to achieve optimal teaching outcomes, the learners' individual "intelligences" must never be overlooked. For instance, some learners remember things better when presented in graphic form, some prefer hearing things, while for others seeing things (e.g., words or pictures) move is more useful. The computer can satisfy the needs of many types of learners, making material available to the learner in the form of a text, a video clip or a movie format (Berk, 2009: 11).

Advantage #8. Technical benefits

Alongside the online tools, there are off-line computer-based resources, such as language practice software, language games, Microsoft Office programs (text processors, slide presentation tools, for instance), which, compared with the traditional procedures, contribute to the efficiency of Communicative Language Teaching by providing learners and teachers with more easy-to-use writing, editing, information saving, and material recycling tools, as well as correction and feedback provision possibilities (Valentin et al., 2013: 56). The opportunities that such off-line technology offers help boost learners' and teachers' motivation and efficiency, and save time in their learning/teaching process (AbuSeileek, 2006: 12; Garris et al, 2002: 441).

5.3. Challenges brought about by digital teaching tools

Besides being useful ways of improving the classes, the same tools can pose serious challenges to both teachers and the schools. The most dominant ones are listed below.

Challenge #1. Expense of implementation

There are many start-up expenses: buying hardware and software, hiring and training technical personnel, maintenance, and upgrading. As financial investment is indispensible in making a technology-enhanced teaching environment possible, this means that schools need to consider the cost-effectiveness of the efforts (Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002).

Challenge #2. Finding appropriate methodology

As the computer is only a tool and a resource, not a method that can be used in the process of teaching (Garret, 1991: 74), it is difficult to define beforehand whether it can be exploited to its fullest advantage and thus lead to satisfying results. Elaboration of an appropriate pedagogical approach and method is essential for making technology work and turning it into a useful teaching tool. According to Pilter (2006: 39), "[i]f schools add technology without providing adequate professional development, the only thing that will increase is their electric bill." This idea is shared by Salehi, according to whom the effectiveness of technology use in teaching largely depends on how and why it is applied (2012: 215). Bringing new machines into the classroom simply to seem innovative does not help teaching or learning; on the contrary, in case of misuse, the technology application in the teaching process might have a reverse effect, namely demotivating students, who might perceive their interpersonal connections and personal power as being reduced (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000: 14).

Also, it has been proved that short-term, one-time superficial teacher training programmes in using technology as an efficient teaching tool often turn out to have equally short-term results. More systematic supervision and support needs to be provided to teachers in order to cause a long-lasting effect on their methodological abilities (Ringstadd & Kelly, 2002).

Challenge #3. Keeping up with technological developments

Looking at the history of language teaching, we notice that each method was accompanied by some form of technology or innovation. For example, the Grammar Translation method, which primarily focused on the one-way transmission of information, made great use of the blackboard (since the 1840s). The blackboard was partly replaced by the overhead projector (since the 1960s), another tool for teacher-dominated classroom instruction. Computer software programs and audio tapes were popular among the practitioners of the Audio Lingual Method (1960s). These tools were mostly offline, and developments in this area continued in the subsequent decades and then peaked in the 1990s.

It is a challenge for teachers to keep up with fast technological developments. Being able to effectively use technological tools entails a good understanding and knowledge of what is available for classroom use. Staying up-to-date with modern trends in technology and constantly trying to think of ways to make those part of the language teaching process can be a time-consuming process, which constantly requires dedication and enthusiasm from teachers (Barrett & Sharma, 2003: 3).

Challenge #4. Technophobia

For some teachers, dealing with technology and effectively integrating it into the teaching methodology and curriculum can be a challenging and daunting experience (Barrett & Sharma, 2003: 2). Technophobia is still present among some teachers and learners (Leither, 2009: 35). This is a big obstacle, usually more for teachers than learners, and unless this fear is overcome the goal of making technology-enhanced teaching a common practice will be hard to achieve (Rozgiene et al., 2008: 32).

Challenge #5. Variation in computer skills

Integrating technology in language teaching demands specific skills from teachers. A lack of necessary technical skills and confidence can be a factor preventing teachers from using technology in their teaching (Salehi, 2012: 215). Before teachers try to come up with the proper methodology to efficiently combine technology and face-to-face teaching, it is important that they as well as their learners have some basic skills to build their language experiences upon (Rozgiene et al., 2008: 32-33).

Challenge #6. Limited suitability of tools

It has been observed that using technology not only as the content of language learning but also as learning material and as a tool is especially efficient for more advanced language learners. The Internet, for example, offers authentic materials which can be exploited in language teaching. Naturally, the whole process of working on original texts, instant communications and digital correspondence might become a barrier for beginner language learners, who need more explicit, slower face-to-face contact to better understand things and build a linguistic basis. The technical level of students is therefore a factor, besides the cognitive linguistic factors.

Challenge #7. Psychological resistance

Learners' as well as teachers' conservative perceptions about efficient education methods and about how languages are learnt might lead to scepticism towards using technologies as an academic teaching tool (Warshauer, 2000: 24). This concerns was confirmed by the teachers participating in the study conducted by Ertmer et al. (2012: 423); teachers noted that the strongest barriers preventing them from using technology were their existing attitudes and beliefs toward technology as well as their current levels of knowledge and skills. Such resistance comes especially from the students and teachers who belong to instructional cultures where more conservative, teacher-centred methods of language instruction are applied. The study by Warschauer confirmed this.

According to Ertmer et al, to remedy the situation professional development efforts need to be redirected toward strategies for facilitating changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs (2012: 423).

Challenge #8. Administrative repercussions

E-mailing, online communicating, and planning and tracking the learners' progress can be very time-consuming (Salehi, 2012: 215), and the fact that most administrators still count the actual time the teacher spends in the classroom to determine the workload might be a discouraging factor for educators and make them avoid using technology-enhanced teaching tools (Rizgiene, Medvedeva, Strakova, 2008: 30).

6. Recommendations

From the advantages and challenges described so far, the following recommendations can be deduced. These are useful in particular for countries like Georgia, which are facing a plethora of educational choices already besides having to prepare for challenges which arise from the digital revolution.

Recommendation #1: Curb and control excessive enthusiasm

Generally, even though the importance of having more innovative, technology-based practices introduced in the language teaching system is widely recognized, the excessive enthusiasm for computers gives some people grounds to worry about making pupils over-dependent on technologies. "The growing mania for getting a computer for every child in schools is dangerous and foolish" (Chapman, 1998: 2), which situation, according to Waschauer and Meskil, is reminiscent of the times when some decades ago the promises of "magic through technology" did not quite materialise, bringing about much frustration and scepticism towards technology-based approaches, such as audio labs. Consequently, excessive enthusiasm should be restrained and overdependence on the computer should be avoided (Werschauer & Meskil, 2000: 2).

Recommendation #2: Make technology targeted and meaningful

Using innovative, modern tools of technology in teaching seems appealing and attractive. However, using new technologies has to always be serving a concrete academic purpose and this use must never be merely for the sake of introducing something different and innovative in the teaching routine. Technology use should not become an end in itself (Chapman,1998: 2). We must ensure that the teaching is driven by the pedagogy and supported by the technology (Laborda, 2008: 289).

What makes a difference is how you take advantage of the opportunities that new technologies offer for language teaching. As Jones put it, "It's not what it is, it's what you do with it that matters" (1986: 34). A similar attitude is voiced by an American instructor, during the experiment that Werschauer and Meskill conducted. The instructor summarizes his careful attitude towards technology in the language teaching: "It is not so much what I do with the technology, but what technology helps me get the students to do. That is what results in learning" (Werschauer & Meskill, 2000).

Technology must only be applied in teaching if its use contributes to the facilitation and efficiency of the learning process, as in case of its misuses the teacher might end up providing pupils with the skills of using a particular software or operating system rather than focusing on transmitting knowledge or developing a particular skill. In this case, it "would be a great disservice to young people", Chapman concludes (1998: 2).

Recommendation #3: Consciously separate or combine the roles of the teacher and the technology

Even though there are certain computer-based possibilities that are irreplaceable (tools for fast information retrieval, electronic dictionary possibilities, endless exposure to the target authentic language, unlimited opportunities of 'guided practice' and consolidation, for instance), the role of the teacher in the study process cannot be replaced (Barrett and Sharma, 2009: 3).

As can be deduced from the widely used term "technology-enhanced teaching", it is important to apply the benefits of technology to supplement and enhance the efficiency of a learning experience. The roles of a teacher and of technology need to be seen as complementary, and the best has to be taken from each and be efficiently combined for the best learning/ teaching experiences and outcomes (Barrett and Sharma, 2009: 3).

The teacher is there to do a number of things which require human intervention, such as performing a needs analysis and creating the learning syllabus. A computer may play a role in this, but decisions such as choosing a conversation topic, for example, need to be made by an experienced professional. Thus, it is important to separate the roles and differentiate between the contributions that teacher and technology might make in the process of teaching - the teacher dealing with more analytical, non-linear, or as Barrett and Sharma put it, "fuzzy" areas, and technologies supplementing more straightforward extra learning opportunities (2009: 3).

Similar views are expressed by the Georgian education expert Giunashvili (2009: 10), who adds that technology use should contribute rather than replace teachers and the face-to-face learning process altogether. This is also voiced by the official policy makers in Georgia, who, while talking about the necessity of bringing technology into the study process in Georgia, emphasize the need to maintain the role of a teacher and offer a balanced methodology repertoire (Tabula, 2012: 1).

Recommendation #4: Help teachers overcome resistance to new teaching paradigms

Changing the teaching paradigm that teachers are used to is never easy (Dooly & Masats, 2011: 43). Research shows that it is difficult to change teachers' established practices and beliefs, as they are based on their own learning experiences (Pajares, 1992). Thus, personal experiences are important determinants of how teachers think and what they do. Dooley and Masata contend that it is extremely important that teacher training programs incorporate many awareness-raising components about the significance and benefits of technology integration in the language teaching process. Moreover, it is important to expose teacher trainees to technology-enhanced experiences by including technology-based approaches in the teacher training. Teacher trainers need to practice what they preach and make the trainees observe directly the useful effects technology-enhanced teaching can have (Dooly & Masata, 2011: 44).

The point made above is further reinforced by Goldsby and Fazal (2000), who conclude that only those student-teachers who learn to use technology during their pre-service studies are likely to incorporate technology in their future classes (121).

Recommendation #5: Systematically and structurally support computer skills

A considerable amount of training and technical support must be provided by the school and by policy makers to help teachers acquire basic technical knowledge. This will help avoid the frustration and disruption technology use might cause (Rozgiene et al., 2008: 29). Knowing which websites, interactive materials and useful computer programs to recommend to your learners, as well as knowing how to search the Web efficiently, use social networking and other information and communication tools - such as Skype, YouTube, Podcasts, to name a few - is part of the basic technology literacy that the teacher must possess. When these core skills are acquired, there are many ways they can be extended. At an advanced level, teachers may wish to learn how to further use these tools for creating online materials or podcasts, explore virtual learning environment, or video-conferencing facilities.

Recommendation #6: Provide methodology training

According to Dooly and Masats (2011), the use of technology is often met with reservation on the part of teachers as they do not know what the pedagogical application and implication of different forms of technology are (44). According to Mashira and Koehler, "a teacher who is able to negotiate the relationship between content, pedagogy, and technology develops a form of expertise greater than the knowledge of a disciplinary expert, a technology expert and an education" (2006: 1017).

Giunashvili (2009: 10) points out the importance of knowing the methods and pedagogic techniques of how technology can be applied in teaching and how to turn technology into a learning/teaching tool. In Georgia, this problem is attempted to be solved through specially organized teacher trainings, supported by the education policy makers (Ingorokva, 2011: 5).

Recommendation #7: Plan and build school infrastructure

The availability of a technical infrastructure and of resources is a basis for technology-enhanced teaching. According to Rozgiene et al, in order to make technology-enhanced teaching possible minimal technical requirements should be met by a school - at least one computer with Internet access, a printer, basic computer software, a computer lab, some technical staff, and, preferably, language learning platforms and programs (2008: 30).

In this respect, situations can differ dramatically in developed and developing countries. The availability of technology and its quality as well as quantity will determine the amount and intensity of technology-based language teaching at each particular educational institution, in each particular country (Rozgiene et al., 2008: 28).

7. Discussion

There has been a much more favourable environment for technology application in language teaching in Georgia since 2002. Before that time, even a cassette player was a luxury for a Georgian language teacher (Tsitsishvili, 2001), whereas now the majority of schools are connected to the Internet and have more technological opportunities than ever before. Nevertheless, the technology-enhanced teaching modernization process in Georgia is far from being completed. There are many schools, especially in non-central locations and regional parts of Georgia, which await much innovation.

Efforts have been made to develop computer literacy throughout the country, with the help of a project of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, in the framework of which the "Society of Computer Knowledge proliferation" was established. Together with the proliferation of computer literacy comes the need to be better at foreign languages, as, for a Georgian-speaking citizen, being an efficient computer user involves knowing a foreign language.

Language proficiency contributes greatly to being better at, for example, navigating the web. At the same time, having computer-based resources available provides a sea of opportunities for learning languages (Son, 2008: 34). So, language teaching and the proliferation of computer literacy go hand in hand and many efforts can be observed in both of these directions in Georgia. However, in present-day classrooms, technologies are still underused and the expertise and experience in applying technology-enhanced language teaching, infused with an appropriate pedagogic value, is still not in place.

8. Facing the Future

In the twenty-first century we have witnessed a change in foreign language teaching methodology – traditional Communicative Language Teaching is being enhanced with the intensive application of technology, which leads to the modernization of CLT and its better suitability to present-day communicative language needs. The difference with previous developments in the history of language teaching methods is that this time it is not the major principles or philosophy of how languages are learnt that changed, neither has one method been replaced by a dramatically different alternative (as in the case of the Grammar Translation Method being replaced by the Audio Lingual Method, for instance); what changed is the definition itself of what "communicative competence" means in this technology-dominated era. The concept of Communicative Competence broadened considerably to embrace the ability not only of face-to-face communication but also that of digital interaction.

According to Rainie & Horrigan (2005), web communication has become the new norm in people's way of life in the developed countries (59), and computer-mediated language can be regarded as "the community's linguistic norm" (Crystal, 2001: 41). A language educator's job is to reflect on these new norms - to explore their underpinnings, their contexts of operation, and their implications; to reframe and rethink our conceptions of language, communication, and even society. It is through this process of analysis and reflection that we can best decide how we can and should use technology in language learning and teaching (Kern, 2005: 183). Even though technology-integrated instruction is on the way up in Georgia, technology is not yet actively and comfortably used by Georgian language educators in their everyday teaching practices. It will be some time still before technology-enhanced Communicative Language Teaching becomes mainstream in Georgia. The biggest challenge for this country may not be the logistical and practical integration of technology but the reflection thereon in order for long-term success to become a reality.

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Conquering the world with "cutting-edge curricula"

Global Citizens learning East Asian languages

Riikka Länsisalmi

1. Introduction

Leiden University is currently attempting to attract more students by offering new internationally flavoured academic programmes at BA and MA level with "cutting-edge and globally conscious curricula" (Goto-Jones 2012), such as *International Studies*, *Human Interaction*, *International Development, History*, *Arts & Culture of Asia*, and *Politics, Society & Economy of Asia*. Unlike "traditional" *Languages and Cultures* ('talen en culturen') programmes, with a heavy language learning component, these novel curricula focus on "content", while offering a lighter version of optional/required language study usually ranging from 10 to 40 EC (European Credits)[1]. English being the unquestioned lingua franca and language of instruction in these programmes, foreign language modules offer a taste of other languages related to the area of study, including "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" languages such as Japanese and/or official United Nations languages (e.g. Mandarin Chinese and Arabic).

If we assume that language and communication competencies needed by professionals to be able to function in a working environment using a second/foreign language need to be at the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) level of "Independent User" B1–B2[2] or above, an obvious question emerges: Which levels are attainable in foreign language education within the given parameters in languages such as Japanese and Mandarin Chinese? The purpose of this paper is to examine these questions, with a particular focus on Japanese as an example case. In the following section this examination is first contextualized by a brief introduction into developments in the teaching and learning of East Asian languages in Europe. An overview of recent *Eurobarometer* language surveys, selected European Union and Council of Europe initiatives and more localized policy documents addressing foreign language education policies and practices follows in section 3. Reference is also made to the role of motivational factors identified by language learners themselves. Finally, section 4 will examine how short introductions into languages such as Japanese are conceived in terms of language competency target levels and to what extent European models can actually be applied.

2. New directions in European language education: Rising Asia?

As Salverda (2002: 5) notes, "[o]f the total number of languages in the world, [...] just ten languages are spoken as their first or second language by some 3.7 billion people around the world: five European languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese and French) and five non-European languages (Chinese, Hindi, Bengali, Arabic and Japanese)." Europe aspires for multilingualism and its language policies have long emphasized the role of languages spoken within the borders of the European Union, but recently the needs of an increasingly globalized market economy have triggered language policy formulations including references also to major non-European languages such Japanese and (Mandarin) Chinese. Following China's robust economic growth, outcries for more education particularly in Chinese are heard from influential stakeholders. In Finland, for example, a game company that created an internationally known hit game and operates also in China now lends its *Angry Birds* for a Mandarin Chinese language project (Yanzu 2012). In the Netherlands, Mandarin Chinese high school language instructor education has been initiated, and in Sweden the Minister of Education Jan Björklund went as far as to remark that he wants Sweden to be the first European country to introduce Chinese as a foreign language in all junior and senior high schools (Edelhom 2011). Acknowledging that only a very small fraction of the world's living languages are actually spoken on European soil, Europe-centred language planning rhetoric is starting to shift towards a more global paradigm of educational linguistic diversity.

Following the rapid growth of its economy, China began establishing Confucius Institutes, or "non-profit public institutions" aiming to "promote Chinese language and culture", in 2004 (Confucius Institute 2009). Five years later, at the end of 2009, there were already 94 such institutes in Europe and more than 320 worldwide. Mandarin Chinese is now enjoying increasing popularity as an optional foreign language in European schools, starting at the first year of primary education, as exemplified by Meilahti primary school in the Finnish capital of Helsinki (Meilahden ala-asteen koulu 2012). Likewise, the number of learners of Japanese has been rising steadily and currently the language is studied by roughly three million people around the globe (Japan Foundation 2009). While most learners of Japanese are located in other Asian countries, Oceania and North America, the language of hugely popular *manga* (Japanese comics) and *anime* (Japanese animated films) is attracting increasing attention also on the old continent.

In European higher education, Oriental/Asian Studies have traditionally been the cradle of Asian language learning. To a large extent, students' interests have now shifted from philology-oriented translation, annotation and explanation of ancient texts towards up-to-date themes with societal relevance, currently equally explored by disciplines outside the "Non-Western" spheres of higher learning. On a strategic institutional level, this tendency is on par with a transition from Oriental Studies to (thematic/disciplinary) Area Studies, which is high on the agenda of European institutes of higher learning. Even those with centuries-old traditions in the field rename and reorganize their academic programmes, also to allow for more students to take up Asian Studies without the traditionally heavy language learning component. Under a broad "Asia" label, programmes of this type can, for example, offer thematic tracks interconnecting across geographical areas, such as *History, Arts and Cultures* or *Politics, Society* *and Economy (of Asia)*. The "Wikipedia student generation" also appears to be increasingly attracted to even wider perspectives; new undergraduate and graduate level academic programmes or tracks such as *Global Citizenship* emerge and, accordingly, institutional reorganizations result in departments of *Global* or *World Cultures* being formed. Discourses on disciplinarity and multi-/inter-disciplinarity spark heated academic debates, as formulations for fresh, modern, and globally relevant visions of Area Studies are sought.

In this climate, from an administrator's perspective, academic language instruction faces the danger of being considered as time-consuming and expensive, requiring small multiple parallel groups, numerous instructors, and several contact teaching hours per week. While getting rid of language components not only helps to save costs, an increasing number of administrators also seem to believe that speedy study progress and timely graduation are best achieved without extensive language learning requirements. Thus incoming students can choose to graduate for example from a 1-year MA programme in Asian Studies without any knowledge of a language relevant to the target area. However, in order to cater to as many potential students as possible (and to keep study tracks without the epithet "global/international" still alive?), students may have the option to take a beginner's level modern language course in a "non-Indo-European/non-Latin alphabet language" such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tibetan, or Arabic (International Studies 2012).

3. Language learning in Europe and motivations for Japanese language study: Economy vs individual

To gain a better idea of the role and positioning of these "Non-Indo-European/Non- Latin Alphabet" languages within the educational context of the language modules to be examined below, I first briefly explore examples of public discourses on language education policy and planning with regard to non-European languages in Europe and the Netherlands. The examined documents include samples of European Union and Council of Europe initiatives and policy documents, surveys to address language education policies and practices, and a recent policy document of the Dutch Education Council on foreign language education in schools (Onderwijsraad 2008). Despite the dominating role of English in these discourses, the languages of neighbouring countries, in the Dutch context German and French, continue to play an important role in language education policies. However, when the focus is shifted to future language needs, a very different picture emerges: the languages of the most immediate European trading partners give way to Russian, (Brazilian) Portuguese, Hindi and (Mandarin) Chinese.[3]

The latest European Commission *Eurobarometer* public opinion surveys, which address European language education policies and practices, illustrate that European citizens have increasingly positive attitudes towards learning foreign languages (Directorate General for Education and Culture 2006). While knowledge of foreign languages was considered favourably by 70% of the respondents in 2001, five years later this percentage had risen to 83%. Interestingly, such positive attitudes appear to parallel a rising tendency to associate language learning with professional opportunities and advancement. Thus, a shift from "soft" values linked to language learning, such as personal development, intercultural awareness, creativity and innovation, or European values (e.g. "feeling more European") to instrumental ones can be detected (Länsisalmi 2012a). Similar formulations can be found in policy makers' and stakeholders' discourses: "European companies continue to *lose business* because they cannot speak their customers' languages; they need to improve their skills in languages, including those of non-European trading partners" (Commission of the European Communities 2002). These views are echoed by the Dutch Education Council, similarly underscoring the economic perspective and market value of foreign languages.[4] Judging from *Eurobarometer* surveys, the range of non-European languages mastered by European citizens is, however, very limited. As the Commission of the European Communities (2002: 6) puts it, "this narrow range of foreign languages could make it difficult for European businesses to achieve their full potential in a multilingual market place." In the globalizing world, mastery of non-European languages is becoming an indispensable economic asset (Skutnabb-Kangas 2002: 17). Speaking Japanese or Chinese makes it easier to sell goods to the Japanese- or Chinese-speaking public "and thereby gives rise to higher profits" (Grin 2002: 21).

As was illustrated above – along with Russian, (Brazilian) Portuguese and Arabic – (Mandarin) Chinese, in particular, is receiving attention as an increasingly important future language in European language education discourses. While economy-driven discourses pave the way for Mandarin Chinese, interestingly, the main purpose for studying Japanese still appears to be a simple personal interest in the language itself (58%), followed by needs for "communication" (55%). "Learning about *manga* [Japanese comics], *anime* [Japanese animated films], etc." is also mentioned by 50% of the respondents of a language education survey carried out in 2009 (Japan Foundation 2009). On the other hand, "future employment", a "utility-based tendency", is mentioned as a motivational factor by 43% and is, together with "interest in Japanese language", up more than 15 percentage points since the previous survey in 2006. Similarly, "current work", another employment-related argument, has risen to 18%. Employment, though, is likely to be a more important reason for Japanese language study in areas such as East Asian countries and the Pacific region than in Europe. Although employment-related arguments thus seem to be increasing, Japanese also still has "non-market value": a student of Japanese may, for example, be interested in learning the (youth) language as depicted in *manga* or *anime*, possibly even providing own translations of Japanese originals on various fansub (fan-subtitled) sites, or engaging in *kosupure* ("cosplay" i.e. costume play) as a hobby. Or perhaps s/he is a "game geek", identifying with Japanese online *otaku* (people with obsessive interests) communities, or a fan of J-pop (Japanese pop music) or Gothic & Lolita (fashion-oriented subculture of young females) style, who follows related news via social media, belongs to fan clubs or communities, and orders products online directly from Japan. The Japanese language thus responds to an individual preference structure, including contact with a subculture or an otherwise specific sphere of Japanese (youth) culture and community, rather than representing an economic interest with little less than instrumental value (Länsisalmi 2012a, 2012b).[5]

Using EU language education policy jargon, one could thus claim that the majority of Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) students may, indeed, be interested in learning Japanese as a "personal adoptive language" ("langue personnelle adoptive"/"persoonlijke adoptietaal", Maalouf et al. 2008: 10, Onderwijsraad 2008: 27) for reasons other than mere professional interests associated with economic advantages. According to policy makers, who themselves adopted the concept from Lebanese-born author Amin Maalouf and a group of other writers and philosophers, this "adopted language" would not normally be the one used for international communication. Rather it should be considered as a "second mother tongue"; Europeans having an unlimited choice to select "rare" languages spoken on distant continents as such "adopted languages" (Maalouf et al. 2008: 10-12). Although Maalouf and friends underline that learning "adopted languages" should be integrated in the school and higher education curricula of all European citizens,[6] in practice their cultural philosophical ideals are quickly run over by economic interests. Languages for which there is little demand – even when they are acknowledged as economically important – are excluded from public education and sidelined as non-curricular activities to be organized and offered by heterogeneous language schools and courses outside official curricula.[7]

4. Assessing language competence and setting targets: CEFR for all?

Following this lengthy contextualization, it is time to take a look at actual language education practices. If more Japanese and Mandarin Chinese learning opportunities are to be offered, an obvious question presents itself: Do European language education planners and administrators in charge of drafting "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" language modules have a realistic idea of what a working language level in an East Asian language entails? While there appears to be some consensus that practical foreign language and communication competencies required in a working environment need to be at least at the CEFR level of "Independent User" B1–B2 or above[8], European policy documents seldom – if ever – make reference to the inapplicability of such requirements to "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" languages. By contrast, instructors and researchers of languages such as Mandarin Chinese or Japanese are quick to point out the challenges that non-Western orthographic systems, possibly unfamiliar grammatical structures, and the lack of cognates between learners' L1 and L2 present to a balanced development of oral proficiency and literacy in these languages in European language education contexts. As Mori and Mori (2011: 466) remark, "ideas based on the instruction of commonly taught European languages cannot be easily or speedily adapted to JFL contexts." Thus a question emerges: How can the common European yardstick, the CEFR can-do formulations, be applied to languages such as Japanese and Mandarin Chinese?

As a partial response to this, the Japan Foundation (JF), an organization supervised by the Japanese Foreign Ministry specializing in international cultural exchange, released in 2010 the *JF Standard for Japanese Language Education* (http://jfstandard.jp), which is modelled on the proficiency level-based can-do statements of the CEFR. As the following brief examples illustrate, however, the JF Standard is not identical to its European counterpart. Compare for example CEFR Reading and Writing competency can-do statements at level B1 with the corresponding level in the JF Standard. Alongside more fine-grained can-do statements, the CEFR proposes very general "umbrella descriptors" for different skills, including the following for B1-level Reading and Writing (British Council 2012):

- Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
- Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.

The JF Standard, on the other hand, does not include such B1-level "umbrella statements" or general descriptors; rather reading and writing skills are linked only to very specific and concrete contexts, themes and types of texts. Can-do statements include for example reading letters and e-mails from family and friends on topics related to travelling or expression of gratitude and recent personal news. Writing, on the other hand, refers to short pieces such as activity reports, blog entries or comments on a website, business trip overviews, simple letters to the editor about environmental issues, or cooking recipes (JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education 2012):

- Can read and understand a letter or e-mail from a friend written in some detail about feelings of gratitude and recent news, and understand most of the content.
- Can write in some detail for a friend a recipe, if one is familiar with the dish.

While the JF Standard makes no promises about any *general* abilities to understand factual texts or write cohesive and coherent texts at B1 level, more focus is put on abilities to locate relevant information, again in very specific contexts, such as job requirements and descriptions, travel magazines and guide books, information on illnesses and preventive methods and treatment, shopping (comparison of different products), and education (course syllabi), for example:

- Can look through texts of some length in, for example, a travel magazine or guide book, and find the information necessary to decide on a destination, such as the features of famous sights and local specialties.[9]

Even while considering such limitations formulated in the JF Standard, reaching the CEFR level B1 in short "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" language modules seems like a relatively unrealistic target. If we take as a concrete example a 15-EC (10 + 5 EC) Beginner's Japanese module, such as the one currently offered in the 1-year Asian Studies Master's programmes at Leiden University, it can be hypothesized that the number of credits translates roughly into 420 hours of student work (1 EC = 28 h). By the end of this intensive module, students are expected to acquire approximately 1,700 basic words and 317 Chinese *kanji* characters[10], including 254 of the 284 *kanji* listed for Level 3 of the international Japanese Language Proficiency Test JLPT (as administered until 2010). The JLPT, until 2010 consisting of four levels, Level 4 being the lowest and Level 1 the highest one, has been offered since 1984 as "a reliable means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese proficiency of non-native speakers" by the Japan Foundation and the public service foundation Japan Educational Exchanges and Services JEES.[11] As it has been estimated that JFL learners without prior Chinese kanji character knowledge need to study for approximately 500–750 hours in order to be able to pass the JLPT "intermediate" Level 3 (*kanji* ~300; vocabulary ~1,500), attaining this level within the 420 hours allocated for a 15-EC module seems challenging (JLEC 2010). On the other hand, reaching the highest level of the JLPT, Level 1 (*kanji* ~2,000; vocabulary ~10,000), common requirement for university studies in Japan, is estimated to require as many as 3,100–4,500 hours of active studying.

A new format of the JLPT was introduced two years ago, now consisting of five proficiency levels instead of the previous four, with a new level bridging the former Levels 3 and 2. The new Level N4 now corresponds roughly to the old Level 3 as explained above. Basically only receptive skills are tested and linguistic competence required for each level of the test is currently expressed in terms of language activities, for Level N4, "the ability to understand basic Japanese", in the following manner (JLPT 2012):

- Reading: One is able to read and understand passages on familiar daily topics written in basic vocabulary and kanji.
- Listening: One is able to listen and comprehend conversations encountered in daily life and generally follow their contents, provided that they are spoken slowly.[12]

How do these JLPT levels, then, correspond to CEFR levels, which are the indicators used in the European language education context? Let us examine that through another example, namely a Beginner's Japanese module planned in the new International Studies BA programme at Leiden University. The objectives of the first 10-EC module (280 h), consisting of 78 hours of contact lessons, are described using CEFR levels as target descriptors as follows: Speaking A1, Listening A1, Writing A1-, and Reading A2. The lowest CEFR level of A1 (or even A1-) is – in a modest but realistic manner – indicated for three of the four skills, only reading receiving the slightly more ambitious target level of A2 (International Studies 2012-2013). Given that the Japanese script is one of the most difficult challenges for JFL students without prior knowledge of logographic writing systems, reaching this target level in reading skills within roughly 280 hours of study seems optimistic. As it is estimated that the current lowest JLPT level N5, "ability to understand some basic Japanese", necessitates approximately 250–400 hours of studying, will 280 be sufficient to reach the "Waystage" CEFR level of A2 in Japanese reading skills (JLEC 2010)?[13]

While JLPT N5-level reading proficiency is formulated as "one is able to read and understand typical expressions and sentences written in *hiragana*, *katakana* [moraic scripts], and basic *kanji*", the CEFR offers a much more demanding general descriptor for A2-level reading skills (British Council 2012):

CEFR Reading A2:

- Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consists of high frequency everyday or *job-related* language (emphasis added).

The JF Standard, again, relies solely on more diversified statements (JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education 2012: 10-11).

JF Standard Reading A2:

- Can read an invoice that was sent by fax or e-mail after ordering office supplies, and check if there are any mistakes in the order details.
- Can read and understand a short, simple postcard or e-mail from one's family or friends about what happened during a trip, and get a general idea of the content.
- Can read a letter or e-mail of thanks from a friend written in short, simple sentences, and get a general idea of the content.
- Can read short simple newspaper articles or other pieces of writing about a favorite sport and understand some pieces of information such as the outcome of a game and a favorite player's performance.
- Can read short simple articles, such as one in a school newspaper reporting about festivals and other school events, and understand some pieces of information such as turnout and descriptions of the day.
- Can read a four-frame comic strip and mostly understand the content, if the dialogue is written in simple terms.
- Can read a short simple explanation on, for example, a signboard in a campground, and understand some pieces of information, such as prohibitions and precautions.

Further information on proficiency levels, namely what JLPT examinees themselves think they can do, is offered by a recent self-evaluation survey (The Japan Foundation & Japan Educational Exchanges and Services 2012). At the lowest JLPT level N5, the highest percentage regarding reading skills, with 50–75% of the respondents agreeing, was scored by the statement "I can understand my appointment day and time from appointment reservation charts at my school, etc.". 25–50% of the respondents indicated that they can "read and understand New Year's and birthday cards", "simple memos", or "simple instructions with pictures (e.g. how to put out trash, how to prepare meals)". By contrast, less than 25% of those who passed the lowest N5 level of the test think that they can, for example

- understand post cards and e-mails from (...) acquaintances and friends,
- get necessary information from the brochures of products (e.g. product features, etc.),
- get necessary information from travel guidebooks and magazines about entering university or finding jobs, or
- understand the content of articles in newspapers and magazines written about familiar everyday topics.

If we consider these statements to correspond somewhat to the CEFR A2-level reading descriptor mentioned above, it is noteworthy to notice that, only at the second-most highest N2 Level of the JLPT, 25–50% of the examinees think that they can finally agree with them. Incidentally, the N2 Level is currently hypothesized as the target level of the 60-EC (1,680 h) language acquisition programme in the *Japan Studies* (in Dutch: *Japanstudies*) BA programme at Leiden university.

5. Conclusions: Balancing the academic "toolbox"

Though very brief, this overview hopefully suffices to demonstrate that modelling "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" language education curricula in the European context necessitates thorough knowledge of the pedagogical challenges presented by said languages.[14] For a learner of Japanese or Mandarin Chinese, even looking up unknown words in a dictionary presupposes an advanced understanding of radicals (character sub-elements) and compositional features of Chinese characters. As reading and writing skills are intrinsically linked to character knowledge, attaining reading or writing proficiency levels useful in professional contexts without learning hundreds or even thousands of characters is impossible.[15]

What can a graduate then do with his/her CEFR A1–A2-level Japanese or Mandarin Chinese? If not read Japanese or Chinese professional documents or a newspaper, at least acquire an elementary (oral) communicative competence greatly valued by native speakers of these languages and gain a solid understanding of what mastering such a "Non-Indo-European/Non-Latin Alphabet" language, including socio-cultural and -pragmatic features, entails. The importance of such understanding, as well as in-depth analyses of the knowledge to be transmitted and the pedagogical approaches to be used, cannot be over-emphasized in the current academic climate aspiring for "cutting-edge and globally conscious curricula".

Maintaining a purposeful balance in the academic "toolbox" offered by Asian/Area/International Studies programmes as well as convincing aspiring students, budget holders and other stakeholders of its present and future value and validity is the task at hand. Securing a place for Asian languages in European "Asia literacy" is a common undertaking for European scholars and students alike. Hopefully this brief contribution can facilitate that process.

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1 For example in the International Studies BA programme offered by Leiden University, up to 55 EC of foreign language study is possible, if a 30-EC "Discretionary Space" in year 3 is devoted solely to language learning. As the programme was launched only in 2012, at present intermediate/advanced language courses are not yet offered by the degree.

2 E.g. the language education recommendations of professionally oriented universities of applied sciences/polytechnics in Finland align BA graduates' language proficiency targets in a foreign language with level 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (Ammattikorkeakoulujen kielten ja viestinnän asiantuntijatyöryhmä 2011). In Ireland the NFQ level 6 is aligned with CEFR level B2 (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland 2007: 7).

3 “Opkomende economieën (Brazilië, Rusland, India en China): vraag naar deze talen? [...] De verwachting is dat taalbeheersing in de Chinese taal in de toekomst *een pré zal zijn op de arbeidsmarkt*.” (Onderwijsraad 2008: 22-23)

4 “Wil Nederland blijven meekomen in de internationale economie, dan is het nodig dat meer Nederlanders meer vreemde talen spreken. [...] *Economisch perspectief centraal:* ontstaan wereldeconomie.” (Onderwijsraad 2008: 11-12)

5 At present little is known about the impact of popular culture fandom upon the learning of foreign languages (Mori & Mori 2011). Cf. “De verwachting is dat taalbeheersing in de Chinese taal in de toekomst *een pré zal zijn op de arbeidsmarkt*.” (Onderwijsraad 2008: 23)

6 “Apprise intensément, couramment parlée et écrite, elle serait intégrée dans le cursus scolaire et universitaire de tout citoyen européen, ainsi que dans le curriculum professionnel de chacun.
Son apprentissage s’accompagnerait d’une familiarisation avec le ou les pays où cette langue est pratiquée, avec la littérature, la culture, la société et l’histoire liées à cette langue et à ses locuteurs.” (Maalouf et al. 2008: 11)

7 “Gaat het om een taal die (bijna) iedereen zou moeten kennen, dan verdient deze een plek in het onderwijs: Engels, Duits en Frans, Spaans, Hindi, Russisch, Turks, Chinees. Gaat het om een taal waarbij het voldoende is dat een klein aantal deze beheerst, dan kan het taalonderwijs ook buiten het initieel onderwijs plaatsvinden, met (financiële) steun van de overheid. [...] Vreemdetalenonderwijs buitenschools: Er lijkt vooralsnog weinig vraag te zijn naar talen die wellicht van groeiend economisch belang zijn, zoals Chinees, Arabisch en Japans.” (Onderwijsraad 2008: 65, 116)

8 See fn. 1 above. Cf. “[...] drie kwart van de jongere bevolking spreekt in 2019 twee vreemde talen op een niveau waarmee zij zich in de praktijk in uiteenlopende situaties kunnen redden. In termen van het Europees referentiekader is dat het B1-niveau” (Onderwijsraad 2008: 76, cf. 58). What should, in fact, be added to the general can-do levels in *professional* contexts is also proficiency in field specific and inter-discursive discourse practices, namely the contextual conditions of the professions in which these languages are put to use: a wide repertoire of genres, contents, and working environments, where the language learner will be exercising his/her profession (Huhta 2010).

9 Furthermore a difference is made in the can-do statement formulations between *yomu* ‘to read’ and *yomitoru* ‘to read and understand’ (lit. ‘read-take’).

10 The remarkably complex Japanese writing system, originally borrowed from China, is at present a hybrid of moraic *kana* syllabaries (*hiragana* and *katakana*) and Chinese *kanji* characters.

11 In 2011, the test was taken by 610,000 examinees around the world. For more information, see: http://www.jlpt.jp/e/about/purpose.html.

12 It is further added that “[w]hile not noted in the table, Language Knowledge, such as Vocabulary and Grammar, is also required for successful execution of these activities.” (JLPT 2012)

13 Cf. Bellassen (2012: 28-29), who points out that, while it is suggested by the organizers that the new HSK Chinese Proficiency Test Level 3 corresponds to CEFR level B1, a more realistic indicator is in fact CEFR A1–A2.

14 Whether learning targets can best be described by dissecting phases and contexts of language learning into can-do “particles of language” and appreciating proficiency levels as “products” are additional questions, which need to be elaborated at another occasion (cf. Huhta 2010). As Bourguignon (2012: 63) remarks: “Focusing on the levels prevents all languages from fitting into the CEFR, which is thus turned into a ‘frame’, yet focusing on the concepts is to consider CEFR for what it was supposed to be, that is a ‘framework’ for a commonly acceptable approach that can become the cornerstone of plurilingualism.” Cf. Blommaert & Backus (2012: 4, 29).

15 Cf. also handwriting vs keyboarding, i.e. production of characters using pen and paper vs knowledge of the Latin alphabet-based “phonetic form” needed for computer input systems (Bellassen 2011).

Language proficiency and CEFR

To measure is to know?

Kasper Maes

1. Introduction

The publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe, 2001) by the Council of Europe in 2001 could be regarded as a turning point in language teaching and acquisition. The CEFR was presented as a framework which consists of three language levels: basic, advanced and proficient. These three language levels are each divided into two levels, resulting in a framework of 6 language proficiency levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. The level of language proficiency of each of the CEFR levels is described using "can-do"-descriptors.

The introduction of the CEFR marks a transition in language learning from 'what do I know about the language?' to 'what can I do with it?', i.e. from theory to practice. Of course functional language proficiency did play a role in language learning before 2001. However, after the publication of the CEFR theoretical aspects like grammar and spelling become less important. The focus is now on being able to read, speak, write and listen in the L2 language in concrete, realistic situations.

In addition to that, the CEFR framework provides a new perspective on language learning. L2 learning is more and more regarded as a continuous process which starts at a breakthrough (A1) level and leads to mastery (C2) of an L2 language. Language learning thus becomes a lifelong learning concept with different intra-institutional and extra-institutional stages, e.g. elementary and secondary education, higher education, language courses, stay or study abroad, self-study, e-learning, etc. As a consequence, the question is raised how to measure the language proficiency at different stages in this process.

Can the CEFR and its descriptors be used for language testing? And if so, does the CEFR provide any specific information that can help to assess language proficiency?

2. CEFR and (formal) assessment

The concept of assessing language proficiency does not play an important role in the 2001 CEFR publication. The document only briefly mentions some types of assessment (chapter 9), without going into details. In the same year the CEFR was published, the European Language Portfolio (ELP)[1] was presented by the Council of Europe as an instrument for reflection on proficiency in any L2 language. This instrument can be used by language learners for self-assessment and to keep track of their language progression. What the ELP does not do, is provide information on how to use the CEFR in formal assessment. However, there are situations in which the L2 learner should have his or her language proficiency formally assessed, simply because L2 learning usually takes place in an educational context, e.g. school or course.

The CEFR levels are already used in a wide variety of educational contexts. In Dutch secondary education for example, the requirements for the eindexamen (final national examination) have been translated to CEFR terms for languages such as French, English and German.[2] In the SLO[3]-publication Handreiking schoolexamen moderne vreemde talen havo/vwo (Guide to final examination modern foreign languages havo/vwo) (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007) the existing final examination's level descriptions are compared to the CEFR level descriptions. In higher education, there is a tendency towards entrance and exit levels for study programmes such as International Business and Languages or German Language and Culture. And in the descriptions of language courses at university language centres or language training providers, the CEFR levels are usually mentioned.

In 2009 the Council of Europe published Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) - A Manual (Council of Europe, 2009). This manual helps providers of examinations and teachers to relate their examinations to the CEFR levels. More recently, the Dutch SLO and Cito[4] publication Toetsen en beoordelen met het ERK (Examination and assessment using the CEFR) (Til, van et al., 2011) contains useful information on testing and CEFR including examples of CEFR-proof examination questions.

3. Use of the CEFR levels

In secondary education, publications like Taalprofielen (Language Profiles) (Liemberg & Meijer, 2004) and Handreiking schoolexamen moderne vreemde talen havo/vwo (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007) provide useful information for language teachers to compare the final exam language requirements with the CEFR descriptions and to shape their language teaching in line with the CEFR descriptors. In addition to that, secondary school teachers can use a wide variety of course books which are already written in accordance with the CEFR levels. In Dutch higher education or institutions like university language centres, on the other hand, the situation is different. A 2011 panel review of Dutch International Business and Languages (IBL) study programmes (HBO-raad, 2011) showed that language teachers in higher education often use their own entrance tests or online tests which are not related to the CEFR. They then draw their own conclusions from the results of these tests regarding the CEFR level of the language learner. The same can be said with respect to examination. The IBL panel review and a quick scan of exams at two Dutch university language centres (Tilburg and Nijmegen) show that most language teachers do not use CEFR-proof exams. Exams usually consist of a portfolio with written assignments and/or a written exam, focussing mainly on grammatical and lexical items. Language proficiency is measured in this way; however, not from a CEFR point of view. The absence of a CEFR-related test at the end of a course or study programme raises the question to what extent the program itself is CEFR-proof. A possible solution for this problem would be to use objective, valid and reliable CEFR entrance tests and examinations. At the moment, such tests are provided by institutions like the Goethe Institut (Goethe-Zertifikat), the French Ministry of Education (DELF/DALF), the Foreigners University of Siena (CILS) and the Instituto Cervantes (DELE). In addition to that, placement tests or examinations from test providers are available online (e.g. TELC). However, these tests are usually linked to language training institutes, test providers or publishers, which questions their objectivity and reliability.

4. All skills are equal?

Which skills are to be tested? Reading, writing, listening and/or speaking? At the same level or at different levels? Are all skills equally important? In examination requirements (e.g. secondary school or IBL) the receptive skills are usually scaled higher than the productive skills. Maybe language teachers reason that it is easier for an L2 learner to attain a higher level in receptive skills. Or that it is more important to be able to read and listen at a high level than to produce texts and speak at the same level. Yet the question why the level for the receptive skills is higher than for the productive skills is hardly ever answered.

A language learner is never at one and the same level for all four skills. So at what overall level is an L2 learner when his or her speaking skills are tested at B1 and listening at C1? It is almost impossible to test the language proficiency at one and the same level. Keeping in mind the differences between the skills mentioned above, maybe we should consider testing language proficiency at different levels for each skill or at least for the receptive and productive skills. This tendency towards skill-differentiated testing is already visible in official language tests, such as the new version of the Goethe-Zertifikat C2[5]. This test consists of 4 modules - speaking, listening, writing and reading - which makes it possible for language learners to have skills tested separately.

5. Conclusion

The CEFR level descriptors are rather vague and ambiguous, which makes it hard for language teachers to understand and apply them consistently in language teaching and examination. Therefore, the descriptors first have to be specified and concretized. In addition to that, both benchmarking and standardization training are needed to assure more reliable measurement.

Some efforts have already been made to concretize the CEFR levels and their descriptors. One of the first attempts was Profile Deutsch (Glabionat et al., 2005), a German project supported by the Goethe Institute and experts from several universities. Profile Deutsch translates the CEFR level descriptors in scenarios and language examples. Roughly the same has been done for English by the British Council - AEQUALS association. Here A

Core Inventory for General English (North et al., 2010) provides selective lists of language content for each CEFR level which can be used by teachers as a point of reference. A different example of concretizing the CEFR is the Van Dale grammar project (Van Dale Publishers, 2011). In this Dutch project, for six different languages the grammar was categorized using the CEFR levels.

With respect to benchmarking and standardization training, the CEFcult project[6] (2009-2011) and its predecessor WebCEF[7] (2006-2009) provide a platform for collaborative online assessment of oral proficiency using the CEFR. Another important project for training in the use of CEF scales is the CEFtrain project[8] (2003-2005). Coordinated by the University of Helsinki, this project provides a training area with language samples for listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to achieve a common understanding of the CEF levels. In the Netherlands, a standardization project has been carried out by the University of Groningen. In this EMBED project[9] (2009-2011) panels of experts filtered student essays to provide samples of academic writing at the B and C levels of the CEFR. More recently, the Nederlandse Taalunie launched a useful and extended training website[10] (2012) containing language samples for all skills and CEFR levels.

The results of these projects, language samples and training materials, are mostly available online and can be used by individual teachers. In addition to that it is important to organize teacher training and standardization sessions to familiarize teachers with the materials. In this way, not only the content of language teaching, but also the examinations and thus the exit levels can be truly CEFR-proof, making them comparable in the way that was intended by the 2001 Council of Europe publication.

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1 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/

2 In Germany, the Conference of the Ministers of Culture has only recently (2011) recommended: "Grundlage für die Definition der Abschlussniveaus fremdsprachlichen Lernens vom Primar- bis zum Sekundarbereich II ist der Gemeinsame europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen des Europarates (GER) mit seinen Kompetenzstufen." (Basis for defining the final level of foreign language learning in primary and secondary education is the Common European Framework of Reference for languages of the Council of Europe (CEFR) with its competence levels.) [my translation] (http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2011/2011_12_08-Fremdsprachenkompetenz.pdf) In other words, in Germany the CEFR and its levels also play an increasingly important role in (primary and secondary) education.

3 *Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling* (Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development)

4 *Centraal Instituut voor Toetsontwikkeling* (Dutch Central Institute for Test Development)

5 http://www.goethe.de/lrn/prj/pba/bes/nc2/bes/enindex.htm

6 http://www.cefcult.eu/index.html

7 http://www.webcef.eu/

8 http://www.helsinki.fi/project/ceftrain/index.html

9 http://www.rug.nl/talencentrum/overhetTalencentrum/Embed?lang=nl

10 http://erknederlands.org/

Modern dictionaries in higher language education.

The Dictionary of Contemporary Dutch (ANW) as an example.[1]

Josefien Sweep

1. Language learning, vocabulary and dictionaries

Vocabulary is an important part of a language. In language use it is often difficult to find the right words, both for native speakers or for second language learners. Improving language proficiency includes learning vocabulary. Dictionaries are important tools in this respect. They are the most important source of information on vocabulary and they are therefore indispensable in language learning.

However, dictionaries nowadays are not what they used to be. On the one hand, dictionaries are losing popularity and authority, because of free online applications, such as search engines, translation tools and discussion forums. On the other hand, the possibilities of a dictionary have increased immensely in the last few decades, because a modern dictionary does not have to be a paper book with listed meanings anymore. Instead, it can be a complex, digital database with all kinds of information (semantic, conceptual, morphological, syntactic) on the lexical units of a language. For several languages, such databases are in existence, compare e.g. *DANTE* for English[2], *Grammis* and *elexiko* for German[3] or the *ANW* for Dutch[4]. These databases are often the result of scientific projects, which makes them very suitable for higher language education.

In addition to the academic background, these digital dictionaries or databases are suitable for higher language education because of the information they offer. They contain a large amount of data, often including information on lexical relations, the connection between different meanings, morphological form, morphologically related words, real examples, illustrations, etc. This amount of information with a digital interface gives way to more search opportunities compared to a paper dictionary. For language education, they can therefore be used in many more ways than traditional dictionaries. However, a prerequisite for making use of projects such as the ANW in education is that language trainers and teachers have insight into the design, structure and search options.[5]

For this purpose, I will introduce the ANW, the "Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek" ('Dictionary of Contemporary Dutch'), in this paper. I will show that the ANW can be used in many different ways for language education and linguistic training. In the next section (section 2), I will first introduce the project and clarify the ANW's background and goals. In section 3, I will explain the structure of the ANW. After this, I will show which information can be searched for in the ANW and how this can be done (section 4). This will lead to some suggestions for using the ANW in higher language education and linguistic training in section 5.

2. The "Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek" (ANW)

The "Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek" ('Dictionary of Contemporary Dutch'), abbreviated as ANW, is a digital, corpus-based dictionary. It describes contemporary Dutch from 1970 onwards, as used in the Netherlands and in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (Flanders) (see Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2010: 718). It is called a dictionary of "Algemeen Nederlands"('general Dutch'), because it describes Dutch which is not specifically connected to a certain subnational region or to a particular social group (see Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2009). Because the ANW is primarily a descriptive dictionary, even this general Dutch can be classified as connected to a specific semantic domain, as belonging to a formal or colloquial register, and some general Dutch words can be considered as offensive, euphemistic or archaic by language users (see "bijzonderheden gebruik"/'specific properties of usage' as explained below in section 4).

The project runs from 2001 till 2018 at the Institute of Dutch Lexicology (INL) in Leiden. The 2001-2007 period was used to develop the ANW. From 2001-2005 a corpus was built and made suitable for lexicographic usage (for more information, see Moerdijk 2004: 176-179; Moerdijk et al. 2008: 18; Tiberius & Kilgariff 2009). The neologism part of this corpus is constantly updated. The 2001-2007 period was also used to design the structure of the ANW and to finish its functional design (for more information, see Moerdijk et al. 2008: 18; Niestadt 2009; van der Kamp 2007). This relatively long preparing phase was needed, because the ANW is not in any sense a standard dictionary. From 2008 onwards, the ANW is to be compiled. At the moment (November 2012) almost 9,000 dictionary entries (which describe over 50,000 words) are published in the current version on the internet. This online version is updated every three months. After the update in December 2012, over 10 000 entries will be available online.

Most dictionaries on the internet show entries from paper dictionaries that are published online (see e.g. http://www.oed.com and http://atilf.atilf.fr/ ; http://www.vandale.nl; http://www.wnt.inl.nl/). Hence, specific facilities which the internet has to offer remain unused. The ANW is specifically designed for the internet (see Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2010: 724) and makes use of the advantages the internet offers, such as linking information and only showing certain selected information. It would be impossible to present the ANW's entry design in a paper version, because this structure is layered and works with links.

Furthermore, the ANW is much more than a list of words with meaning descriptions. The ANW also provides information on the structure of the lexicon (by means of explicit lexical relations under "Woordrelaties"/ "relations to other words"), on the context of a word (by means of real examples and by "combinatiemogelijkheden", i.e. lit.: 'possible combinations', translated as "combinations" in the English version of the ANW) and on conceptual information (by means of a structured list of properties, the so-called “semagram”) (see section 3 and especially Figure 3). In a paper dictionary, these different types of information could not be incorporated, because this would result in bulky dictionary entries, which would make it too difficult or too time-consuming for users to find the information they are looking for.

Because of the combination of the great amount of information with an online design, specific information can easily be extracted from the ANW. The online structure makes the ANW suitable for several kinds of usages. Additional and more complex information does not have to be shown and therefore a user does not have to read it, which makes the ANW usable as a simple, traditional dictionary that gives the meanings of a certain word and some grammatical information. But of course, additional information can also be easily extracted, which makes the ANW very useful for higher language education and translation studies. A condition for using the ANW effectively in different contexts is that teachers and users understand the entry structure. I will therefore present the structure of the ANW in the next section.

3. The structure of ANW entries

The ANW can be accessed for free via http://anw.inl.nl. This website shows a list of numbers and letters on the left and a search box on the right. If a word is typed in the search box, a list of results appears. The required entry will be opened by a click on the word which is searched for.

Figure 1: The entry *lexicograaf* ('lexicographer') in the ANW

The screen of an ANW entry is divided in two panes, as illustrated in Figure 1. On the right, the actual dictionary entry is shown. On the left, the structure of this entry is presented. The structure on the left in the example *lexicograaf* ('lexicographer') in Figure 1 shows that this word has only one meaning (1.0 "woordenboekschrijver", i.e. 'dictionary maker'). Clicking on the short meaning description in the left pane, such as "woordenboekschrijver", will open a larger, full definition on the right (as in Figure 1). Users can find information on the "Woordsoort" ('part of speech'), "Spelling en flexie" ('spelling and inflected forms'), "Uitspraak" ('pronunciation'), "Woordrelaties" ('relations to other words'), "Semagram"('semagram'), "Algemene Voorbeelden" ('general examples') and "Woordfamilie" ('word family'), all belonging to meaning 1.0.[6] It is possible to click on all the headlines in the left pane. The information clicked on will directly appear on the screen in the right pane.

If we compare the entry for *lexicograaf* (see Figure 1) with, for instance, *biograaf* ('biographer') or *cartograaf* ('cartographer'), we see that in the last two entries "Combinatiemogelijkheden" ('possible combinations') are also given. In the entry for *fotograaf* ('photographer') under meaning 1.0, we in addition find "Vaste verbindingen" ("Fixed expressions") (see Figure 2), which are combinations that are idiomatic or non-transparent (see Tempelaars, to appear).

Figure 2: Left pane of the ANW entry *fotograaf* ('photographer')

The full structure of the entry design with all possibilities can be found in the advanced search, under the tab "Kenmerken → Woord" (/"Properties → word"; see also Figure 5). An explanation in Dutch of the entry structure is given under the last tab "Help. Over het ANW" / "Help. About the ANW" (i.e. Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2009) under the link "artikelstructuur" ('entry structure'). In the rest of this section, I will briefly discuss this entry structure (see also Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2010: 720-722).

For many users, an important part of the entry probably is the traditional meaning description. If an entry is opened, this meaning description will automatically appear in the right pane, as in Figure 1. After scrolling through the entry, a user can always return to this general meaning description by clicking on the short description after the meaning number in the left pane. For example, if a user clicks on "woordenboekschrijver" in the left pane of the entry for *lexicograaf*, the description "iemand die voor zijn beroep de lexicografie beoefent; iemand die werkt of heeft gewerkt aan een woordenboek…" ('someone who practises lexicography as a profession; someone who is working or has worked on a dictionary…') will be shown in the right pane (as in Figure 1) and if a user clicks on "iemand die fotografeert" in the entry for *fotograaf* (see Figure 2), the description "iemand die fotografeert voor zijn beroep of uit liefhebberij" ('someone who takes photographs as a profession or as a hobby') will appear on the right.

Headlines such as "Woordsoort" / "Part of speech" or "Spelling en flexie" / "Spelling and inflected forms" on the left pane are marked in paper dictionaries and therefore also in most online dictionaries by typographical differences or parentheses and they are often expressed by abbreviations. The meanings of these abbreviations are often incomprehensible without looking them up in a list at the beginning or at the end of the dictionary. In paper dictionaries, this way of presenting such information is probably the best because of lack of space and because of the readability of the entry. In an online design, these two issues do not exist. There is no lack of space and by means of links and different panes the entry remains very well-organised and readable in spite of the amount of information: The left pane always shows which part of the entry is opened and by clicking you can jump to the information you are looking for, which will be shown in the right pane.

After Woordsoort" / "Part of speech" and "Spelling en flexie" / "Spelling and inflected forms", the entry continues with "Uitspraak" ('pronunciation'). In this part of the entry, dictionary users can find stress patterns and foreign pronunciations. The dog type *basset*, for example, can in Dutch be pronounced as in English or in a Dutch manner.

The "Woordrelaties" / "Relation to other words" gives the hyperonym (the superordinate), possible synonyms, antonyms and, in the case of person names, masculine and feminine forms ("androniemen" and "feminiemen"). With *fotograaf*, for instance, a hyperonym and a feminine form are given, i.e. *persoon* ('person') and *fotografe* respectively.

The "Semagram" is a special feature of the ANW (see Moerdijk 2008a; Moerdijk 2004: 180-181; Moerdijk et al. 2008: 19-20). A semagram is a representation of the concept of a word, especially used for nouns. It is a list with relevant properties of the concept connected to a specific meaning. The semagram goes beyond a traditional meaning description in that it provides more information (including encyclopedic and sometimes even cultural knowledge) and lists this information in a structured way. As we will see in the next section, the semagram enables new ways of searching.

Figure 3 shows the semagram of *lexicograaf*. In the middle, the original semagram is presented. On the right, the properties of this semagram have been translated into English. On the left, the slots that belong to these properties are made explicit. These slots are not or not yet visible for users, the labels for these slots can only be found in the underlying software ('the editor') which is used by the lexicographer who makes the entry (see Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2010: 718-720).[7]

Underneath this semagram, a user can find examples with the headword (see the entry structure in the left panes of Figure 1 or Figure 2). First some general examples are given, and in some entries - as is the case for *fotograaf* - combinations with other words and idiomatic expressions can be found.

The combinations (under "combinatiemogelijkheden", i.e. 'possible combinations', compare e.g. Figure 2) provide collocations and also other relatively frequently co-occurring words in the ANW corpus that are considered relevant by the lexicographer. They are classified according to syntactic properties, such as 'as a subject' or 'with an adjective' for nouns and such as 'with an adverb' or 'with a prepositional phrase' for verbs (see Tempelaars, to appear). The entry of *fotograaf* lists under 'as a subject' combinations such as *een fotograaf fotografeert / maakt foto's / neemt foto's / kiekt* (i.e. variants for 'a photographer is making photos') and under, for example, 'in a prepositional phrase' the combination *voor een fotograaf poseren* (lit.: "for a photographer pose", i.e. 'to pose for / to a photographer').

slot (not visible)	**online semagram of *lexicograaf***	**translation**
A + headword...	**Semagram** Een lexicograaf...	*A lexicographer...*
category	is een persoon	*is a person*
(whole:) organisation or institute	werkt gewoonlijk bij een bedrijf of instituut dat woordenboeken maakt	*usually works at a company or institute that compiles dictionaries*
(property:) expertise	is gewoonlijk een taalkundige	*is usually a linguist*
(property:) sex/gender	is een man of een vrouw	*is a man or a woman*
(activity or function:) activity	beoefent de lexicografie; werkt of heeft gewerkt aan een woordenboek of aan woordenboeken; heeft een meer woordenboeken gemaakt of samengesteld; beschrijft woorden en woordcombinaties, hun vorm, betekenis en gebruik; maakt definities	*does lexicography; is working on or has worked on a dictionary or dictionaries; has compiled one of more dictionaries; describes words and word combinations, their form, meaning and use; makes definitions*
(causality:) cause or reason	beoefent zijn vak gewoonlijk voor zijn beroep	*is usually occupied in this way on a professional basis*

Figure 3: The semagram of lexicograaf with its categories and a translation

The idiomatic expressions (under "Vaste verbindingen" / "Fixed expressions", compare e.g. Figure 2) range from proverbs to non-transparent combinations (see Tempelaars, to appear). In the entry for *fotograaf*, for instance, the combination *digitale fotograaf* ('digital photographer') is classified as a fixed expression, because this does not refer to a photographer who is digital, but to a photographer who is using digital photography.

In most entries, the last headline is the word family. The word family provides all derivations with the headword and all compounds (with the headword as a head in the right part of the compound or as a modifier in the left part) that can be found in the ANW corpus. Because many morphological processes are productive, these lists are by definition not exhaustive. They illustrate, however, how the entry word is used by other words in the corpus, and the word family shows by means of the listed examples what type of words are possible. If, for instance, a language user, such as a translator, wants to know whether a photographer of the German newspaper *Die Zeit* can be called a *Zeitfotograaf* and whether this should be spelled with or without a hyphen and with or without *Die*, the analogy with, for instance, *NRC Handelsbladfotograaf*, *Paroolfotograaf* and *Volkskrantfotograaf* provides the answer (see Figure 4).

Some words from the word family are headwords in the ANW, which means that they have their own entry. If this is the case, the entry can directly be opened by clicking upon the word. With *fotograaf* this is the case for *fotografe*, *amateurfotograaf*, *beroepsfotograaf*, *natuurfotograaf*, *persfotograaf*, *straatfotograaf* and *vakfotograaf* (see Figure 4).

Understanding the structure of ANW entries is a necessary for knowing what can be looked up in the ANW. Also, it is very useful for understanding the ANW's different search types. The next section discusses these different ways of searching for information in the ANW.

fotograaf

Woordfamilie

Afleidingen:	fotograafje; fotografe
Samenstellingen met trefwoord als rechterlid:	actiefotograaf; amateurfotograaf; ANP-fotograaf; arbeidersfotograaf; architectuurfotograaf; astrofotograaf; aurafotograaf; avonturenfotograaf; Bauhaus-fotograaf; bedrijfsfotograaf; beroepsfotograaf; Binnenhoffotograaf; bruidsfotograaf; buitenfotograaf; clubfotograaf; collega-fotograaf; dansfotograaf; digifotograaf; documentairefotograaf; dorpsfotograaf; eigenschapsfotograaf; familiefotograaf; fokveefotograaf; freelancefotograaf; galafotograaf; gastfotograaf; gelegenheidsfotograaf; gerechtsfotograaf; glamourfotograaf; gossipfotograaf; hoffotograaf; hoofdfotograaf; hotelfotograaf; huisfotograaf; huwelijksfotograaf; internetfotograaf; jazzfotograaf; kandidaat-fotograaf; kermisfotograaf; keukenfotograaf; kunstfotograaf; landschapsfotograaf; leerling-fotograaf; lichaamsbouwfotograaf; lijffotograaf; luchtfotograaf; luchtenfotograaf; macrofotograaf; Magnumfotograaf; misdaadfotograaf; modefotograaf; modellenfotograaf; natuurfotograaf; NRC Handelsbladfotograaf; onderwaterfotograaf; oorlogsfotograaf; oud-fotograaf; Overijsselfotograaf; paardenfotograaf; Paroolfotograaf; paparazzo-fotograaf; persfotograaf; plantenfotograaf; politiefotograaf; popfotograaf; portretfotograaf; privéfotograaf; propagandafotograaf; reclamefotograaf; reisfotograaf; reportagefotograaf; rockfotograaf; scheepsfotograaf; schoolfotograaf; sfeerfotograaf; sleepbootfotograaf; societyfotograaf; Sovjetfotograaf; spoorfotograaf; spoorwegfotograaf; sportfotograaf; sportpersfotograaf; stadsfotograaf; staffotograaf; straatfotograaf; theaterfotograaf; tijdfotograaf; Timefotograaf; topfotograaf; trouwfotograaf; Trouwfotograaf; undercoverfotograaf; vakfotograaf; VN-fotograaf; vogelfotograaf; Volkskrantfotograaf; waddenfotograaf; Weekendfotograaf; weerfotograaf; would-befotograaf; zaakvoerder-fotograaf; ziekenhuisfotograaf
Samenstellingen met trefwoord als linkerlid:	fotograaf-dealer; fotograaf-reporter; fotograaf-schilder; fotografenbestand; fotografencollectief; fotografendrukte; fotografenduo; fotografenechtpaar; fotografenfederatie; fotografengeluk; fotografengeslacht; fotografengroep; fotografenkoor; fotografenmotor; fotografensyndroom; fotografentocht; fotografentruc; fotografenvereniging; fotografenvest; fotografenvuur; fotografenwereld

Figure 4: The word family of *fotograaf*

4. Searching in the ANW

There are different possibilities for looking up information in the ANW (see Moerdijk et al. 2008: 20-24; Schoonheim & Tempelaars 2010: 721-722). They can be found under the horizontal grey tabs (see Figure 1 or Figure 2).

First of all, it is possible to perform a standard search (i.e. a semasiological search), which allows users to search for a word and to find its meaning. This kind of search can be carried out under the tab "woord → betekenis" / "word → meaning". If the website http://anw.in.nl is opened, this type of searching will be automatically started. In this search type, it is possible to use wildcards. Searching for "%graaf", for instance, results in 29 entries, varying from *biograaf* to *vakfotograaf*.[8]

Secondly, it is possible to search in the opposite direction, i.e., in linguistic terminology, to perform an onomasiological search. This can be done under the tab "betekenis → woord" / "meaning → word". This way of searching is possible on the basis of the semagrams. A user can, for example, look up all words that denote female persons. If the user chooses *person* as the 'category' and fills out that a typical character trait of this person is *vrouw* ('female'),[9] 245 results will be found at the moment (November 2012), ranging from *abortustoerist* ('abortion tourist') to *zondares* ('sinner'). The word *lexicograaf* is of course included within this result (see the category and sex/gender property in Figure 3). Or suppose a user would like to know which animals bark ("blaffen") in Dutch, the user can give in "blaft/blaffen"[10] under the sound within the animal category. Besides several dogs, the result yields animals such as *blafuil* ('barking owl'), *stokstaartje* ('meerkat'), and *vos* ('fox').

Thirdly, the advanced search option under "properties → word" can be used. If a user clicks on this tab, the left pane shows all headlines as described in section 3 (i.e. the ANW's entry structure). Figure 5 illustrates what this looks like. Users can search specifically on all these types of information in the ANW. It is for example possible to find all headwords in the ANW with three syllables by searching under "Spelling and Pronunciation"/"Spelling en uitspraak". Or to find all verbs which can be combined with another infinitive (via "Combinations" / "Combinatiemogelijkheden").

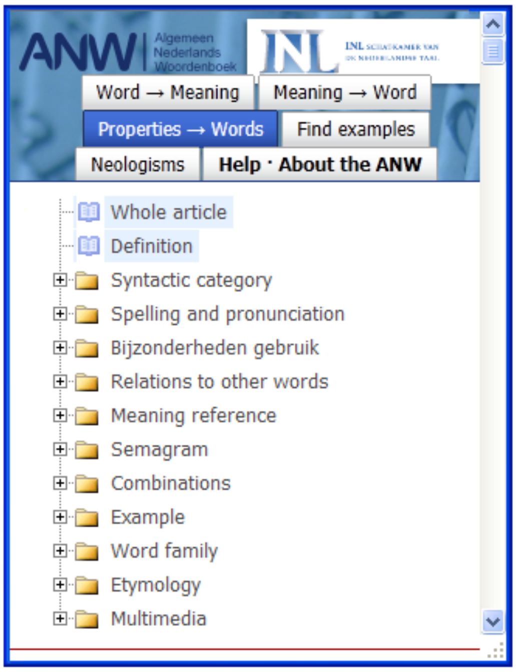

Figure 5: The advanced search under the tab "properties → word" (/"kenmerken → woord")

Under "Bijzonderheden gebruik" ('specific properties of usage'), it is possible to search for, for instance, words within a specific register or to look up Dutch words that are typically used only in Belgium or only in the Netherlands. It should be noted that this search is conducted in the entry as a whole. Searching words of a 'very formal' register, for example, gives as the first two results *ambtenaar* ('civil servant') and *burgemeester* ('mayor'). These words themselves are not formal at all, but on the basis of these entries the formal synonyms "overheidsdienaar" and "burgervader" can be extracted.

The fourth tab provides the option to search for specific examples. This option makes it possible to find all examples from, for instance, the author "Brusselmans", all examples taken from the "NRC" newspaper or to find all examples in the ANW that are used in the last year (searching in the date range 2011-2012).

Last but not least, it is possible to find new words in the Dutch language (neologisms). Under this tab, users can find information on neologisms, such as a test[11], on the probability that a new word will be incorporated into the lexicon, users can find all neologisms collected at the Institute of Dutch Lexicology and all neologisms that are incorporated in the ANW (see Schoonheim, to appear). Only for neologisms, etymological information (see Figure 5) is provided.

5. Usage in higher language education

The ANW can be used in different ways in higher language education. A standard semasiological search from a word to its meaning can of course be useful to all kinds of users. In this section, I will make some suggestions for using the ANW in other ways. With these suggestions, teachers should bear in mind that the ANW is a project in progress, which means that at the moment only a part of the Dutch lexicon has been described. New entries are compiled every day and added every three months. Also, the ideas in this section are just suggestions; professionals are of course encouraged to think of other possibilities.

Suggestion 1: Finding words for vocabulary learning and translating

Although the ANW is a monolingual dictionary, it can be used in bilingual education settings. Via the search option from meaning to word ("meaning → word"), a language user with a basic knowledge of Dutch can look up Dutch words on the basis of knowledge of concepts in his or her native language. Suppose that someone would like to know whether Dutch has a word referring to footwear which is in-between a shoe and a boot. The description "halfhoge laars" ('calf-length boots') provides the word *bottine*. Searching for the name of dried fish for consumption, results in *bakkeljauw*, *klipvis* and *stokvis* (query description: "gedroogde vis" ('dried fish')). Or suppose that someone needs to know how to translate a movement in-between dancing and jumping. The description "dansen/springen" ('dancing/jumping') results in *huppelen*. This option is very useful for learners of Dutch to improve their vocabulary and for translators to find correct translations, even if they are native speakers of Dutch.

The advanced search (the third tab) can be used more specifically for finding words in order to improve vocabulary or to find correct translations. If someone needs to know what the animal with the scientific name *Limosa limosa* is called in Dutch, he or she goes to "kenmerken → word" (/"properties → word"), clicks on semagram, types *Limosa limosa* in the "science"/ "wetenschap" field and immediately finds that this bird is called a *grutto* in Dutch.

For vocabulary learning, learners of Dutch cannot only use the advanced search or the search type from meaning to words (the "meaning → word" tab), but they can also learn vocabulary by learning word relations, such as hyperonyms (superordinates) and synonyms. In principle, general hyperonyms are given for each headword. Learning these helps to improve basic vocabulary for beginning learners of Dutch and it gives insight into the lexicon structure for more advanced learners. The word family provides comparable possibilities. The word family can be used to learn many words at once, it provides insight into the structure of the lexicon and could lead to morphological knowledge. Teachers could design tasks and assignments for students on the basis of the ANW's word family and the word relations.

Suggestion 2: Collocations and grammatical constructions
Translators or translation students and students who have to write in Dutch can also profit from the Combinations ("Combinatiemogelijkheden"). These combinations provide typical or frequently occurring combinations with a headword. Language learners can learn collocations on the basis of the combinations. Students can check and improve their phrases on the basis of these combinations. Translators can use the combinations to find the right translation for certain phrases. As with the search from meaning to word, using the information under combinations can be helpful for academic writers and translators or translation students, who are native speakers of Dutch.

Advanced language learners can also use the combinations to learn certain grammatical constructions. With the advanced search under the "properties → word" tab, combinations of, for instance, verbs with bare infinitives ("met infinitief"), with *te* ('to') + infinitives ("met infinitief met *te*"), and with *om te* + infinitive ("met infinitief met *om te*") could be compared. This can provide insight into the differences between such constructions.

Suggestion 3: Learning about Dutch varieties
The advanced search (the "properties → word" tab) can also be used for finding differences between standard Dutch used in the Netherlands and standard Dutch used in Belgium (by searching under "Bijzonderheden gebruik", 'specific properties of usage', as described in section 4). This can be useful for highly advanced language learners and advanced language users, such as authors and editors.

Suggestion 4: Improving spelling
Last but not least, the ANW can be used to check and improve a student's spelling. The ANW fully follows the official Dutch spelling of the so-called "groene boekje" (as also presented on http://woordenlijst.org), shows how to divide words by hyphens and it gives allowed or explicitly non-allowed orthographical variants.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have introduced the ANW, illustrated its rich information structure and shown its possibilities for searching information. I have explained that the ANW is not a standard dictionary: It combines many different types of information and the online design makes it possible to perform searches for specific information. As a consequence, the ANW can be used for simple queries, for instance by language learners at beginner's level and by high school pupils, as well as for looking up complicated information by highly advanced learners, translators and even scholars. It is possible to perform a standard search of a word's meaning, but the ANW can also be used for finding information on collocations, frequently used idioms, grammar, or conceptual-cultural knowledge in the semagrams.

Teachers in Translation Studies courses, in Dutch as a Second Language courses or even in Linguistics courses should be able to instruct their learners how to use the ANW. For this purpose, this paper has given insight into the structure of the ANW and presented some of its usage possibilities for language learners and language users with various levels of proficiency.

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2 http://www.webdante.com

3 http://hypermedia.ids-mannheim.de; http://www.owid.de/wb/elexiko/start.html

4 http://anw.inl.nl; For a comparison of elexiko and the ANW, compare Moerdijk 2008b.

5 The curriculum of the Dutch master´s programme at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA) -which is a study for becoming a teacher for Dutch at the highest secondary school level ("eerstegraadsdocent")- therefore contains an obligatory course on lexicology and using modern dictionaries such as the ANW in education.

6 An English version of the ANW's headlines and tabs can be chosen in the browser window at the bottom on the right (see Figure 1). The English version is illustrated in Figure 5; it shows that not all headlines have been translated yet (see "Bijzonderheden gebruik", i.e. lit.: 'specific properties of usage').

7 For another example of a semagram with categories and a translation into English compare Moerdijk et al. 2008: 19. They show the semagram for *cow*.

8 The query does not only check the headwords themselves, but also the word family. Therefore, the entries *paleografie*, which gives *paleograaf* in its word family, and *school*, which has *schoolfotograaf* in its word family, are also on the list.

9 Although the categories and the questions are translated into English in the English version, the answers should be in Dutch, because the "meaning to word"-search will search within the dictionary entries (in the semagrams) and they of course only contain Dutch words.

10 Searching with an inflected form and an infinitive provides most results.

11 The so-called FUDGE-test, see Metcalf 2002 and http://www.inl.nl/images/stories/taalspelen/fudgetest/index.html.

The Effects of Teaching Dutch Learners British English Consonants

An experimental study

Thomas de France & Dick Smakman

1. Overview

This study focuses on the field of second language pronunciation and its interaction with formal instruction. It examines the effects of pronunciation training on native Dutch learners' production of certain problematic consonants of Standard British English (SBE).

Specifically, this paper looks at a pronunciation course at the department of English Language & Culture at Leiden University in the Netherlands. The course was an intensive thirteen-week instruction through which Dutch students were expected to learn how to pronounce SBE phonemes. The course presented the articulatory features of phonemes and urged students to learn to recognise and describe these phonemes. Furthermore, the learning process was stimulated though auditory examples presented by the instructors and systematic correction of the sounds produced by students. The speech of the students was recorded at the beginning and end of this course and consonants from both recordings were transcribed for this article.

2. Research questions

1. To what degree do native Dutch learners' English consonants change following an intensive pronunciation course?
2. Are certain consonants more difficult to learn than others?
3. Can types of learners be discerned on the basis of learning patterns?

3. Purpose

The goal of this research is to present conclusions that will help English teachers in the Netherlands to be better aware of which English consonants are easily learned and which ones require more focused instruction. This paper will appeal, then, to educators who question whether the sometimes neglected aspect of pronunciation can improve through instruction or whether it is a natural ability peculiar to select speakers and is therefore to a degree beyond the learner's or instructor's control.

4. Methodology

4.1. Material

During the first and last week of the autumn 2008 semester, students enrolled in a thirteen-week (90 minutes per week) SBE pronunciation course read out a selection from Mr Loveday's Little Outing, a short story by Evelyn Waugh (from 1936). Both readings were recorded. One reading test took place before students received any pronunciation training ("Test 1"), and the other ("Test 2") took place at the end of the course. The text, consisting of 1,112 words, took each speaker about six to seven minutes to complete.

4.2. Speakers

The test subjects were 30 native speakers of Dutch. They were first-year students and most were in their late teens (18-20 years old). All speakers were female. Their regional background varied, but students in the course tend to come from the southwest area of the Netherlands. Three skill levels of students — advanced, intermediate and lower-level — were determined based on their performance at the beginning of the course. An instructor of the course listened to a short sample of each student's Test 1 performance and gave a grade based on a traditional 10-point Dutch grading scale. The judge gave the grade based purely on segmental data. On the basis of these grades, 10 advanced students (group "A"), 10 intermediate students (group "B") and 10 lower-level students (group "C") were selected.

4.3. Consonants under investigation

The pronunciation issues that were selected are difficult for Dutch learners, according to, amongst others, Gussenhoven & Broeders (1997), Van den Doel (2006), Hoorn (2009), Collins et al. (2011) and Hoorn, Smakman & Foster (submitted). The six most important consonant-related issues which these sources refer to were selected for the present research. They are described below, including an explanation of the problems at hand.

1. Syllable-final voiced alveolar plosive, /d/. In syllable-final position, Dutch underlying /d/ usually becomes voiceless, a near-phonetic neutralisation with /t/.
2. Syllable-final voiced labio-dental fricative, /v/. In syllable-final position, Dutch underlying /v/ usually becomes voiceless, a near-phonetic neutralisation with /f/.
3. Voiced dental fricative, /ð/. This sound does not occur in Dutch, and Dutch speakers are claimed to substitute this English sound with /d/, which is the closest alternative from the perspective of place of articulation coupled with voicing.
4. Voiceless dental fricative, /θ/. This sound does not occur in Dutch, and Dutch speakers are said to substitute this English sound with, most commonly, /t/.

5. Medial /t/. Some Dutch learners consistently "flap" or "tap" a medial /t/, giving it a weaker sound, closer to that of /d/. This may be due to American English influence.
6. Postvocalic /r/. Dutch learners often pronounce a highly audible postvocalic /r/ when they speak English rather than omitting this consonant, which is the norm in SBE. Maintaining this consonant in some shape or form is in line with Dutch pronunciation (Smakman 2006: 237).

4.4. The transcription

Nearly 1,800 consonantal tokens (900 before and 900 after the course) were listened to and judged by the first author, who is a native (American) English speaker living in the Netherlands. Each token was judged as either a successful or an unsuccessful realisation of the issue in question. The goal was to have five tokens per feature, per speaker. Only on a few occasions was this not possible. Oscillograms and spectrograms produced by Praat (see Boersma & Weenink 2009) were used as a secondary tool when the production of a particular consonant issue was difficult to identify based on the auditory signal alone.

5. Results

5.1. All consonants for three student groups

Results from Test 2 were compared with those from Test 1 to determine how much progress each group made in producing the six consonants. Table 1 shows a comparison of Test 1 ("T1") and Test 2 ("T2"). The table represents all correct utterances of the nearly 1,800 tokens, which were calculated and divided by the total number to yield a "percentage correct" figure.

Table 1: Percentage correct for all tokens, over all speakers. The features referred to are the ones mentioned in 4.3.

	/d/	/v/	/ð/	/θ/	MED-/t/	DEL-/r/	total
T1	80	65	69	95	65	66	73
T2	80	68	72	95	86	89	82

Most noticeable about these results is that the voiceless dental fricative, /θ/, was, from the beginning, produced acceptably by a high number of test subjects. The two areas in which there was marked improvement was with medial /t/ and deletion of postvocalic /r/.

Table 2 shows the percentage of tokens successfully produced in each test, broken down over the three speaker groups.

Table 2: The three groups' percentage correct of the six consonantal features in Test 1 and Test 2.

	/d/		/v/		/ð/		/θ/		MED-/t/		DEL-/r/	
Grp	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
A	92	88	72	79	100	94	100	100	90	100	88	100
B	87	75	68	74	62	76	98	96	49	*86	50	**96
C	58	78	48	49	44	46	90	90	50	71	58	72

The overall tendency is that consonant features in most cases improve, and the intermediate group even achieved a statistically significant improvement for two consonant-related issues by the end of the course (* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .001$). It is, on the other hand, also clear that improvement is by no means a rule, and in fact in some cases students' consonants remained more or less the same or even became more deviant from the target realisation.

5.2. Benchmarks

Tables 1 and 2 give an overview of the data and instantly reveal that the consonants of the various learner groups were affected in different ways by the course. This is true for individual learners as well. This individual and group variation will be discussed in more detail in 5.3. To interpret the data more easily, the following benchmarks are defined (bearing in mind that five tokens for each consonant per speaker were collected).

1. At least 4 acceptable tokens in both Test 1 and Test 2: Test 1 performance was already adequate 1 and remained so in Test 2. This will henceforth be referred to as "ACCEPTABLE" or "ACC".
2. The learner improved by 2 tokens: progress needed following Test 1 and was achieved with Test 2. This will be referred to as "PROGRESS" or "PRO".
3. Test 2 performance did not change in either direction by more than one token: improvement needed following Test 1 but not achieved with Test 2. This will be referred to as "STASIS" or "STA".
4. At least 2 acceptable tokens in Test 1 and a decline in performance by at least 2 tokens in Test 2: Test 1 performance was mediocre and declined in Test 2. This will be referred to as "REGRESS" or "REG".

All four scenarios occurred, but ACCEPTABLE was the most common (100 out of 180 instances). PROGRESS and STASIS happened 32 and 34 times, respectively. In 7 cases, regress occurred. Seven cases were not taken into consideration because the total number of tokens needed (5) could not be collected.

5.3. Results for individual speakers, speaker groups, and consonants

We can apply the classifications ACC, PRO, STA and REG to individual speakers. Table 3 classifies all speakers' performances of each consonant by this 4-way division. The level of the students is also in the table. The students are numbered, so, for example, "A1" is the first advanced student. The symbols are used as follows: "+" = PROGRESS; "0" = STASIS; "-" = REGRESS;

blank = ACCEPTABLE; asterisk = not enough tokens collected.

Removing the category of ACCEPTABLE from the table to show only those learners who needed the help offered by the training (as is shown by the categories PROGRESS and STASIS) or whose performance decreased (REGRESS) puts in perspective the amount of benefit that was possible for learners to receive. Of the 173 cases shown in Table 3 in which there were enough tokens collected, there are 100 blank boxes (ACCEPTABLE): that is, 100 cases in which the learner was not in need of the training in the first place. We are then left with 66 instances (32 PROGRESS and 34 STASIS) in which the learner was in need of training, or 38% (66 out of 173 cases). When the data are viewed in this way, as separate cases (of PROGRESS, REGRESS, etc.) by each speaker, we can conclude that the total benefit of the course was about 18% (32 out of 173 cases achieved PROGRESS). About one-third of these cases (namely 11) were in the production of one issue, the deletion of postvocalic /r/.

Table 3: Classification of individual speakers' performances by consonant feature.

Speaker	/d/	/v/	/ð/	/θ/	MED-/t/	DEL-/r/
A1		-	-			
A2		+				
A3						
A4	*	0				
A5	0	+				
A6						
A7					+	+
A8		+			+	
A9		0				
A10						
B1		+			+	+
B2			0	-	0	+
B3	*	0	0			*
B4		+	+			+
B5	0				*	+
B6		0			+	+
B7	-		+		+	+
B8	0					+
B9	0		0		*	+
B10	-		*		*	
C1		0	0		0	0
C2	0					
C3	+	+				
C4	0		0	0	0	0
C5		0			+	
C6	+		0	0	-	0
C7	0	+	0		0	+
C8	0	0	0		+	
C9	+	+	-			
C10		0	0		+	+

Not only can the deletion of postvocalic /r/ be claimed to be learned with ease, as it is simply the deletion of a phoneme rather than learning to produce a new phoneme, but one can also argue that mastering this consonant feature is not as important as the other issues, because postvocalic /r/ will neither lead to misunderstandings nor be considered incorrect in many varieties (e.g., American English).

The ACCEPTABLE category seems less relevant, as it turned out the course was not needed to improve phonemes that had already been produced correctly during Test 1. Table 4 sums up Table 3 but does not include the ACCEPTABLE category.

Table 4. Revised Table 3 results, without the acceptable category.

	/d/			/v/			/ð/			/θ/			MED-/t/			DEL-/r/		
group		STA	REG	PRO	STA	REG	PRO	STA	REG	PRO	STA	REG	PRO	STA	REG	PRO	STA	REG
A	0	1	0	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
B	0	3	2	2	2	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	8	0	0
C	3	4	0	3	4	0	0	6	1	0	2	0	3	3	1	2	3	0
tot	3	8	2	8	8	1	2	9	2	0	2	1	8	4	1	11	3	0

PROGRESS was reached in 32 cases, STASIS in 34 cases and REGRESS in only 7 cases. The table shows that the speakers' /v/, medial /t/ and postvocalic /r/ were affected most positively by the course (PROGRESS) and that /ð/ was affected the least even though such improvement had been needed (STASIS). It also confirms that /θ/ needed the least improvement. The patterns across all speakers reveal that the following hierarchy of acquisition is very roughly true, regardless of starting proficiency: first /θ/, then medial /t/ and deletion of /r/, and finally /d/, /ð/ and /v/.

Table 5, finally, shows the results for each of the speaker groups, across all consonants.

Table 5. Success rates for the three groups.

group	PRO	STA	REG
A	6	3	2
B	15	9	3
C	11	22	2
tot	32	34	7

The advanced group ("A") was affected least by the course, which is not surprising given their initial level. The high levels of STASIS in the weakest group are striking, for they show that learners who start out weak are also very unlikely to improve. Another scenario would have been for this group to show the most improvement, simply because they had most room for improvement.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Answers to research questions

Research question 1: To what degree do native Dutch learners' English consonants change following an intensive pronunciation course?

The effects of the course were clear. In the end, several phonemes benefited from the course. In almost half the cases where progress was needed, it occurred. For certain consonants, however, pronunciation training did not seem necessary. Our results show that this is true for /θ/, although it may also be true for consonants which were not part of our investigation but which are often taught. There were no patterns when it comes to type of phoneme and degree of success, in the sense that certain pronunciation qualities (for instance, place or manner of articulation) were easier than others.

Research question 2: Are certain consonants more difficult to learn than others?

Indeed, certain consonants seem more difficult to master than others. The voiceless dental fricative, /θ/, on one side of the spectrum, did not present even initial problems for most learners. Its voiced counterpart, /ð/, however, along with syllable-final /d/ and /v/, proved to be more challenging.

Research question 3: Can types of learners be discerned on the basis of learning patterns?

Learner types can be established on the basis of starting level: the more successful students at the start of the course have less opportunity to benefit from such a course. The results, in addition, show that qualifying students on the basis of behaviour regarding specific phonemes is not possible.

6.2. Discussion

The results show (or remind us, rather) that a pronunciation course has very unexpected results for individual learners and regarding individual consonants. In the end, fortunately, there is success, besides failure, but it is clear that there is a considerable amount of wasted energy on the part of both teachers and students. Teaching certain individuals certain consonants is to no avail or might even have negative effects in the short run. The results also show that certain problems which are put forward in the literature as being problematic do not actually seem so problematic. It may be that for certain pronunciation features, small deviations have large perceptual and evaluative effects because of stigmatisation. It is up to the learner and teacher whether they want to focus on these phonemes for this reason or not.

We have also found good evidence that it is not always useful to try to determine difficulties students may have with consonants based on a place of articulation or manner of articulation that the sounds may have in common. For example, /θ/ and /ð/ have place and manner in common: both are dental fricatives. However, the faithful production of /θ/ was considerably less challenging for learners than was that of /ð/. The data may suggest, however, that the feature of [+voice] (or [+lenis]) may be more difficult across the board, given that the three most difficult sounds in this study were all voiced: /d, v, ð/.

The consonant /θ/ is deemed by many instructors and authors to be a notorious error among Dutch native speakers, yet our speakers did not seem to have a problem with this consonant. The results, specifically those regarding /θ/, may therefore evoke the question as to whether all tokens were correctly identified. One of the authors transcribed the consonant tokens.

An argument for using transcription as a means for determining the nature of the tokens was that perceptual reality was considered more important than articulatory reality. One might wonder what to do with a realisation that strongly resembles a target without actually hitting that target perfectly, to such an extent that it is not distinguishable from the original. Is that an acceptable realisation nevertheless and should teachers make the effort to correct those inconspicuous variations? One wonders what the criteria are for certain notorious errors to be qualified as such: is it because teachers and other experts often exacerbate this issue and turn it into a realisation which is stigmatised more within the Netherlands than elsewhere? Does perception overrule articulatory reality?

Contrary to what literature in the field suggests, primarily Collins et al. (2011) and Gussenhoven & Broeders (1997), our data show that simply because a certain consonant does not exist in the source language does not necessarily mean that learners will have problems producing it in the target language. Once again, the voiceless dental fricative, /θ/, demonstrates this point. Considering the relative ease learners in this study had in producing this sound, a general statement — for example, one that would suggest that both dental fricatives are equally as difficult to learn — must not be made. A further example, that of medial /t/, also shows that L1 phonology does not necessarily transfer when learning the sound system of the target language. If learners had been using the Dutch equivalent of medial /t/, then it would have sounded similar to the British English realisation. Instead, at the beginning of the course many speakers used a flap, which is not the common Dutch realisation but one that exists in several varieties of native English, most notably General American.

The fact that only 18% of the consonants showed PROGRESS reveals that in certain instances students improve without training, while in other instances they fail to improve despite instruction. This contradictory situation is well known, and in fact studies over the decades have suggested that pronunciation may not be a teachable skill (Suter 1976; Purcell & Suter 1980; Pennington 1989; Stern 1992). These and other studies argue that factors such as biology and personality may suppress the effects of teaching and may even be the main determinants of pronunciation acquisition.

So, what happens subsequently with students like those in this study? The successes and failures of consonant acquisition reported here are not final. The students will continue their studies and their pronunciation will keep changing. They might go abroad, and that will affect their pronunciation even more. The cases of REGRESS may be the result of awareness created in the course and may lead to PROGRESS in the end. In other words, the Test 2 situation is an intermediate stage, despite the fact that the course has ended. Breaking down the old accent and building a new accent is an important rationale behind the course, and in that respect, cases of REGRESS are not necessarily viewed negatively. The assumption in this course is that with the knowledge they have, they can start self-educating and improve in that way, provided they feel the need and/or motivation to do so.

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English Academic Writing by Dutch Engineering Students[1]

Laurent Willemsen

1. Introduction

It may come as a shock to aspiring engineers that a large part of their professional life may revolve around communication and using language effectively. Huckin and Olsen (1991, p. 7) discuss the findings of several studies that suggest that professional engineers spend 25% of their time writing. Anderson (as cited in Elling, Andeweg, de Jong, & Swankhuisen, 2000, p. 14) finds that 40 to 60 per cent of a professional engineer's time is spent communicating with others.

According to the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (as cited in Brinkman & van der Geest, 2003, p. 68), a comprehensive engineering programme should include a project that results in "a report that demonstrates both mastery of the subject matter and a high level of communication skills". Such expectations give a clear insight into what is expected of graduate-level engineering students in this global economy.

Many students, however, have difficulty with writing their thesis in English and with producing readable text. The study discussed in this article examined the writing of students from the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering (IDE) at Delft University of Technology (DUT), who had nearly completed the Master's programme of Strategic Product Design (SPD).

Although not described in detail, the IDE 'Teaching and Examinations Regulations' states that, in general, a DUT master's graduate "is able to work in an international environment by virtue of ... language and communication proficiency" (2011, p. 7). It also states that an SPD graduate is expected to be able to "present and report design concepts and (strategic and/or scientific) research findings in a professional manner" (p. 8).

The aim of this study was to define the depth and breadth of the problems experienced by Dutch SPD students. This article is structured to follow the tools as described by Rogers and Rymer (2001). It is split in two parts: one of language competence and one of academic writing competence. It concludes with an overview of the range of issues students experience and how these issues affect their communicative competence.

2. Communicative Competence

One model that can be used to evaluate communicative competence is that of Rogers and Rymer (2001). They set out to develop a means to point out to prospective MBA students areas for improvement in their writing. Instead of evaluating texts on internal merits using a common scoring rubric, they sought to read the texts "as readers seeking to understand writer intent" (Rogers & Rymer, 2001, p. 116). They looked at the text in such a way, from the content level of organisation to the minutiae of individual lexical errors, to assess the "success or failure of interaction between writer and intended reader" (p. 116). After writing the text, students would receive feedback and know where their deficiencies lay. With that knowledge, they could set out to improve their competences.

One reason why such an approach effective is that the suggestions it provides are not limited to a specific discourse. It was used to evaluate the decontextualised essays of the test by those traits most important for writing in an MBA programme. The traits used to evaluate the writing reflect commonly found issues such as "addressing the assigned task, reasoning logically, and avoiding errors" (p. 121). The validity of these traits is, according to Rogers and Rymer, verified by assessment research, which points out that several of the traits found form "significant components of analytical writing quality" (p. 122).

The model helped identify areas of improvement for MBA students, who, as a result, "[felt] more confident that they [could] succeed in the unfamiliar writing context of the business school." (p. 138). One reason for this effectiveness, Rogers and Rymer argue, is the logical progression for discussing writer-reader efforts to communicate (p. 124). It moves from the task tool, concerned with the goal of communication, to the coherence tool, which looks at structure and internal cohesion. Third is the reasoning units tool, which deals with readers' evaluation of credibility and argumentative development. The last tool is that of error and it includes both the errors that affect a writer's credibility as well as those that can change the meaning of a sentence.

The four tools provide a useful framework for this study, as they serve to bring together several relevant theories and language resources. The order of the tools was rearranged to reflect the difference between the goals of the original study and this one. The tools were originally developed to screen individual students at the start of their graduate studies and inform them about their writing proficiency. This current study, however, looks at the writings of graduating students and is more concerned with more general findings. The tools were rearranged from the logical progression used by Rogers and Rymer, chosen to help individual students, to the current one, which clusters the two language tools (i.e. Error and Coherence) and the two academic writing tools (i.e. Argument and Task). Each tool is discussed in turn, with relevant examples from the theses and conclusions on the findings of each tool.

3. Assessing language competence

3.1. Literature on language competence

Language competence is primarily concerned with the ability to use a language to express meaning clearly, i.e., unambiguously and concisely. Mcguire (as discussed in Hoeken, 2008, p. 56) acknowledges the value of language competence in the first stage of his information-processing paradigm, attention for a text. This paradigm suggests that before readers can begin to evaluate the validity of an argument, they first need to pay attention to the text. Gopen (2004, p. 10) has described this using a hypothetical *reader energy*, where the effort a reader is willing to exert to understand a text is divided between understanding what the structure conveys and evaluating the content of the text. The more energy readers lose in reconstructing meaning, the less energy they will have to understand the author's intention.

In reading, readers use the available energy to come up with a fitting interpretation of the text. Readers use both their previous knowledge and the cues given by the author. These cues are what make up the text: the words, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, chapters and documents and they have to fit the reader's interpretation of the text up until that moment. When the difference between the current interpretation and the direction of a cue is too large, this will result in a certain level of confusion and will require that the reader reinterprets the text. The energy that this reinterpretation requires is detracted from the total energy available to understand the meaning of a text.

Although writing effectively can be difficult for native authors and readers, it is considerably more difficult for non-native authors and readers. In the initial stages of learning a second language (L2), learners often rely on and transfer the language intuitions from their first language (L1) to the L2, both to positive and negative effect. This development strategy has its benefits, but for learners to progress beyond basic intermediate stage these intuitions will need to be adjusted to reflect the structure of the L2. This can be seen in the text produced by non-native authors. These authors have to convey meaning using a language they may not be completely proficient in. At the same time, non-native readers have to make sense of a text that is not in their L1.

It is likely that the problems that emerge in writing of non-native authors is the result of this negative transfer. The problems of language competence can be subdivided into two categories, error and coherence. The error category addresses problems on a lexical and grammatical level. The coherence category addresses how sentences, paragraphs and chapters tie together to form a cohesive document.

3.2. Method

I used a modified version of the Rogers and Rymer (2001) model to evaluate the theses of nine students and assess their language competence. As the expectations and requirements are likely to vary between supervisory teams and topics, the theses were selected from several supervising chairs and on a range of subjects. In the sample, both sexes are represented relatively equally (four men, five women).

A selection from each thesis included the executive summary (where present) and a representative chapter. Such a chapter would need to include a sufficient number of student-produced paragraphs, as these would exhibit the issues readers are likely to face in reading the thesis. As many issues arise from language interference, instances in one chapter are likely to be found throughout the thesis.

The selection from each thesis was read and each instance that reflected poor language competence was highlighted. The highlighted instances were categorised using the two tools described in the following sections. This approach gave an overview of common errors and instances of poor coherence of the theses.

3.3. Error tool

Instead of trying to classify errors by some arbitrary measure of severity, Rogers and Rymer categorise them by their disruptive impact. Errors can either affect an author's credibility or interfere with communication. Those errors that affect an author's credibility can be categorised into three categories: *accent errors*, *etiquette errors*, and *credibility errors*. The first category, accent errors, includes those errors that reflect the author's non-native origin and contains missing or wrong articles, wrong prepositions, and incorrect use of idioms. One step up are errors of etiquette. These 'errors' of prescriptivism are more serious, because readers are likely to notice any deviations from what they consider the norm and will judge the author for it (either consciously or subconsciously), believing as they do that "critical thinking is reflected in the observance of grammar rules" (Rogers & Rymer, 2001, p. 130). The last type of errors that affect an author's credibility are those that are recognisable violations of Standard English. Spelling errors, faulty subject/verb agreement, and punctuation errors, all of these "[reduce] the reader's confidence in what a writer has to say" (Rogers & Rymer, 2001, p. 130) and are often the unnecessary consequence of writing quickly and forgetting to proofread.

Although these errors affect the perceived credibility of the author, they are unlikely to interfere with communication to a great degree. The fourth category of error, disruptive errors, is concerned with those errors that do interfere with communication and make the reader's task more difficult. These can either be mistypings resulting in a different word or words used incorrectly, carrying a meaning other than the author intended. When readers try to make sense of a text and are confronted with words that carry a different meaning, they will have to re-evaluate the meaning they constructed and read a text again. Although not discussed explicitly in the model, this type or error also includes L1 interference.

As this study aims to assess communicative competence in the broad sense, it does not exclude mistakes that do not interfere with communication or detract from a writer's credibility. Each mistake has an effect on the reader and, as such, should be included in the evaluation of the student's communicative competence. As these are graduate students, their credibility is likely to suffer if their writing features low-level mistakes.

Examples of common issues

Although the effect of a single error cannot be objectively measured, the errors are arranged so that each next level of errors is more likely to distract the reader and reduce the author's credibility. All these levels affect a text at the same time. In discussing the tools, only those errors and issues relevant to the tool are discussed. The table gives an example of each issue.

Typing errors are relatively minor and are unlikely to seriously impede comprehension. Their effect on an author's credibility, however, is likely to be larger than errors resulting from L1 interference.

typing errors	The Dutch government anounced two years ago that [company] was for sale. (thesis 5, p. 40)	

Spelling errors not only reduce an author's credibility, but may require a reader to reread the sentence and come up with an alternative to the misspelled word.

spelling errors that alter word meaning	Since a brake trough of the electric car has a huge impact on the total demand. (thesis 6, p. 22)	breakthrough

Collocation errors may not be the result of inattention or poor proofreading on the part of the author, but of L1 interference.

Collocation	This technology is not expected to have a great influence on the needed grid capacity either. (thesis 6. p. 23)	major

Similar in their origin and effect, the errors in the thesaurus category are difficult to spot for authors with smaller vocabulary and with the correct 'idea' linked to the word.

Thesaurus	With the pumping system the user can administer a dose of sauce for the consumer. (thesis 4, p. 11)	dispense serving/ quantity

Issues of usage are placed higher than both thesaurus and collocation, because of the effect such 'mistakes' can have on the author's credibility. Some readers have strict opinions on how words ought to be used and will judge those authors who do not consider these notions while writing.

Usage	The growing amount of single households has an important impact on the electricity consumption. (thesis 6, p. 20)	increasing number considerable impact

The second to last level of errors looks at whether sentences are grammatically correct. Although the current approach argues that there is much more to writing well and effectively than writing only grammatically correct sentences, a reader's comprehension process may be slowed down or derailed by wrong verb tenses, strange subject-verb combinations and unintended subject-verb reversals.

Grammar	`In terms of punctuality is Holland the second best in Europe, after Switserland. (thesis 5, p. 38)`	

The last level of errors is reserved for errors similar to the thesaurus level. That level dealt with words that were wrong only to the extent that there was a better word to convey the intended meaning, including both nuance and connotation. In contrast, errors on this level are likely to confuse readers, requiring them to reread a sentence multiple times to determine how this error can be placed in their interpretation of the text.

Dictionary	`The tea podholder avoids that the tea gets a cream layer. (thesis 3, p. 11)`	`prevents`

The tool was designed to indicate a level of competence according to the prevalence of errors in a text. Rogers and Rymer have come up with six levels of competence, each of which comes with a brief description. The lowest level, 1, describes texts that suffer from: "Numerous errors of many types [that] severely interfere with communication and damage credibility" (2001, p. 131), whereas the highest level, 6, is reserved for texts where: "No errors interfere with communication or damage credibility. [It has no] disruptive errors, but may have a few credibility and/or etiquette errors, and/or accent errors" (p. 130).

Using these descriptions as the range of competence, most theses would score between three and four: disruptive errors and errors that interfere with communication are frequent; credibility and etiquette errors range between frequent and occasional; the frequency of accent errors range between numerous and frequent.

3.4. Coherence tool

Reading a text requires that a reader interprets the meaning of a text. At each level (sentence, paragraph and beyond) and at each moment, the reader creates an expectation of what a text means and what the author intends to say. By anticipating a reader's interpretative choices and expectations, authors can ease this process. This is what is meant with coherence: a text that satisfies the reader's expectations and signals the author's intentions. Conversely, unfulfilled expectations caused by poor coherence slow down reader comprehension (Fahnestock, 1983, p. 407).

One of the most important principles used to ensure coherence is what is called the known-new contract. In interpreting a sentence, most readers look for familiar elements to tie new information to. Similarly, most readers expect a linear progression from low to high informational value. Most sentences will begin with an element that readers are already familiar with and will end with what is most important.

Another important factor in creating coherence is emphasis, making a clear distinction between important and subordinate elements. One effective way to achieve this is through active formulation, which allows the verb to communicate the important action. Connected to this principle is the advice to put topical information in subject position, further adding to the coherence of a sentence.

Where sentences rely on coherence, paragraphs build on cohesion. The distinction between coherence and cohesion is the difference between lexical connection and rhetorical connection. For a reader to judge a paragraph as cohesive it must provide a clear argument and rhetorical connection between its elements.

The paragraph can be considered the basic functional unit of discourse in academic writing. Most readers expect paragraphs to have a distinct topic and point and assume that the topic of a paragraph, that which the paragraph discusses, is located in either the first or the second sentence. Every following sentence should be thematically connected to that stated topic and each paragraph should end with a concluding sentence. The author must ensure a logical progression from statement of topic to conclusion.

On a higher level, multiple paragraphs form the body of a text, preceded by a title and an introduction and followed by a conclusion. An effective introduction often includes a contextualising background, a statement of the problem to be discussed, and a response to that problem. The problem introduced in the introduction is discussed and expanded in the body of a text, which should contain multiple paragraphs. The paragraphs should show a clear link to the surrounding paragraphs and elaborate on the topic. Although there are various types of elaboration available to an author, many beginning authors default to the temporal mode, where they describe their process and activities in chronological order. Although this is one of the easiest organising principles for authors to use, it is often not the best organising principle for a reader to make sense of the topic discussed.

Common issues

There are some common issues that diminish both coherence and readability.

frontal overload	"An informational overload is created by filling the first part of the clause with all the prominent information.... The problem may well stem from a fundamental difference between the structure of the clause in English and Dutch." (Hannay & Mackenzie, 2002 p. 126-7)
faked cohesion	"Some writers try to fake coherence by lacing their prose with conjunctions like thus, therefore, however, and so on, regardless of whether they signal real logical connections." (Williams and Colomb, 2010 p. 78)

sprawl	When authors deviate from a point to add information, and continue to add additional information, losing the original point.

Examples

This section uses the features and issues discussed above to evaluate some sample sentences selected from the theses. In each sentence the verb phrase is made bold, discourse markers are italicised, and possible confusing elements are underlined. This sentence would be less wordy and more effective if it had been written in the active form, instead of the passive.

> By showing images of people who use the product an inspiring ambience **is created**. (thesis 3, p. 5)

This second example illustrates how even liberal use of discourse markers does not aid comprehension when the ideas itself are not clearly expressed already.

> *Third*, electricity **is** intangible and by that difficult to comprehend. *Not only* **is** it difficult to comprehend by the characteristics of electricity, *but also* consumers **are** ignorant about their own consumption patterns, *since* consumption data **is** improperly **communicated**, *hence* they **do not know** what they **miss**. (thesis 6, p. 28)

The examples illustrate how poor coherence makes understanding the author's intention considerably more difficult. All the reader energy is lost in deciding how components relate to each other and what the logical and rhetorical connection between them is. As a result, the reader has less energy available to focus on the content of the text.

Using the descriptions of competence described by Rogers and Rymers, we find that, in the texts that receive the lowest score attainable, (1) "passages are disjointed and there is no overall sense of meaning. Text requires rereading; many passages remain unclear" (p. 127). Texts with a score of 6 "form a meaningful whole with a controlling idea that is logically developed, with each passage clearly related to the next. Rereading is unnecessary, even if content is complex" (p. 127).

Most theses would receive a score of 3: "some passages hold together, but the parts do not form a meaningful whole; context may be missing, parts may be unclear, inconsistent, or unrelated. Cohesive devices may be used appropriately, but some may be inappropriate [e.g. the frequent misuse of therefore], and cohesive devices may not compensate for the lack of overall meaning. Frequent rereading of passages may be required; some passages may remain unclear" (p. 127).

The results discussed in both the error and the coherence tool suggest that many readers will find the theses hard to read. Solving these problems in isolation, however, will not ensure an effective text. To do that requires looking at a different component of communicative competence: academic writing competence.

4. Assessing academic writing competence

Much of our current academic discourse is based on the concept of social constructivism, where the community decides what is legitimate knowledge. This "suggests that the way we understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are not 'truths' proven and fixed for all time but are specific to particular cultures and periods" (Hyland, 2006, p. 39). Although Johns (as cited in Hyland, 2006, p. 221) suggests that "texts are emotionally neutral and strive to appear objective," much of academic writing relies on persuading "other investigators that one's knowledge is legitimate" (Rose, as cited in Hyland, 2006, p. 111). Instead of enumerating the facts, a successful author uses the available facts to construct an argument and to persuade readers.

4.1. Method

As each discipline relies on different means to persuade their audience, it is impossible to use my own academic expectations (developed while studying English Language and Culture) to evaluate the academic writing of students from a different academic community. Both the purpose of writing a text (task tool) and the suitability of arguments (argument tool) might differ for each community and are determined by each community. To assess what the community's expectations regarding academic writing competence are for SPD students, the initial method was expanded to include several interviews, which served to determine the expectations of the discourse community. As SPD is an applied field of research, with strong ties between academe and industry, it was important to include both and construct a composite understanding of their expectations. The people interviewed included: five full professors, one associate professor/director of education, one instructor of undergraduate students, and one director of business development at a large multinational who has supervised several graduation projects.

In semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and varied in length from 35 to 70 minutes, each interviewee was asked to consider their expectations with regard to theses and academic writing competence in general and to describe what the purpose of a thesis was and what they expected in terms of structure and organisation. The interviews were reviewed and the relevant passages were transcribed. These passages were used to determine what the community's expectations were and what the consequences of poor academic writing competence are likely to be. The theses were analysed in the same way as for language competence, now including these community expectations to assess whether they were written for the correct purpose and reflected the community's style of argument.

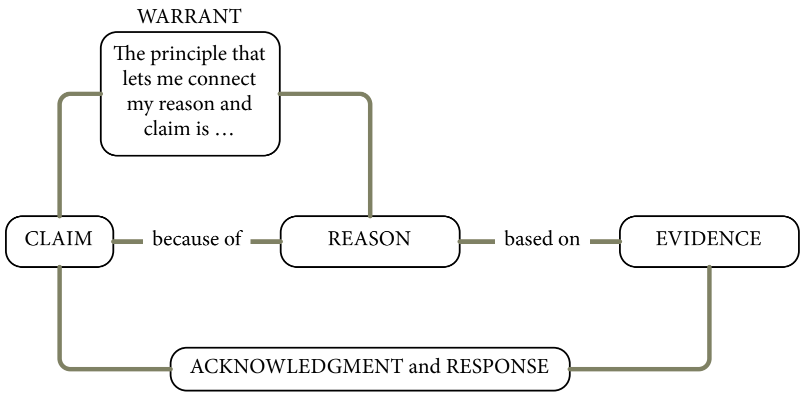

Figure 1: Adapted Toulmin Model

4.2. Argument tool

Although there is considerable variation between scientific communities with regard to what constitutes a valid argument or evidence, the components individual disciplines use to construct and evaluate these are likely to be very similar in nature. Academic writing is concerned primarily with constructing claims and supporting these with evidence and reasons, using subordinate arguments to support major arguments.

The Toulmin model shows that there are several components to each well-made argument. Readers, in evaluating an argument, first look at the claim and try to determine how the reasons support it. The principle that connects a claim and its reasons is called the warrant. A warrant describes a general circumstance followed by a general consequence and reasons and claims are specific instances of these. As an example:

> When a product market becomes crowded,$_{\text{general circumstance}}$ profits decrease.$_{\text{general consequence}}$ The smartphone market is crowded with many companies,$_{\text{specific reason}}$ so it is not an attractive market.$_{\text{specific claim}}$

This example illustrates that introducing a warrant before a claim aids the reader in evaluating how reason and claim are connected. Warrants, however, often rely and build on specific knowledge in a community and over time often become tacitly understood. As a result, conclusions that seem self-evident to people within the community can become difficult to evaluate for outsiders.

One final component of the Toulmin model is 'acknowledgement and responses'. Authors are expected to anticipate any counterarguments readers are likely to come up with and include a response to these in their own argument. They also will need to make clear what the limitations are of their evidence, reasons and claims, thereby illustrating how certain they are of their claims. This is what is called hedging, described by Johns as one feature of academic writing that effectively aids persuasion of others (as cited in Hyland, 2006, p. 221). Clear use of hedging forces the author to provide a formal and neutral description of their evidence and to be hesitant in claiming absolute certainty.

Examples for argument tool

Academic writing uses a highly formal and a neutral form of language, which aims to ensure that data and results can be objectively assessed. Descriptions of companies are of little value to the company when they consist of statements copied from the company's website, as the following example shows. Although the company may use such language in their promotions and public relations, it is of little analytical value, as most any food company might claim similar achievements, aims and goals.

> `[Company] provides delicious, nutritious and convenient foods for families in 200 countries around the world. (thesis 4, p. 11)`

As discussed in the literature overview, academic discourse relies on community understanding and a clear distinction between what is understood, what can be assumed and what is unknown. Very few academics would claim certain proof of their claims.

> `In this section, literature is presented to prove the claims that diversity in NPD teams is needed. (thesis 9, p. 9)`

Another issue with such a strong claim is that it leaves little room for discussion.

Result of the argument tool

A text with a low score (1) introduces "no claims and no support" (p. 129). In texts with a high score (6) the arguments "consist of claims and support and are logical, credible, and complete. Claims are explicitly stated, explained, and substantiated with supporting evidence and support is relevant to claims, varied, concrete, and engaging" (p. 129).

The examples shown illustrate that students have difficulty to use an appropriate style for their writing. Many students make use of informal language and fail to construct an argument beyond supplying the reader with the facts found and the methods used to find these. When they do provide claims, these are often insufficiently hedged and might strike the reader as overconfident and showing little academic consideration.

Looking at the theses from an outsider's point of view, most would receive a score of 3: "arguments are incomplete or inadequate. Claims may be undeveloped with little or no support. When support is used, it may be insufficient, it may seem simplistic (the 'everyone knows' type), or may be inappropriate to the claim" (p. 129).

4.3. Task tool

There is a marked difference between reports written at university and those written for a professional purpose. At university, reports often have an educational function, where students have to convince their tutors that they have the ability to use the methods taught to analyse and solve the problems they face. These analyses and the data found form the main content of their reports. In a professional environment, authors are instead expected to provide their audience not only with a thorough analysis and the supporting data, but also suggest what they are now expected to do. The core content of the document and its focus should be on the future and the actions, instead of the supporting evidence. Evidence is important only to the extent that it is used to convince the reading audience. The author needs to make clear what the relevance is of the text and why the audience should read on.

When students fail to understand what the purpose of a text is, this will have an effect not only at this level, but also at the other levels of argument, coherence, and error. When they assume that they only have to write down the facts they have found, students are unlikely to spend effort on building a cogent argument. Similarly, because they are used to writing reports for an audience that already understands the content, they will not realise how errors may distract a reader from what they are trying to say.

Interview insights

The interviews clarified what most readers expected of the theses and what, in their opinion, the purpose of a thesis is. There were variations in what the academic staff expected of students: some expected a process-driven, method-focussed report, while others preferred a well-argued, solution-focussed thesis. Interviewing a business professional helped to decide, for the current study, what students are expected to do in writing their thesis. Students are expected to support their recommendations with a thorough analysis of the problem and solution-space, not by systematically using all the methods available in a 'checkbox' manner, but by building a cogent argument explaining why they chose the methods they used and how these support their recommendations.

Following Roger and Rymers' description, a text with a low score (1) "does not fulfil the task. Content evidences writer misunderstanding regarding what the writing needs to accomplish. It may be irrelevant to the task. It may surprise or disappoint the reader. Can be characterised as 'off-task'" (p. 151). A high scoring text (6) "fulfils the task completely by addressing reader expectations and meeting situational requirements for the writing. Content addresses reader requirements, issues, concerns, or questions; form is fully appropriate for the context and situation" (p. 151).

To see whether the theses were likely to meet these expectations, the structure of the executive summaries was used to determine whether the theses were chronological or argument-focused. This approach makes giving examples difficult, as it would require the complete text to be presented.

Although there is no clear consensus between supervising chairs about the task the students need to fulfil, to the degree that supervising chairs do agree, most theses would receive a score of 4: "[the thesis] fulfils the task to some degree, addressing some reader expectations and, for the most part, complies with situational requirements for the writing. Content may meet reader expectations to some extent, but not completely. Form may depart from the contextual and situational norms in some respects" (p. 151).

5. Conclusions

Graduating students would be expected to achieve a high score on all four levels of communicative competence. However, if all the scores are taken together, the texts are likely to be evaluated as ineffective and exhausting to read: nearly all pages contain numerous errors, the majority of paragraphs lack coherence, few arguments have explicitly stated claims or a clear connection to the evidence, and there is a considerable difference between what readers expect and authors provide.

The consequences of poorly developed communicative competence are far reaching and are likely to have an effect on the career perspective of graduates. This was made apparent in the interview with the business professional. He suggested that in the professional world, few people get the opportunity to write forty-page reports and most professionals are expected to communicate their progress and findings in short, concise, and clearly written single-page summaries. In such a condensed format, the graduates' level of communicative competence becomes a distinguishing factor and may determine the relative success of their career. One aspect that also negatively affects the value of their theses is, according to the business professional, their difficulty to distinguish between what is certain and which elements are, as of yet, uncertain. This uncertainty makes it difficult for higher management to assess the possible success and value of a proposal.

In summary, the findings of this study suggest that the communicative competence of SPD graduates would benefit from improvements on multiple levels. These improvements are not limited to language competence alone but students will also benefit from additional instruction on academic writing. The issues discussed are likely to be the result of multiple factors and unlikely to be limited to the sample of Dutch SPD graduate students.

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Academisering en taalvaardigheidonderzoek en -onderwijs aan Vlaamse hogescholen

Sophie Debrauwere & Jan Ceuppens

1. Inleiding

De hogeschool- en structuurdecreten (1994-2003) hebben het onderwijslandschap in Vlaanderen hertekend: de drieledige structuur (hoger onderwijs korte type, hoger onderwijs lange type of "HOLT" en universitair onderwijs) werd herleid tot een tweedelig hoger onderwijs met professionele bachelors en academische bachelors-masters. De hogescholen en universiteiten gingen associaties aan die in 2013 uitmonden in de integratie van alle masters in de universiteiten. Deze laatste zien hun studentenaantal daardoor met 20 000 stijgen. Het van oorsprong praktijkgerichte HOLT heeft een lange weg van academisering afgelegd. De gevolgen zijn voelbaar voor docenten en studenten en weerspiegelen zich in de curricula. Hieronder bespreken we de impact van de academisering op het taalvaardigheidonderwijs in de opleiding Toegepaste Taalkunde (verder afgekort tot TT) van de Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel (HUB), vanaf september 2013 Katholieke Universiteit Leuven-Campus Brussel. In Hoofdstuk 2 verduidelijken we de plaats van taalvaardigheid in het universitair taalonderwijs. Hoofdstuk 3 zoomt in op de docent taalvaardigheid als vorser. Twee onderzoeksprojecten worden toegelicht: een rond een elektronische verbetertool voor schrijftaken en een tweede rond een corpus van Duits videomateriaal. Centraal in Hoofdstuk 4 staat de taalstudent die wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar taalvaardigheid verricht. Hier rapporteren we de resultaten van vier kwantitatieve meesterproeven waarin de studenten het taalvaardigheidniveau Frans en Spaans van hun medestudenten onderzochten.

2. Academisering van het curriculum

Het departement TT van de HUB (het voormalige VLEKHO) heeft het aantal studiepunten van de academische vakken in de bachelor en master verhoogd. Dat is echter niet ten koste gegaan van de praktijkgerichte pijler die in alle bachelorjaren meer dan 35% van de studiepunten vertegenwoordigt.

Binnen die praktijkgerichte disciplines staat taalvaardigheid in de drie bachelorjaren centraal: gemiddeld 18 van de 60 studiepunten gaan er naar Taalbeheersing Nederlands en Taalbeheersing voor de twee gekozen vreemde talen. Het belang van taalvaardigheid blijkt ook uit het aantal contacturen: over de drie jaren heen telt een opleidingsonderdeel Taalbeheersing (moedertaal of vreemde taal) 156 uur. Ter vergelijking: Taal- en Letterkunde (KUL), een meer theoretische opleiding, investeert in de eerste twee bachelorjaren 16 studiepunten en 117 (in sommige opleidingen 133) uur in de verwerving van twee talen.

Het is duidelijk dat hogescholen en universiteiten naar elkaar zijn toegegroeid: de eerste hebben hun academische pijler verzwaard, de laatste hebben de praktijkgerichte vakken uitgebouwd. Dat de convergentie resulteert in een brede, algemene bachelor blijkt niet alleen uit de curricula, maar wordt ook bevestigd door de groeiende studentenmobiliteit tussen de partners.

De vraag is welke consequenties dat alles heeft voor het taalvaardigheidonderwijs.

Moet dat bijvoorbeeld verschillen van taalonderwijs in het middelbaar onderwijs (MO)? Moet er naast taalverwerving ook plaats zijn voor taalvaardigheidonderzoek en voor de zogenaamde academische vaardigheden? Een en ander hangt af van de beoogde eindtermen. Volgens het "domeinspecifieke leerresultatenkader" van de Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad (VLUHR) moet de

TT-student op het einde van zijn bachelor niveau C1 of minstens B2 van het ERK halen en een jaar later de master afsluiten met niveau C2 of minstens C1 (VLUHR 2012).

In dat ERK verschijnt de term 'academisch' vanaf het beheersingsniveau B2, d.i. het niveau van de 'zelfstandige gebruiker': die moet academisch materiaal kunnen verwerken. Als vaardige gebruiker (niveau C) moet hij zich kunnen uitdrukken over een academisch onderwerp. Deze can-do statements hebben betrekking op alle vaardigheden. Taalvaardigheid in het HO is dus breder dan in het MO.

In de can-do statements is er geen expliciete verwijzing naar theoretisch inzicht of analytisch onderzoek, maar het ERK wijst wel op het belang van taal- en communicatiebewustzijn. Inzicht in de "beginselen volgens welke talen worden geordend en gebruikt, maakt het mogelijk om nieuwe ervaringen te assimileren"(Nederlandse Taalunie, 2008, p. 99).

In het curriculum van het departement TT (HUB) is het dubbele spoor in het taalvaardigheidonderwijs zichtbaar: in de drie bachelorjaren staat taalverwerving centraal in het vak Taalbeheersing; in de master komt de nadruk onder meer op academisch taalgebruik, discoursanalyse, kleinschalig kwantitatief onderzoek te liggen. In het opleidingsonderdeel Taal en Tekst Spaans bv. analyseren de studenten de kenmerken van het Spaanse academische discours in authentieke gesproken en geschreven fragmenten verzameld door het ADIEU-project (Akademischer Diskurs in der Europäischen Union, Vázquez, 2006). In een tweede fase produceren ze zelf korte academische teksten en, in sommige gevallen, een meesterproef.

Door deze aanpak is er een zekere overlap is tussen taalvaardigheid en theoretische vakken zoals Taalkunde, Methoden voor Taalonderzoek, Meertaligheid, Taalwetenschap, Interculturele Communicatie e.a. Dat is echter niet ongewenst, want al te vaak denkt de student in aparte vakjes en zet hij zijn theoretische inzichten onvoldoende in om sneller en beter taal te verwerven.

De academisering en de bijhorende publicatiedruk zorgen voor een groeiende interesse in het taalvaardigheidonderzoek en -onderwijs. Die nieuwe oriëntatie heeft sinds 2003 een institutioneel raamwerk gekregen met het onderwijsontwikkelingsfonds (OOF) van de KUL. Dat fonds financiert innovatieve projecten. waarin universitaire en (ex-)hogeschoolopleidingen samenwerken. Getuige daarvan zijn de twee OOF-projecten die hieronder worden toegelicht.

3. Taalvaardigheidonderzoek en -onderwijs door docenten

3.1. Elektrared

Achtergrond

Elektared is een elektronische verbetertool voor schrijftaken Spaans aangevuld met een elektronische oefeningendatabase voor remediëring. Beide werden in 2004-2005, onder leiding van Kris Buyse, ontwikkeld door een team van taaldocenten Spaans van de KUL en de partnerhogescholen Lessius (Antwerpen) en Vlekho (Brussel, nu HUB).

Schrijfopdrachten zijn maar al te vaak een bron van frustratie voor student en docent. Beide partijen investeren tijd in een oefening die, zodra er een cijfer op staat, snel als afgehandeld beschouwd wordt. De student ziet het rendement niet en kan zijn progressie niet inschatten. Ook de docent zit met tal van onbeantwoorde vragen: hoe wordt een taalopdracht het best beoordeeld, holistisch of analytisch? Wat is de meest objectieve evaluatiemethode? Hoe kan een student op basis van een zeer beperkt aantal opdrachten zijn taalvaardigheden verbeteren? Hoe ziet formatieve feedback er idealiter uit? Hoe meet je het rendement van een opdracht en hoe zorg je voor vooruitgang over de jaren heen? Hoe pak je recurrente fouten aan? Wat is het gewicht van taalfouten in een tekst? Hoe blijft de evaluatie van grote groepen studenten een haalbare zaak?

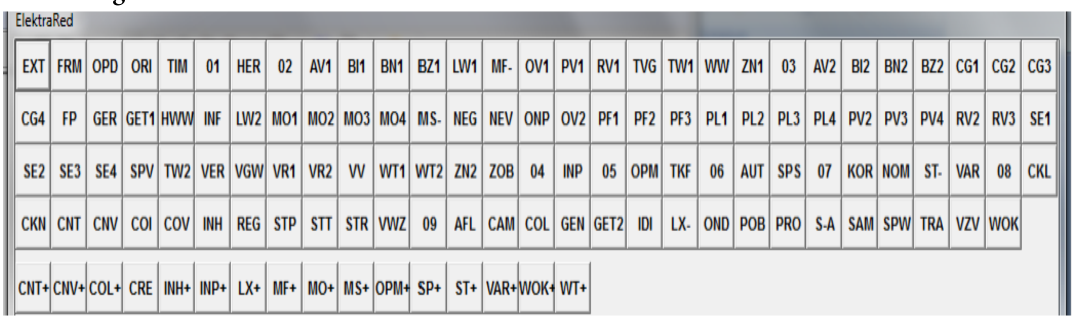
Een mogelijk antwoord op enkele van die vragen wordt aangereikt door Waddington (1999). In zijn kwantitatief onderzoek naar de evaluatie van vertalingen, bewijst hij dat analytische evaluatiemethodes betrouwbaarder en objectiever zijn dan holistische. De holistische methode scoort bijzonder zwak voor de subgroep 'goede vertalingen': onderlinge verschillen tussen goede vertalingen werden wél waargenomen door de foutenanalyse maar niet door de holistische methode. Het experiment bevestigt ook de tweede stelling van Waddington: de betrouwbaarheid van de foutenanalyse is nog groter als ze gecombineerd wordt met een holistische evaluatie. Twee vertalingen kunnen hetzelfde aantal fouten tellen maar toch nog in kwaliteit verschillen.

Hoewel het hier gaat om de evaluatie van vertalingen, zijn de raakvlakken met taalopdrachten duidelijk. Het zou dan ook interessant zijn om het experiment van Waddington over te doen voor schrijftaken. Gesteld dat ook hier de beste evaluatie een combinatie is van een foutenanalyse aangevuld met een holistische evaluatie, dan stelt zich voor de docent het probleem van de haalbaarheid. De gebruiksvriendelijke verbetersoftware Markin van Holmes kan soelaas bieden. Op http://www.cict.co.uk/markin/index.php wordt de software toegelicht en kan een gratis testmodule gedownload worden.

Ontwikkeling en gebruik van de labelset

Het ElektraRedproject ging van start met de ontwikkeling van een foutentypologie en een labelset voor Markin. Aanvankelijk was die gebaseerd op de categorieën van de klassieke grammatica en de ervaring van de docenten. Daarna werd de knoppenbalk gedurende een jaar empirisch bijgesteld en aangevuld. Hieronder een kopie van de knoppenbalk die de docent gebruikt om de fouten te labelen.

Figuur 1: Labelset voor de docent



De 122 labels zijn verdeeld over tien categorieën: afspraken, herhaling zelfde fout, interpunctie, morfologie, morfosyntaxis, presentatie, spelling, stijl, tekst en woordenschat. Naast negatieve labels, zijn er ook positieve die worden ingezet telkens als de student een valkuil ontwijkt. Ondanks het grote aantal labels blijft de knoppenbalk goed hanteerbaar. Uit enkele proefrevisies is ook gebleken dat de docenten grotendeels gelijk annoteren. Overlap van categorieën is echter niet uit te sluiten: wanneer de student 'andaluz' schrijft waar 'andaluza' verwacht wordt, kan het gaan om een vormfout op morfologisch niveau of om een congruentiefout substantief-adjectief op morfosyntactisch niveau. De gedetailleerde labels verplichten de docent om de fout heel precies te lokaliseren en te omschrijven. Een rode krabbel 'stijl!' naast een volledige paragraaf behoort tot het verleden. Naast labels kan de docent ook onbeperkt bijkomende commentaren schrijven die de student onder de tekst terugvindt. Eerstejaarsstudenten krijgen hun eerste geannoteerde schrijftaak terug na veertig contacturen Spaans en een training met de labelset van twee uur. Voor de meesten is dit voldoende om met de annotaties en de commentaar hun eerste revisie correct uit te voeren. Het betreft op dat niveau vaak eenvoudige lexicale, morfologische en morfosyntactische fouten. In de drie volgende jaren wordt de knoppenbalk 'volledig' in gebruik genomen en leren de studenten ook omgaan met labels als onvoldoende nominalisering, te korte zinnen, registerfout, fout tegen thema-rhema, interne tegenstelling, onjuiste bewering, redundantie of gebrek aan informatie, fout tegen conventies, onvoldoende of foutieve anafoor... Op http://wwwling.arts.kuleuven.be/elektravoc/knoppenbalk.htm vinden ze een overzicht van alle foutenlabels die verduidelijkt worden met voorbeelden. De metataal is Nederlands om de eerstejaarsstudent niet af te schrikken en omdat men er ook van uitging dat de labelset gedeeltelijk voor andere talen inzetbaar moest zijn. Later zou echter blijken dat heel veel knoppen 'taalgebonden' zijn. Hieronder enkele labels uit de categorie 'lexicale fouten'.

Figuur 2: Labelset met voorbeelden voor de student

POB	Zwakke, te algemene of te vage woordkeuze	[...] desea **dar muerte a sí mismo**. (suicidarse)
PRO	Foutief of onvoldoende pronominaal gebruik werkwoord	- ***foutief:*** En una relación a distancia esto nunca **se ocurre**. (ocurre) - ***onvoldoende:*** **He tostado** mucho durante esa semana. (Me he tostado)
TRA	Foutief (on)overgankelijk gebruik werkwoord	- ***onovergankelijk:*** PIE **aprovecha de** esta ocasión para invitarles. (aprovecha) - ***overgankelijk:*** Los nietos suelen **aprovecharse** la generosidad de sus abuelos. (aprovecharse de)
VZV	Foutief voorzetselvoorwerp bij werkwoord, substantief of adjectief	- ***werkwoord:*** Me gustaría **asistir en** la reunión. (asistir a) - ***substantief:*** Ciertos niños saltan a la vista por su **interés a** las lenguas. (interés por/en) - ***adjectief:*** Estoy ansiosa **a** ver el centro de Madrid. (ansiosa por)
WOK	Foutieve woordkeuze	Después fui con mi clase a una casa cultural - no **me memorizo** el nombre exacto - donde hicimos un juego de papeles. (me acuerdo de/recuerdo)

De geannoteerde tekst kan in verschillende formaten geëxporteerd worden. De XHTLM-file is interessant wanneer de student zijn tekst op scherm bekijkt, het rtf-formaat is handig als hand-out. Zoals blijkt uit onderstaand rtf-voorbeeld, ziet de student het volledige label in de tekst. Daaronder krijgt hij een overzicht van de gemaakte fouten en indien de docent het nodig acht, bijkomende commentaar. Met Markin kan ook de groepsmediaan berekend worden. Dankzij de statistieken en de overzichtelijke lay-out ziet de student nog altijd het bos door de bomen, ongeacht het aantal annotaties.

Figuur 3: Voorbeeld 1 van een geannoteerde tekst

Una anécdota

A mí, un día, me pasó algo grave. Estaba en la ciudad de Santa Cruz, Bolivia y eran
Congruentie onderwerp-werkwoord **1** la una de la noche. Estaba con cinco otros extranjeros
caminando**2** *Woordvolgorde (andere gevallen)* en la plaza central. Queríamos ir a una discoteca
que *Interpunctie* **3**según Linde quedaba muy cerca. Así que caminábamos por las calles
en busca de esta discoteca. Estaba oscuro y no había nadie en la calle.
Después de veinte minutos, nos paramos en una intersección. Con su móvil en la mano,
Linde preguntó a un transeúnte dónde estaba la discoteca. El joven miró a su
alrededor (para estar seguro *Voorzetselvoorwerp* que no habían *Onpersoonlijke constructie* **4**
testigos) y de repente sacó su arma. 'Celular, celular,'*Interpunctie* **5** gritó,
'¡rápido, rápido!' Asustada Linde dio su móvil y luego, el joven apuntó con su fúsil
woord fout gespeld Woordkeuze Voorzetselvoorwerp **6** mí. Me parecía que el arma era falsa pero no
podía arriesgarme **7** *Pronominaal werkwoord* **8** mucho. Entonces, dí *Vorm fout gespeld*
también mi móvil y enseguida, el joven se fue corriendo. Nunca en mi vida tenía
Werkwoordstijden **9** tanto miedo.
De esta anécdota puedo concluir que nunca hay que andar en el centro de una grande
Bijvoeglijk naamwoord (vorm) ciudad con un grupo de extranjeros.
Goede collocatie Typische vormfout vermeden

Statistics

1	bn1Bijvoeglijk naamwoord (vormfout)
1	cg3Foutieve congruentie onderwerp-persoonsvorm (+ voltooid deelwoord)
1	col+Goede collocatie
2	inpInterpunctiefout (leestekens + hoofdletters)
1	mf+Typische vormfout vermeden
1	onpFoutief of onvoldoende gebruik onpersoonlijke constructies (b.v. "hay")
1	pl4Foutieve woordvolgorde (andere gevallen)
1	proFoutief pronominaal gebruik werkwoord
1	spvFoute spelling van een grammaticale vorm
1	spwFoute spelling van een lexicaal item
2	vzvFoutief voorzetselvoorwerp bij werkwoord, substantief of adjectief
1	wokFoutieve woordkeuze
1	wt1Foutief gebruik werkwoordstijden (buiten consecutio temporum)

1. era la una >< eran las dos
2. gerundio estaba caminando con
3. ,que según Linde,
4. para estar seguro de que no había
5. comillas angulares o españolas
coma fuera de las comillas «¡Celular, celular!, gritó, ¡rápido, rápido!».
6. apuntó el arma/el revólver hacia mí
7. no quería arriesgar (v. Intr.)/no quería arriesgar mi vida (v. tr.)
8. nunca en mi vida había tenido (en aquel momento: anterioridad a una
situación en el pasado) o (en relación con el presente)
nunca he tenido más miedo
9. nunca hay que/se puede andar por

Voorbeeld 1 is een schrijftaak voor bachelor 1 (BA1) die gericht is op het gebruik van de verleden tijden: de student schrijft een anekdote. In de statistieken leest de student onmiddellijk af dat het gebruik van de tijden quasi correct is en dat er verder ook geen speciale aandachtspunten zijn. De opdracht is descriptief van aard; het is dan ook te verwachten dat hier nauwelijks opmerkingen over inhoud voorkomen. Opmerkingen over stijl worden in het eerste jaar bewust beperkt. De ervaring leert dat de docent bij de eerste schrijftaken, naast de annotaties, ook beter enkele correcte oplossingen suggereert zodat de student, die zelf nog vertrouwd moet raken met het verbeteringssysteem, een goede revisie instuurt.

Voorbeeld 2 is een complexere schrijftaak. De student uit bachelor 3 (BA3) moet een uitnodiging schrijven voor de proclamatie en diploma-uitreiking van de ‘Spaanse’ hogeschool HUB. Hier spelen, naast taal, ook tekst en stijl een belangrijke rol.

In de statistieken ziet de student onmiddellijk een aantal aandachtspunten. Hij moet de collocaties controleren en zorgvuldiger omgaan met leestekens. Maar de belangrijkste problemen zijn het register of de toon van de brief en een aantal afwijkingen m.b.t. tot conventies. De anders vrij informele Spanjaarden hanteren in deze omstandigheid een zeer formele stijl. De student schrijft lezergericht zoals hij het geleerd heeft in het Nederlands (“u hoort daarna een toespraak van”, “u kunt uw diploma afhalen”, “u kunt genieten van een glas”) maar in deze uitnodiging moeten de universiteit en de decaan centraal staan. Het gewicht van een bepaalde fout varieert van tekst tot tekst. De student vermeldt in de uitnodiging geen concrete datum voor de bevestiging van deelname. De fout ‘Coherentie (kwantiteit)’, meer bepaald ‘gebrek aan expliciete informatie’ kan in dit geval grote gevolgen hebben. Deze fout zal dan ook dubbel aangerekend worden. Omgekeerd wordt de student ook beloond omdat hij niet de term ‘proclamación’ (hier een valse vriend) als vertaling voor ‘proclamatie’ opneemt.

Figuur 4: Voorbeeld 2 van een geannoteerde tekst

Membrete

2 de junio de 2012

Ceremonia de Entrega de Diplomas*Goede collocatie*

Estimado-a estudiante *conventies interpunctie*

Queremos informarle que nuestra*Bezittelijk voornaamwoord (gebruik)* Ceremonia de Entrega de Diplomas de los masters de comunicación empresarial*Interpunctie* se llevará a cabo**1** el próximo viernes 2 de julio **2**. Le esperamos*Te korte zinnen* **3** a las 7 de la tarde en los Salones de Congreso (01. 123) de nuestro*Conventies* **4** campus.

La ceremonia será introducida por*Collocatie* **5** unas palabras de apertura del señor Erik
Uytterhoeven, director de la carrera filología*Collocatie* **6**. A continuación podrá escuchar*Register* un discurso de nuestro invitado*Interpunctie Lidwoord (gebruik)*señor Ivo Be-let, y una vez éste*Aanwijzend voornaamwoord (gebruik)* finalizado, usted*Register* **7** **8**podrá*Te weinig variatie* recoger su diploma en la
secretaría cual*Betrekkelijk voornaamwoord(vormfout)* se ubica en el edificio 'T Serclaes. *Inhoud Spellingsysteem* **9** **10**

A las 7.30 podrá compartir una copa y aprovechar este momento con sus compañeros de *clase**Register Structuur tekst* **11**.

Le agradecemos nos avise en cuanto posible*Coherentie (kwantiteit)* **12** si podemos contar o no con su presencia*Register* y cuantas*Spellingsysteem* personas le acompañarán.*Collocatie* **13**

Un cordial saludo.

Jan De Smedt
Encargado Intendencia HUB*Conventies*

Statistics

1	av2Foutief, overbodig of onvoldoende gebruik aanwijzend voornaamwoord
1	bz2Foutief, overbodig of onvoldoende gebruik bezittelijk voornaamwoord
1	cknNiet-functionele herhaling, redundantie; gebrek aan expliciete informatie
3	cnvSkopos: conventies binnen doelcultuur en verwachtingen van doelpubliek met betrekking tot teksttype, functie van de tekst, medium; in bedrijf, dienst, regio, land,… heersende normen, regels, gebruiken
3	colFoute collocatie
1	col+Goede collocatie
1	inhOnjuiste bewering
3	inpInterpunctiefout (leestekens + hoofdletters)
1	korTe korte zinnen
1	lw2Foutief of onvoldoende gebruik lidwoord
1	pv4Andere fouten (persoonlijk voornaamwoord)
1	sttProblematische tekstopbouw
4	regOngemotiveerd formeel, neutraal, vertrouwelijk,... register; gebrek aan pragmatische gepastheid
2	spsFoutieve toepassing Spaanse spellingsysteem (letters, accenten, y/e, o/u)
1	Te weinig variatie

Door statistieken van iedere student bij te houden, krijgen beide partijen een beter zicht op de vooruitgang. De derdejaarsstudent die zwart op wit ziet hoeveel fouten hij maakt tegen spelling, morfologie en morfosyntaxis en dat slechte resultaat kan afwegen t.o.v. de mediaan, aanvaardt doorgaans gemakkelijker een lage score en stuurt in de volgende taak meer bij.

De HUB-studenten Spaans werken vier jaar lang met de labelset in de vakken Taalbeheersing, Professionele Communicatie én Vertaling (waarvoor een eigen labelset ontworpen werd). Andere talen maken (nog) geen gebruik van deze methode.

Opbouw van een groot digitaal corpus van schrijftaken Spaans

Om de individuele prestatie te overstijgen en de schrijfvaardigheid van alle bachelorjaren te verbeteren, verzamelde het team een uitgebreid corpus van geannoteerde teksten van studenten Taal- en Letterkunde (KUL) en studenten Toegepaste Taalkunde (Lessius en Vlekho). Uit de analyse van deze database werden voor de verschillende niveaus drie lijsten met telkens de tien belangrijkste problemen opgesteld.

Tabel 1: Frequente fouten

	Top 10-foutenlijst Bachelor 1		%	Bachelor 2		%	Bachelor 3		%
1	Spelling		12,25	Leestekens		8,86	Spelling		9,98
2	Gebruik verleden tijd	MS	8,74	Spelling		8,79	Woordkeuze	W	7,11
3	Congruentie	MS	8,73	Woordkeuze	W	8,12	Congruentie	MS	6,40
4	Woordkeuze	W	5,64	Congruentie	MS	5,90	Gebruik verleden tijd	MS	6,40
5	Gebruik voorzetsels	MS	4,52	Markeerders	T	5,41	Markeerders	T	6,40
6	Collocaties	W	3,73	Gebruik verled. tijd	MS	4,14	Collocaties	W	4,68
7	Gebruik lidwoord	MS	2,95	Voorzetselvoorwerp	W	3,82	Verwijzingen	T	3,86
8	Gebruik wijzen	MS	2,92	Gebruik wijzen	MS	3,71	Voorzetselvoorwerpen	W	3,55
9	Ser/estar	MS	2,41	Gebruik voorzetsel	MS	3,35	Gebruik lidwoord	MS	3,44
10	Geslacht	W	2.37	Gebruik lidwoord	MS	3,18	Vervoeging ww	M	3,13

De categorieën ‘Spelling’, ‘Gebruik verleden tijden’, ‘Congruentie’, ‘Woordkeuze’ en ‘Gebruik lidwoord’ scoren in alle jaren proportioneel zwak. De meeste fouten zijn dus spelfouten, lexicale of morfosyntactische problemen. Pas vanaf BA2 maakt de student ook meer fouten op tekstniveau (markeerders). In BA3 duiken plots veel fouten in de vervoeging van de werkwoorden op. Dergelijk cijfermateriaal kan de docent ertoe aanzetten om de studenten niet alleen te wijzen op hun verantwoordelijkheid om regelmatig te herhalen, maar ook om in de hogere jaren nog een herhalingstoets op de werkwoorden in te lassen. Het overzicht toont aan dat spelfouten niet vanzelf verdwijnen en dat ze voldoende zwaar bestraft moeten worden opdat de student beter zou reviseren.

Tabel 2: Frequente fouten na training met Markin

	Top 10-foutenlijst Master Meertalige Communicatie 2008		%	Fouten/categorie	n	%
1	Woordkeuze	W	12,1	Tekst	177	35,2
2	Collocaties	W	10,3	Woordenschat	135	26,8
3	Inhoud kwantiteit: redundantie/niet-expliciet	T	8,1	Morfosyntaxis	114	22,7
4	Registerfouten: pragmatisch ongepast (te formeel...)	T	5,5	Interpunctie	21	4,2
5	Inhoud: intern incoherent	T	4,5	Stijl	17	3,3
6	Interpunctie		4,2	Spelling	16	3,2
7	Inhoud kwaliteit:niet helder/te algemeen/te anekdotisch	T	4,1	Morfologie	9	1,8
8	Skopos: voldoet niet aan verwachtingen	T	3,3	Opmaak	7	1,4
9	Spelling		3,2	Opdracht	4	0,8
10	Inhoud: onjuiste bewering; extern incoherent	T	3,1	Andere	3	0,6
				Totaal	503	

Het corpus werd in 2004-2005 samengesteld. Elke student komt maar in één van de niveaus voor. Het is bijgevolg niet mogelijk om in deze lijsten de progressie van de studenten af te lezen. Het corpus is bovendien niet groot en gediversifieerd genoeg om ervan uit te gaan dat deze lijsten universeel zijn. Zo staat in BA1 het ‘Gebruik van de verleden tijden’ op de tweede plaats omdat de studenten als opdracht kregen een anekdote in de verleden tijd te schrijven. In de periode van dataverzameling (2004-2005) was er weinig variatie in de drie Top 10-lijsten . Zeven jaar later stellen we bij de masterstudenten wel een daling vast van de fouten tegen spelling en morfologie, en een verschuiving naar enkele categorieën op tekstniveau (structuur, inhoud).

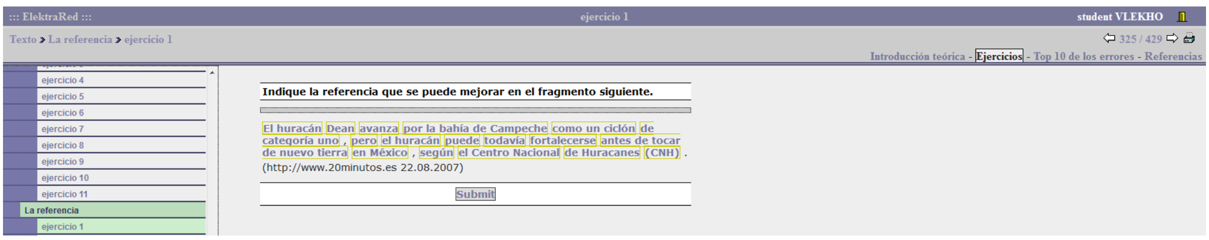
Bovenstaande tabel werd gegenereerd op basis van een corpus van 42 teksten afkomstig van 11 studenten uit de masteropleiding Meertalige Communicatie. In tegenstelling tot de bachelorstudenten heeft deze groep meer dan drie jaar systematische training met Markin gekregen. Het zwaartepunt heeft zich duidelijk verlegd: spelling vertegenwoordigt nog maar 3,2% van alle fouten in vergelijking met de 9,98% in BA3. Er valt geen enkele morfosyntactische categorie binnen de Top 10. Foutieve woorden en collocaties zijn goed voor 22,4% van alle fouten, daarna volgen zes categorieën uit het tekstniveau, terwijl dat er in BA3 maar twee waren. Wanneer we alle fouten in acht nemen, stellen we vast dat spelling geen prominente rol meer speelt (3,2% van alle fouten). Meer dan één fout op drie is een probleem op tekstniveau. De masterstudenten blijven morfosyntactische fouten maken (22,7% van alle fouten), maar er zijn geen echt aanwijsbare zwakke punten meer zoals in BA3. Stijl doet zijn intrede. Dat stijl vrij laag scoort, heeft te maken met de beslissing om skoposfouten en registerproblemen onder te brengen bij de categorie ‘Tekst’. De verschuiving van de foutencategorieën heeft niet alleen te maken met een betere beheersing van de Spaanse taal, maar ook met de complexiteit van de schrijftaken. Op bachelorniveau worden vaak korte, beschrijvende teksten gevraagd, terwijl het in dit corpus gaat om de toelichting bij een grafiek, notulen van een vergadering, een direct mailing voor de lancering van een nieuwe uitvinding, een goodwillbrief, een mededeling voor de HUB en een opiniërende tekst.

Bij gebrek aan een controlegroep die geen Markin gebruikt, kunnen we onmogelijk meten wat de juiste bijdrage van deze verbetermethode is. De tool laat in ieder geval wel zien dat de docent in de master vooral problemen op tekstniveau en lexicale fouten bijstuurt. Anderzijds is het ook duidelijk dat men de resterende morfosyntactische problemen niet kan negeren en dat het zinvol is om zelfs op masterniveau, via zelfstudie, voldoende herhaling en remediëring in te bouwen.

Ontwikkeling van een reeks elektronische remediëringsoefeningen

Markin registreert en rapporteert duidelijk de individuele en collectieve schrijfproblemen, maar het is nog steeds de student die het initiatief neemt om zijn schrijfvaardigheid te verbeteren. Híj moet de annotaties verwerken, de tekst verbeteren en op basis van de statistieken remediëringsoefeningen maken. In de database vindt de student voor de courante fouten een reeks oefeningen met sleutel en commentaar alsook een kort theoretisch overzicht.

Figuur 5: Afgeleid product: oefeningendatabase



De evaluatie geëvalueerd

Acht jaar na de start van ElektraRed is de balans positief. Met de nodige training kunnen beginnende studenten hun geannoteerde tekst bijna integraal reviseren. De zeer analytische en gedetailleerde aanpak verplicht hen om meer tijd te steken in de verbetering, maar slechts een kleine minderheid vindt zijn weg naar de database met oefeningen.

Studenten begrijpen en aanvaarden hun score beter en weten ook hoe die zich verhoudt t.o.v. de mediaan. Een uitzondering hierop zijn de slecht presterende studenten; zij vinden de waterval van negatieve labels demotiverend.

De duidelijke en systematische rapportering en de strenge sancties voor weerkerende fouten zorgen ervoor dat studenten minder nonchalant zijn en beter scoren op spelling, interpunctie, morfologie en morfosyntaxis. Bij peerrevisie is het duidelijk dat studenten zelf ook een grotere systematiek aan de dag leggen en 'verder' leren kijken dan de taalfouten. Een ongewild voordeel van deze tool is dat studenten de metataal beter beheersen.

Ook de docent haalt voordeel uit deze correctiemethode. Tijdens de ontwikkelingsfase werd vastgesteld dat de knoppenbalk 'werkt' en dat geannoteerde schrijfopdrachten van twee docenten grotendeels overeenkomen. Verder statistisch onderzoek op grotere schaal kan bevestigen of deze analytische methode bijdraagt tot objectievere evaluaties.

Dankzij de diagnosegerichte beoordeling kan de docent de vooruitgang van de individuele student en van de groep beter inschatten en inspelen op de noden van een groep. Wat vroeger intuïtief gebeurde, kan nu bewust en nauwkeuriger; de docent kan het curriculum logischer (van gemakkelijk naar moeilijk) opbouwen en heel gerichte schrijfoefeningen geven. Met statistieken achter de hand kan hij bepaalde beslissingen motiveren. Idealiter beperkt deze elektronische verbetertool zich niet tot één jaar, één vak en één taal. De meeste labels zijn echter taalafhankelijk en de labelset is dus niet zonder meer overdraagbaar op andere talen of andere oefeningen.

De verbetertool heeft ook zwakke punten. Categorieën als tekst en stijl zijn veel moeilijker te labelen en te interpreteren dan taalfouten. Annotaties over structuur, inhoud, register, conventies, stijl en lexicale problemen moeten worden aangevuld met een commentaar die de studenten in staat stelt hun tekst correct te verbeteren. Precies daarom betekent Markin geen tijdwinst voor de docent.

Op het niveau van discours en stijl wordt er nauwelijks vooruitgang gemeten, maar dat ligt ongetwijfeld ook aan het feit dat de moeilijkheidsgraad van de schrijftaken toeneemt.

Ook met Markin blijft het moeilijk een correct cijfer te geven. Er kan wel een negatieve waarde aan een label gekoppeld worden, maar dat is een tijdrovende activiteit die voor iedere oefening en iedere groep aangepast moet worden. Bovendien moet de docent nog altijd beslissen hoeveel -35 op 20 nu precies betekent.

De analytische evaluatie bevoordeelt de voorzichtige student die zeer eenvoudige zinnen maakt, geen complexe argumenten aanvoert en zijn regels volschrijft zonder risico's te nemen. Hij krijgt wel eens het label 'gebrek aan variatie' 'lexicale armoede', 'te anekdotische ideeën', maar dat weegt niet op tegen de vele valstrikken waarin de creatieve student kan lopen. Waddingtons experiment indachtig, is het raadzaam om naast de analytische score ook een holistische te geven waarbij de beoordelaar één algemeen cijfer geeft en bepaalde positieve punten zoals 'vlotte stijl', 'interessante denkpistes' of negatieve punten zoals 'inhoudelijk incoherent' heel sterk laat doorwegen.

3.2. Video.de

Het gebruik van authentiek audiovisueel materiaal is voor taalleerders op alle niveaus motiverend; het confronteert hen ook met realistisch taalgebruik. Bovendien draagt de visuele informatie ertoe bij dat ook de taalvormen beter onthouden worden. Sinds de komst van 'web 2.0' en streaming video is dergelijk materiaal alomtegenwoordig, maar in een didactische context stoot het gebruik ervan vaak op praktische beperkingen: het wordt bijvoorbeeld alleen illustratief gebruikt naast het 'eigenlijke' tekstmateriaal, er worden slechts fragmentjes gebruikt die aan één bepaalde leseenheid en/of doelstelling gebonden zijn. Het project video.de, dat in 2012 met steun van het OOF opgestart is, heeft tot doel een corpus van dergelijk materiaal aan te leggen. Dat corpus kan bovendien met een systeem van annotaties ontsloten worden.

Rond het videomateriaal worden met name een aantal 'didactische schillen' aangebracht die de verschillende aspecten van authentiek taalgebruik makkelijker toegankelijk maken voor docenten, leerlingen/studenten en onderzoekers. Met behulp van een eigen annotatietool (enigszins verwant aan commerciële producten als Anvil, vgl. http://www.anvil-software.org/) worden die schillen aan specifieke segmenten van het gebruikte materiaal toegekend. Zodoende kunnen de meest uiteenlopende taalelementen systematischer bestudeerd of in lessen besproken worden: naast de meer voor de hand liggende, zoals woordenschat en grammaticale fenomenen, kunnen ook prosodische aspecten, stijlkenmerken, tekststructureringsmiddelen en genreconventies, sprekerswissels, het verband tussen verbale en niet-verbale communicatie op deze manier gecodeerd worden. Het aanleggen van een corpus – met inbegrip van de transcriptie van de taalelementen, de segmentering, de definitie van de schillen en het annoteren – vormt op zich al een stap in een onderzoeksproces die het taalbewustzijn van studenten en leerlingen verhoogt.

Verder onderzoek kan in het kader van masterproeven gebeuren; een in 2012 opgestart project bestudeert bijvoorbeeld het gebruik van modaal- en oordeelspartikels in Duitse toespraken in het Europees Parlement en de getolkte weergave ervan. De eindgebruikers zouden, zoals gezegd, docenten zijn die in het videocorpus gericht kunnen gaan zoeken naar bijdragen die aan hun didactische doelstellingen voldoen en daarin ook precies die specifieke fragmenten selecteren die ze willen gebruiken.

Het project bevindt zich nog in de voorbereidingsfase en beperkt zich voorlopig tot Duitstalig materiaal uit bronnen als *Deutsche Welle*, *Euscreen*, de mediatheken van de openbare omroepen *ZDF* en *ARD*. De initiatiefnemers en medewerkers zijn dan ook allemaal docenten Duits – op de ICT-medewerker na –, maar de bedoeling is wel de ervaringen en de nieuw ontwikkelde tools uiteindelijk ook voor andere talen te benutten. Eerste resultaten hopen we in het voorjaar van 2013 te kunnen voorleggen.

4. Taalvaardigheidonderzoek door studenten

4.1. In de lessen

De meeste TT-studenten hebben geen voorkennis Spaans, bijgevolg gaan de eerste 130 contacturen Taalbeheersing (BA1 en BA2) naar taalverwerving. In BA3 komt er plaats vrij voor onderzoek. Studenten lezen een wetenschappelijk artikel over taalvaardigheid en onderzoeken in een beperkte replicastudie of ze de conclusies daarvan kunnen bevestigen of moeten verwerpen.

Een voorbeeld hiervan is het onderzoek van García (2009) naar de interactie in conversaties. García vergeleek de beurtwissels in conversaties tussen Spaanstaligen en in conversaties van taalleerders Spaans in Duitsland. Ze stelde vast dat Spaanstaligen converseren volgens een andere logica dan studenten Spaans. Die wachten meestal hun beurt af en laten de anderen uitspreken, terwijl Spanjaarden elkaar in de rede vallen en overnemen. Taalleerders zoeken dus 'harmonie'. Onder die noemer vallen ook de 'lachjes uit medeplichtigheid' die de anderen waarschuwen dat er iets fout loopt. Hun beurtwissels sluiten ook niet echt op elkaar aan: in plaats van te reageren, lanceren de studenten een nieuw onderwerp. Beurten worden meestal afgesloten door een pauze, een klinkerverlenging in het laatste woord of een lach. De nieuwe beurt wordt niet ingezet door een markeerder. García besluit dat de conversatie van studenten Spaans de som is van individuele boodschappen die veel weg hebben van een monoloog. Ze zijn fundamenteel anders dan de Spaanse conversatie, die gebaseerd is op interactie en waarin alle deelnemers meewerken aan één collectieve boodschap.

García gaat ervan uit dat de beperkte kennis van markeerders voor uitweiding, (her)introductie van een nieuw thema, veralgemening... de conversatievaardigheid van de taalleerders erg beperkt en pleit er dan ook voor om meer aandacht te besteden aan discourse markers en conversatiemechanismen.

Na lectuur van deze studie zochten de studenten TT een conversatie van Spaanse jongeren op YouTube en organiseerden ze gelijkaardige conversatie-oefeningen in de verschillende jaren. Ze transcribeerden telkens 10' tekst en gebruikten de conclusies van García als hypotheses voor hun eigen onderzoek. Ze konden alle stellingen bevestigen, maar de verschillen tussen Spaanstaligen en studenten Spaans waren minder uitgesproken dan in Garcia's studie.

De relevantie van dergelijk taalvaardigheidonderzoek is groot: de student leert iets bij over zijn eigen gedrag. Na deze lessen ging er geen conversatie meer voorbij of de studenten verwezen naar hun onderzoek. Telkens als een student lachte om de beurt door te geven, schoot iemand te hulp met een discourse marker. Het werd een spel om elkaar in de rede te vallen en aan te vullen.

4.2. In de meesterproef

In de masteropleiding schrijft de student een meesterproef, die 18 van de 60 studiepunten vertegenwoordigt en waaraan een studiebelasting van zowat 500 uur is gekoppeld. Meesterproeven die taalvaardigheid als onderwerp hebben, zijn populair bij de studenten TT. Dat is niet verwonderlijk: hun favoriete taal staat centraal en ze kunnen hun intensieve taalvaardigheidstraining combineren met theoretische begrippen uit de vakken 'Meertaligheid' en 'Interculturele Communicatie' en met een van de onderzoeksmethodes (experiment, surveyonderzoek, interviews, observatie, inhoudsanalyse, usability-testing) uit het vak 'Methoden voor Taalonderzoek'.

Hieronder worden drie kwantitatieve studies (Nobile, 2011; Schut, 2011; Van Maldergem, 2012) besproken waarin studenten peilen naar het niveau van de taalvaardigheid Spaans en Frans van de studenten TT aan de HUB. Op een vierde studie, die het taalvaardigheidniveau voor Duits onderzocht in de 'academische' bacheloropleiding TT aan de HUB en in de 'professionele' bacheloropleiding van de Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg (Konanowicz, 2012), kunnen we hier niet verder ingaan; gezien het kleinere aantal studenten voor Duits zijn de resultaten daarvan ook met grote omzichtigheid te benaderen.

Onderzoeksopzet en methodologie
De drie kwantitatieve onderzoeksvragen luiden als volgt:

- Wat is het taalvaardigheidniveau Spaans/Frans van de studenten TT?
- Welke factoren beïnvloeden die taalvaardigheid?
- Beantwoordt dat niveau aan de domeinspecifieke leerresultaten (DLR) die de VLUHR oplegt?

In een bijkomende kwalitatieve onderzoeksvraag gaat de student na of empirisch gebleken is dat Dialang een geschikt meetinstrument is.

De student is verantwoordelijk voor de vragenlijsten van de survey, de afname van de testen, de aanmaak van het codeboek, de codering van de variabelen met SPSS, de gegevensverwerking en de rapportering. Daarnaast rapporteert hij ook de resultaten aan de betrokken taaldocenten en programmadirecteuren. Dat laatste verhoogt de relevantie van de meesterproef. In de literatuurstudie zoomt de student in op het Europees Referentiekader voor Talen en op de Dialangtaaltesten. Hij maakt een overzichtelijke en logische samenvatting van alle kritiek, waarvan we hier de belangrijkste punten oplijsten.

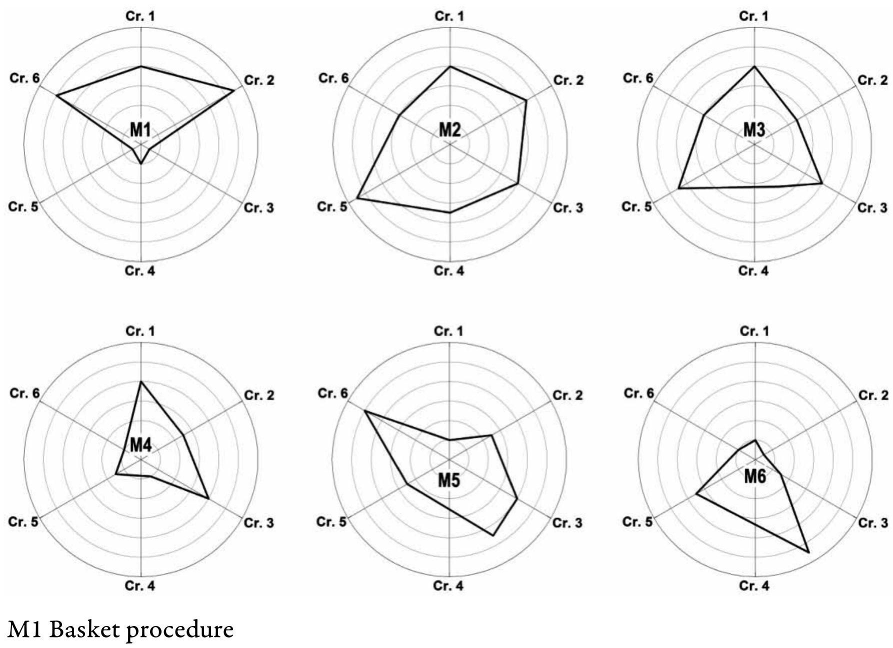
Kritiek op het ERK
Een decennium na de publicatie van het Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) zijn de zwakke punten van het Europees Referentiekader (ERK) bekend. De taalonafhankelijke descriptoren, die een ruime waaier aan taalactiviteiten beschrijven, en waarmee men hoopte de Europese curricula en diploma's objectief te vergelijken, blijken vaag, onvoldoende exhaustief en systematisch, en vooral: veel minder universeel dan eerst werd aangenomen (Alderson et al., 2006). Men stelde verder vast dat de moeilijkheidsgraad van vaardigheden verschilt van taal tot taal. Zo zou correct spellen in het Spaans aan een lager ERK-niveau gekoppeld moeten worden dan in het Frans. Tardieu (2010) komt tot de conclusie dat de equivalentie tussen taaltesten in de verschillende landen, ondanks het ERK, nog steeds niet gegarandeerd is. Een moedertaalspreker Nederlands en een Franstalige kunnen voor Engels allebei niveau B1 halen, maar voor andere items slagen. De ene B1 is dus de andere niet. De studie van Carlsen (2010) toont aan dat beoordelingen intercultureel bepaald zijn omdat een 'goed gestructureerde tekst' niet in alle Europese landen aan dezelfde normen beantwoordt. Alderson en Huhta (2005) wijzen erop dat de koppeling van een descriptor aan een bepaald niveau niet empirisch gebeurde, maar op aanwijzing van taalexperten, waardoor de standaardbepaling niet objectief is.

Kritiek op Dialang
Ook Dialang, een diagnostische taaltoets voor 14 Europese talen gebaseerd op de ERK-descriptoren, is sinds het online gaan in 2006 niet van kritiek gespaard gebleven. De Dialangtesten meten de spreekvaardigheid niet, en de schrijfvaardigheid is herleid tot een passieve multiplechoicetoets die veraf staat van het creatieve schrijfproces. Maar net als voor het ERK staat vooral de werkwijze ter discussie: de koppeling van de testitems aan een van de zes ERK-niveaus gebeurde door taalexperten die zich de vraag stelden welke de minimumvereisten zijn om een taak correct uit te voeren. Wordt een item 'B1' gelabeld, dan wordt aangenomen

dat alle bovenliggende niveaus de taak correct uitvoeren, alle onderliggende niveaus niet. Om taalvaardigheidniveau B2 te halen moet de testgebruiker 22 van de 30 vragen correct beantwoorden (dit is de som van alle vragen A1/A2 (9) + B1 (12) + 1 vraag). Deze methode om grensscores te bepalen, de zogenaamde basketmethode, werd in 2001 speciaal voor Dialang ontwikkeld. De voor- en nadelen worden heel helder weergeven in de studie van Kaftandjieva (2010). Zij wijst erop dat er geen grensscores bepaald werden voor de niveaus A1 en C2, waardoor de extremen onbepaald blijven. De methode houdt ook enkel rekening met de distributie van de vragen: wie 10 vragen juist heeft, zit altijd in B1, ongeacht welke vragen juist beantwoord werden. Kaftandjieva, die op zoek is naar de beste toets, d.i. een haalbare test met de beste interne validiteit, vergelijkt zes verschillende methodes om grensscores te bepalen.

Uit de spinnenwebben, waarin zes criteria zijn opgenomen, blijken de meest betrouwbare methodes M2 (de Cumulative Compound Method) en M3 (de Cumulative Cluster Method). Hier worden de cut offscores bepaald op basis van beoordelingen én van empirische data.

Figuur 6: Profiel van de methodes om grensscores te bepalen volgens zes criteria (Kaftandjieva, 2010, p. 128)



M1 Basket procedure
M2 Cumulative Compound method
M3 Cumulative Cluster method
M4 ROC-curve method
M5 Item Mastery method
M6 Level Characteristic Curves method

De basketmethode (M1) scoort goed op haalbaarheid: ze is toepasbaar op heel wat testen (criterium 1) en statistisch niet complex (criterium 2). Verder zijn ook de verschillen tussen twee opeenvolgende grensscores (criterium 6) significant. De methode scoort echter slecht op criterium 3 (procedure enkel op basis van oordeel, zonder empirische toetsing) en op de criteria die de interne validiteit en de repliceerbaarheid van de grensscores meten: de standaardfout van de grensscores is vrij groot (criterium 5) en de verschillen in de testresultaten wijzen erop dat de grensscores, vooral aan de uiteinden van het interval, mogelijk misplaatst zijn (criterium 4). Kaftandjieva (2010) komt tot dezelfde conclusie als Alderson en Huhta (2005) en raadt aan om de basketmethode enkel als formatieve toets te gebruiken.

Ondanks deze gefundeerde kritiek, werd er beslist om in de HUB-meting Dialang te gebruiken omwille van volgende redenen:

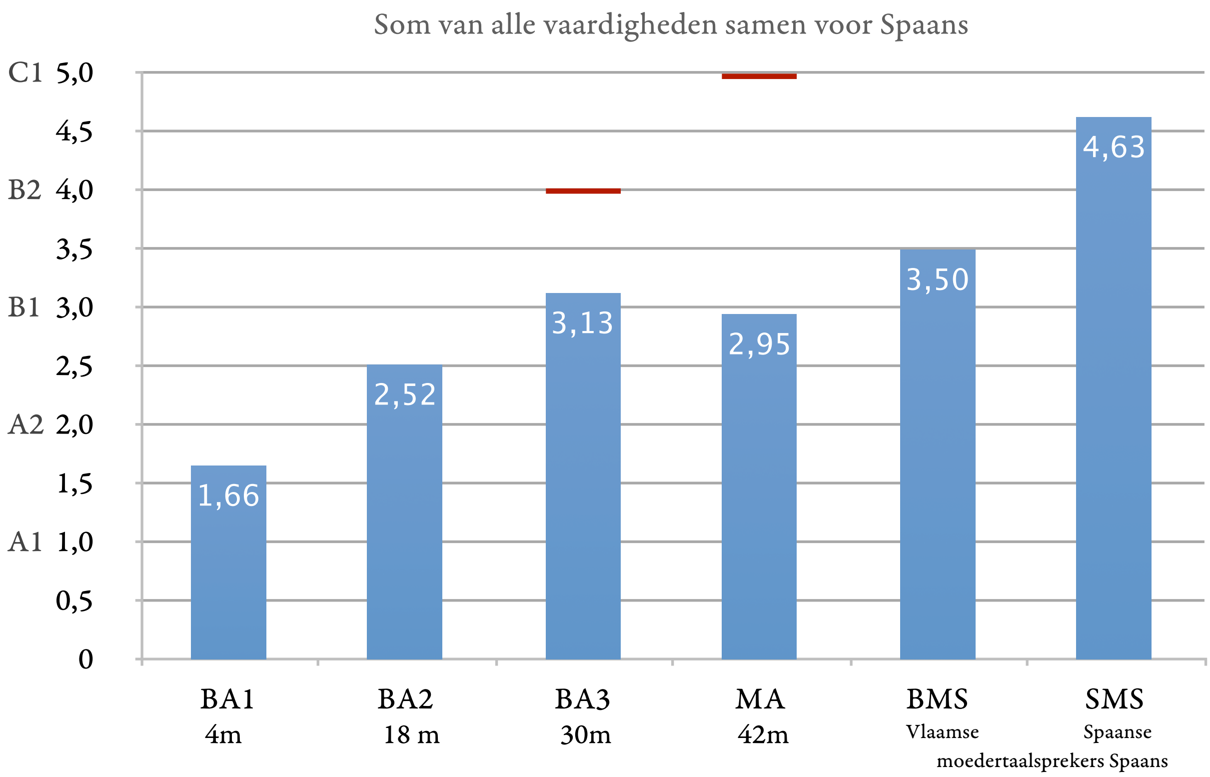
- In één masterjaar kan de student onmogelijk zelf ERK-gerelateerde toetsen ontwerpen en afnemen.
- De basketmetode wordt, ondanks de beperkingen inzake validiteit, alom gebruikt omdat ze heel goed scoort op haalbaarheid (supra) en gratis online kan worden afgelegd.
- De Dialangtoetsen worden door alle Vlaamse universiteiten op hun website gepromoot.
- Van de Wiele en Weylandt (2010) tonen aan dat de Dialangtoetsen een grote voorspellende waarde hebben voor de slaagkansen voor het eindexamen Economisch Frans van de Ugent.
- - Een survey bij meer dan 550 Dialang-gebruikers doet Huhta (2010) besluiten dat Dialang een nuttig instrument is om de sterktes en zwaktes in de vaardigheden te vinden.
- - Dialang fungeerde al eerder als meetinstrument in studies naar taalvaardigheid (van Onna en Janssen, 2006; Cortina-Pérez, 2009; Huhta, 2010).

Belangrijkste resultaten voor Spaans (Nobile, 2011; Schut, 2011)

Alle bachelorjaren (BA) en de masters (MA) namen deel aan de test in het begin van het tweede semester; de eerstejaars hadden dus minstens 4 maanden Spaans gevolgd. In de grafiek wordt een kleine groep Vlaamse studenten die Spaans als moedertaal hebben geïsoleerd (BMS), net als de Spaanse studenten Vertaler-Tolk die in het kader van een Erasmusuitwisseling aan de HUB studeren (SMS). De vaardigheden lezen, schrijven en luisteren, en de linguïstische toetsen (grammatica en woordenschat) werden eerst apart berekend en vervolgens samengeteld om een gemiddelde taalvaardigheidscore te berekenen. De referentielijnen zijn de minimumniveaus voor de afgestudeerde bachelorstudent (B2) en voor masterstudent (C1) die bepaald worden in het domeinspecifieke leerresultatenkader van de VLUHR. Om de Dialangresultaten te vergelijken met de HUB-examenresultaten werden de ordinale schalen van het ERK (A1-C2) in deze studie behandeld als intervalvariabelen (1-6), als zou de afstand A1-A2 gelijk zijn aan die van B1-B21. Een variantieanalyse van het algemene taalvaardigheidniveau toont aan dat de gemiddeldes significant verschillen ($F(4, 116) = 37{,}681$; $p < 0{,}001$). Uit de post-hoc Tukey-toets blijkt dat BA1 significant verschilt van BA2 ($p < 0{,}001$) en BA2 op zijn beurt van BA3 ($p = 0{,}036$). De gemiddeldes van de MA en BA3 verschillen echter niet significant ($p = 0{,}15$). Statistisch is er dus geen achteruitgang in de MA, wel is er sprake van stagnatie. Een Mann-Whitney-toets wijst uit dat het gemiddelde ERK-niveau van de Spaanse moedertaalsprekers significant hoger ligt dan dat van BA3 ($p < 0{,}001$). De Vlaamse studenten (gemiddelde 3,13) halen in hun derde jaar wel de Vlaamse moedertaalsprekers Spaans in (gemiddelde 3,50; $p = 0{,}076$) maar komen, zoals verwacht, niet in de buurt van het gemiddelde van de Spaanse studenten (4,63).

Wat de beïnvloedende variabelen betreft, werd een zwak lineair verband vastgesteld tussen het aantal uur Spaans onderwezen in het hoger onderwijs en het gemiddelde niveau. De verklaarde variantie bedraagt 0,3 en de richtingscoëfficiënt geeft aan dat het gemiddelde stijgt met 0,707 per jaar (p = 0,001). Een Mann-Whitney-toets wijst uit dat de variabele 'verblijf van minstens één jaar in Spaanstalig land' de taalvaardigheid beïnvloedt.

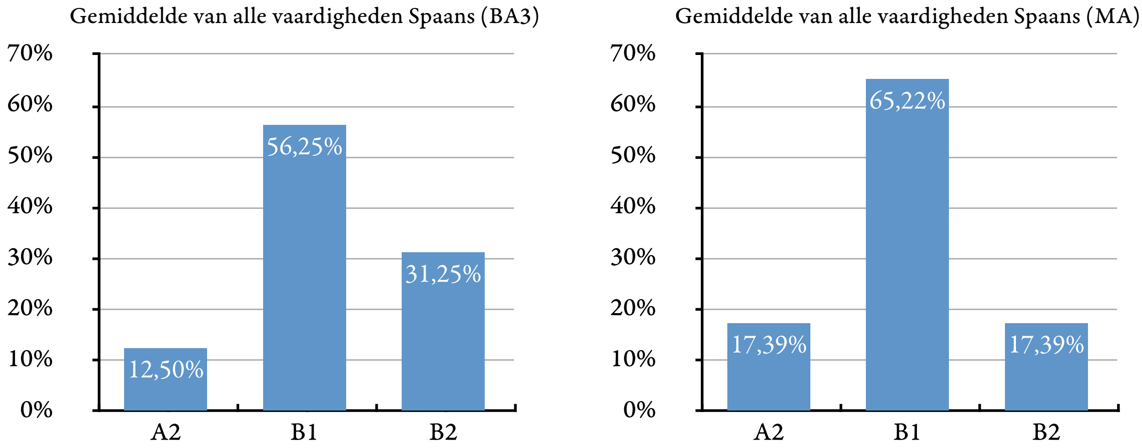
Grafiek 1: Taalvaardigheid Spaans van de TT-studenten (HUB)



Het verschil tussen het gemiddelde ERK-niveau van de studenten uit BA1 met langdurig verblijf (rangorde = 43,60) en zonder langdurig verblijf (rangorde = 22,89) is significant (U = 17,000; p = 0,001). Het verschil verdwijnt evenwel in BA2. De variabele 'Spaans in het middelbaar onderwijs' zorgde niet voor een significant verschil tussen het gemiddelde van de studenten uit BA1 die geen Spaans op school kregen (gemiddelde rangorde = 24,63) en de studenten uit BA1 die wel Spaans op school kregen (gemiddelde rangorde = 25,93). Na vier maanden hebben de studenten zonder voorkennis hun achterstand ingehaald. Ook een Erasmusverblijf van vier maanden in Spanje zorgde niet voor significante verschillen. Uit de Mann-Whitney-toets blijkt dat er geen verschil (U = 25,000; p = 0,542) is tussen het gemiddelde van de studenten uit BA3 die niet op uitwisseling gingen (gemiddelde rangorde = 8,00) en de Erasmusstudenten uit BA3 (9,33). Er blijkt een sterke correlatie te zijn tussen de HUB-examens Taalkunde en Taalbeheersing: in BA1 (rho = 0,853; p <0 ,001), BA2 (rho = 0,786; p < 0,001) en BA3 (rho = 0,793; p=0,002). De vergelijking van de opgetelde HUB-taalexamens met de Dialangresultaten levert volgende resultaten op: Spearman's rho wijst op een middelmatige correlatie in BA1 (rho = 0,621; p < 0,001) en een niet-significante correlatie in BA2 en B3.

Op de onderzoeksvraag of alle studenten in BA3 de norm van het DLR halen, moet negatief geantwoord worden: slechts 31,25% van de studenten uit BA3 haalt halverwege het jaar de vooropgestelde norm B2. Met nog een semester te gaan is het onwaarschijnlijk dat alle studenten deze norm halen. Halverwege de master haalt geen enkele student de norm C1 en slechts 17,39% haalt B2.

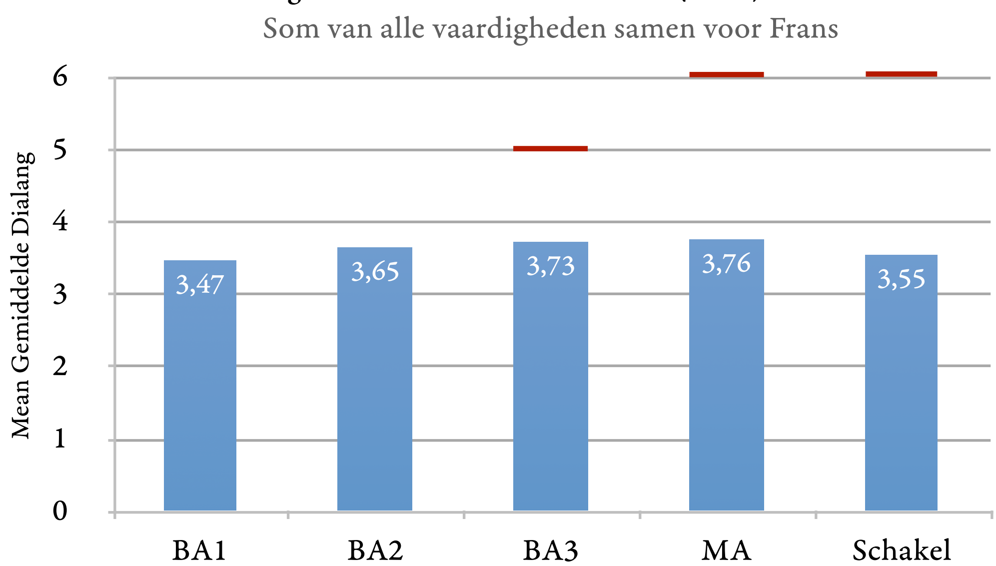
Grafiek 2: Taalvaardigheid Spaans in BA3 en in MA (% studenten/ERK-niveau)



Belangrijkste resultaten voor Frans (Van Maldergem, 2012)

Onderstaande grafiek geeft een overzicht van het gemiddelde taalvaardigheidniveau Frans. Alle bachelorjaren (BA) en de master (MA) namen deel aan de test in het begin van het tweede semester. In de grafiek zijn de zogenaamde schakelstudenten uit de master geïsoleerd. Dat zijn studenten die na hun professionele bachelor een schakeljaar volgden en doorstroomden naar de master. De vaardigheden lezen, schrijven en luisteren, en de linguïstische toetsen (grammatica en woordenschat) werden eerst apart berekend en vervolgens samengeteld om een gemiddelde score te berekenen. De referentielijnen zijn de ERK-niveaus voor de afgestudeerden in de bachelor (C1) en in de master (C2), zoals bepaald in het DLR-kader van de VLUHR.

Grafiek 3: Taalvaardigheid Frans van de TT-studenten (HUB)



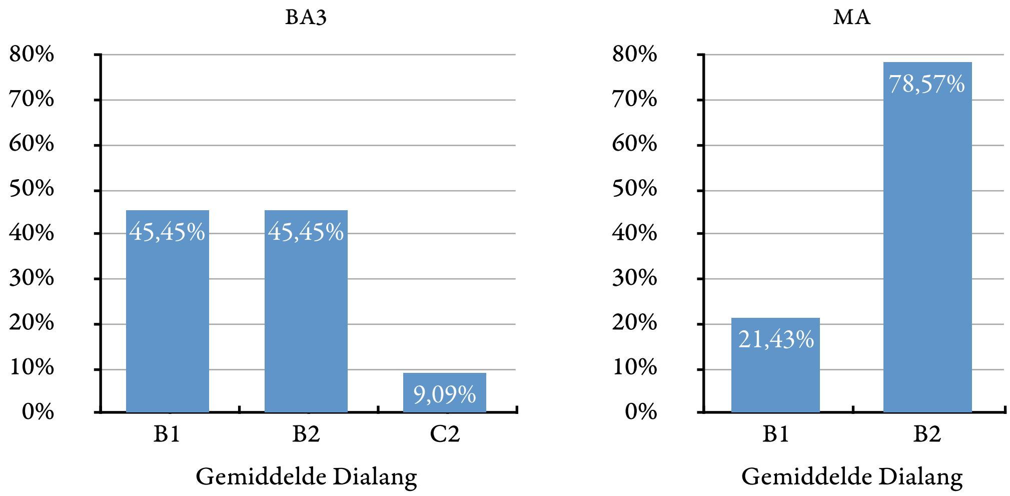
Uit de variantie-analyse blijkt dat de gemiddeldes niet significant verschillen ($F(4, 122) = 0,856$; $p = 0,493$). De zeer lage correlatiecoëfficiënt (0,064) bewijst dat er geen sprake is van een correlatie tussen het aantal uur Frans onderwezen aan de

HUB en het Dialangresultaat.

Wat de beïnvloedende variabelen betreft, blijkt de variabele 'contact met het Frans buiten de schoolmuren' niet voor significante verschillen in de taalvaardigheid te zorgen. Variabelen die wel een invloed hebben op de taalvaardigheid, zijn de woonplaats, de moedertaal en de opleiding in het MO. Er werd in BA3 een significant verschil ($U = 11{,}000$; $p = 0{,}047$) gemeten tussen de studenten die in een tweetalig gebied (rangorde 18,33) wonen en zij die in Vlaanderen wonen (rangorde 11,05) maar dit verschil werd niet bevestigd voor BA1 of BA2. Een Mann-Whitney-toets ($U = 72{,}000$; $p < 0{,}001$) toont aan dat moedertaalsprekers Frans (rangorde 39,45) significant beter scoren dan Nederlandstalige studenten (rangorde 22,30) in BA1. Dat blijkt ook zo te zijn in BA2: Franstalige studenten (rangorde 27,06) tegenover Nederlandstalige (rangorde 16,78); $U = 51{,}500$; $p = 0{,}008$. In BA3 meet men geen significant verschil meer. Er is eveneens een significant verschil ($U = 15{,}000$; $p = 0{,}022$) tussen het gemiddelde van de eerstejaarsstudenten met een ASO-diploma (gemiddelde rangorde = 21,59) en de studenten zonder ASO-diploma (gemiddelde rangorde = 7,00). In BA2 en BA3 was het aantal niet-ASO'ers te klein om te toetsen. De Spearman's rho ($rho = 0{,}542$; $p < 0{,}001$) wijst op een middelmatige correlatie tussen de HUB-taalexamens (Taalbeheersing en Taalkunde) en de Dialangresultaten in BA1. In BA2 is er nog sprake van een lage correlatie ($rho = 0{,}319$), die in BA3 wegvalt.

Op de derde onderzoeksvraag moet negatief geantwoord worden. Halverwege het jaar zit nog 45,45% van de derdejaarsstudenten in B1, 45,45% in B2 en slechts 9% haalt ruim de norm met C2.

Grafiek 4: Taalvaardigheid Frans in BA3 en MA (% studenten/ERK-niveau)

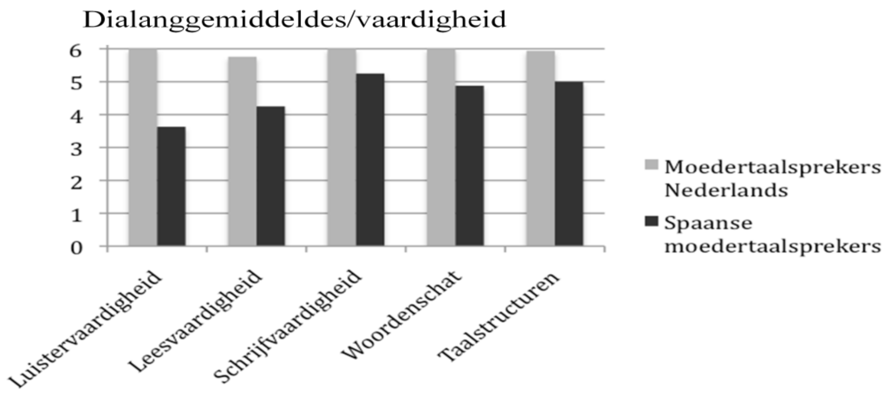


Op de onderzoeksvraag of alle masterstudenten de norm van het DLR halen, moet eveneens negatief geantwoord worden: 76,47% van de studenten zit in niveau B2, dat is twee niveaus lager dan de vooropgestelde C2.

Uit de metingen blijkt dat de masterstudenten de norm C1 voor Spaans en C2 voor Frans niet halen. In een volgende stap kan gezocht worden naar verklaringen voor deze kloof. Hieronder een van de verklaringen waarom de studenten Spaans de norm niet halen.

Tijdens hun empirisch onderzoek deden Nobile (2011) en Schut (2011) een eigenaardige vaststelling: de toetsen Nederlands zijn zo gemakkelijk dat ze geen discriminerend vermogen hebben om de moedertaalsprekers Nederlands onderling te onderscheiden; bijna alle HUB-studenten, ongeacht hun studiejaar en moedertaal, komen voor alle toetsen in C2 terecht. Dit resultaat staat in schril contrast met de Dialangtoetsen Spaans: de Spaanse Erasmusstudenten die in hun derde of vierde jaar Vertaler-Tolk zitten, stranden voor luistervaardigheid op 3,63 en voor leesvaardigheid op 4,25.

Grafiek 5: Vergelijking van Dialang-gemiddeldes van de moedertaalsprekers Nederlands en Spaans



Ondanks het feit dat hier geen statistisch bewijs geleverd wordt, is het duidelijk dat de moeilijkheidsgraad van de Spaanse toetsen hoger is dan die van de Nederlandse. De hoge codeerovereenstemming die gemeten werd bij het opstellen van de descriptoren en van de Dialangitems, wordt hier niet bevestigd door de empirische data. Er zijn meer empirische studies nodig die bewijzen dat de testitems aan het juiste ERK-niveau werden gerelateerd en dat de toetsen van de verschillende talen vergelijkbaar zijn.

Conclusie taalvaardigheid Spaans en Frans TT-studenten

Volgens de Dialangtoetsen studeren de HUB-studenten TT af met niveau B1 voor Spaans en bijna niveau B2 voor Frans. Het verloop van de talen is helemaal anders: Spaans is voor de meeste studenten een nieuwe taal, hun vaardigheden nemen snel toe en het verschil tussen de eerste drie studiejaren is significant. Voor Frans meten de Dialangtoetsen geen significante vooruitgang.

De Dialangtoetsen vertonen, zoals hoger vermeld, een reeks gebreken. De resultaten uit deze studies moeten dan ook vergeleken worden met andere ERK-gerelateerde toetsen.

Er zijn ook nieuwe empirische studies nodig die het niveau van de HUB-studenten met dat van andere taalstudenten vergelijken en de haalbaarheid van de learning outcomes van de VLUHR meten. Het 'verkoopt' minder goed om in de leerresultaten te schrijven dat studenten de master binnenkomen en uitstappen met hetzelfde ERK-niveau, maar wat als alle empirische metingen in die richting wijzen? Voor Spaans moeten de meeste studenten in vier jaar tijd van 0 tot C1 geraken. Als we de studiepunten van de vakken waarin Spaans wordt gesproken optellen, komen we aan 45. Algemeen wordt aangenomen dat één studiepunt overeenkomt met een studiebelasting van 25 uur, wat betekent dat een student Spaans in vier jaar tijd 1125 uur aan Spaans besteedt (waarvan 450 contacturen).

Tabel 3: Guidelines voor het CEFR Cambridge ESOL

CEFR Level	Guided Learning Hours
C2	approximately 1,000–1,200
C1	approximately 700–800
B2	approximately 500–600
B1	approximately 350–400
A2	approximately 180–200

Als we dat totaal vergelijken met de Guidelines van de Cambridge ESOL University, stellen we vast dat de studenten TT niveau C1 moeten bereiken met 1100 uur, 900 uur minder dan de begrote tijd. Alderson, de architect van het ERK, stelde zich in 2007 al de vraag of men de vooropgestelde niveaus voor Engels wel aan de andere vreemde talen kan koppelen.

5. Conclusie

De laatste tien jaar heeft het ERK de interesse voor verwerving en didactiek van vreemde talen aangewakkerd. Naast die Europese tendens is er in Vlaanderen een tweede kracht actief: die van de academisering. Beide op het eerste gezicht tegenstrijdige ontwikkelingen, de eerste praktijkgericht, de tweede theoriegericht, zorgden voor een opwaardering van het taalvaardigheidonderwijs. In het curriculum neemt taalvaardigheid een belangrijke plaats in, zowel in de opleiding Toegepaste Taalkunde als bij Taal- en Letterkunde. Taalbeheersing, het schoolvoorbeeld van een praktijkvak, heeft nu ook een theoretische dimensie: taalverwerving en -didactiek zijn steeds vaker onderwerp van onderzoek door docenten en studenten. Bovendien hebben de recente ontwikkelingen geleid tot een hechtere samenwerking tussen de instellingen en meer gezamenlijke onderzoeksprojecten rond taalvaardigheid.

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[1] Statistici die dit 'liberale standpunt' verdedigen, hebben aangetoond dat het voor parametrische testen weinig uitmaakt als een ordinale variabele als intervalvariabele beschouwd wordt. In dat geval neem je aan dat de 6 ordinale niveaus eigenlijk afgeronde waarden zijn van een onderliggende, continue variabele.