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Foreword

Roger Nunn

Welcome to our seventh Volume of English Scholarship Beyond Borders. In this volume we will be proposing two issues for the first time.

In this first issue, we present four papers from very different cultural and geographical contexts. In *Beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices in a South African university,* Msukisi Howard Kepe provides interesting insights into the domination of English in the post-apartheid mainstream education system. His study continues his work into translanguaging (Kepe, 2019) by exploring the beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices at University level. The findings indicated that translanguaging encourages a cultural process of the negotiation of linguistic practices. His study also reflects on the broad diversity of global settings in which translanguagung occurs. This study resonates with the work of four other ESBB members (Foncha et al., 2016), in that it leads students to reflect constructively on their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In the first of two papers in this issue (and three in this volume) on developing informational competence (*Two models of reuse situations in language textbooks*), Ahmet Acar scrutinizes the use of mini-projects an action-oriented approach to promote the development of social actors in the classroom. Min-projects therefore go beyond the communicative simulations and role-plays of previous communicative approaches. Ahmet discusses two models of reuse situations in language textbooks, concluding that only mini-projects “have the potential to train students capable of acting in a foreign language-culture as social actors”.

Jennifer Yphantides provides an original contribution to our guiding theme of crossing borders in *Supporting neurodiverse students in the EFL classroom: A cross border challenge and responsibility*, Jennifer points out that in spite of the increased need to consider neurodiversity, most of us are ill-prepared face this challenge. This paper provides both theoretically sound explanations and practical classroom-tested solutions. A very interesting contribution and one that also underlines the responsibility we all have to learn about neurodiversity.

In our first contribution from France since our first publication seven years ago, we are happy to introduce this paper by Christian Puren, who like Ahmet Acar, addresses information literacy. Scheduled to be a keynote speaker at our Izmir conference (which was cancelled at the last minute due to the coronavirus epidemic), Puren (*Information literacy in a social action-oriented approach: From communicative competence to informational competence*) provides a rich theoretical and practical pedagogical framework for considering the social dimensions of informational competence. Puren's work is exemplified from a French as a foreign language context, but it is interesting to note common interests with English teaching in school systems in other contexts, such as the Turkish context described by Ahmet Acar in this volume.

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Beliefs of Students About Their Translanguaging Practices in a South African University

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Abstract

With the demise of apartheid following the advent of democracy in 1994, English language domination continues unabated in South African mainstream schools and institutions of higher learning. Consequently, the English language hegemony became a deficit to most students from less-affluent backgrounds who were required to learn the English language as the first additional. This situation follows as researchers agree that students learning English as First Additional Language (EFAL) battle with conceptualisation and struggle to classify added information at universities in South Africa. To help maximise the learners' and the teachers' linguistic resources in problem-solving and knowledge construction, this study explores the beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices during pre-writing at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. The central question was: What are the students' beliefs about their translanguaging practices in a South African university? This case study focused on five third-year students from the Bachelor of Education Undergraduate Class. The participants range in age 18 to 35. The researcher is an insider, presenting English Methodology to these students. The study was conducted through the students' pre-writing process with the Gibbons Curriculum Cycle aid to collect data. Translatability theory as a theoretical framework informed the study. The study revealed that when translanguaging is adopted, it accommodates cultural and linguistic practices negotiation. It is informed by plurality to reflect a broad diversity of global settings, whilst accommodating successful communication, including in our language classrooms.

Keywords: Diversity, English hegemony, Gibbons Curriculum Cycle, pre-writing process, scaffolding, South African Language in Education Policy, translanguaging, translatability.

Introduction

Before the establishment of the 1948 system of apartheid in South Africa, there was a fierce recurring antagonism and competition between the two White (originally European) population groups, indicating the Dutch, Afrikaans L1 speakers (Afrikaner), and the English L1 speakers. From this feud of the 20th century derived an institutionalised education earmarked by either monolingualism or transitional bilingualism.

For White students, native language, instruction was universal. Students received all their education, including tertiary education, in either English or Afrikaans. In Black education, conversely, the "mother tongue principle" implied that children had to begin their schooling experience in their vernacular as the medium of instruction up to Standard 3 (Grade 5, the fifth year of schooling). From Standard 4 (Grade 6) to tertiary level, English became the medium of instruction (MoI) (Christie & Collins, 1982). Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs in 1953 and later Minister of Bantu Education, affirmed this notion when he said: “When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them” (House of Assembly/ HoA 1953, p. 3585). Researchers agree that a move to English beyond Grade 4 corresponded with regular drop-in pass rates to a low 48.3% in 1982 and 44% in 1992 (Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017). To this end, language became a political and social concern in South Africa. Recent studies confirm that non-English students do not achieve the same level of academic success as their native English peers. Consequently, many Grade 12 learners with reading or writing deficiencies possess the literacy levels of Grade 4 pupils (Horne, 2002). With the demise of apartheid following the advent of democracy in 1994, English language hegemony continues unabated in South African mainstream schools and institutions of higher learning. It has become a deficit to most students from less affluent backgrounds, learning the English language as a first additional language. This situation remains despite the status granted by the New Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 200 of 1993) to provide official status – in the past granted only to English and Afrikaans – to the 11 major languages. The following are the 2011 percentage estimates of L1 speakers within the population: isiZulu (22%), isiXhosa (16%), Afrikaans (13.5%), Sepedi (9.1%), English (9.6%), Setswana (8%), Sesotho (7.6%), Xitsonga (4.5%), Siswati (2.6%), Tshivenda (2.4%), and isiNdebele (2.1%) (Census South Africa, 2012, p.24). The aforementioned linguistic deficit is aggravated because most teachers still rely on the traditional methods of teaching from primary level, secondary level and up to a tertiary level in South Africa, resulting

in students learning through a continuous process of rote memorisation (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). This paradox motivated this research.

Rationale

The chapter emerged because many students in the English methodology class of which I am teaching appeared to struggle with conceptualising their courses and added information, impacting negatively on their duly performed (DP) as they score low marks. Consequently, the institution marks most students as DP. This means they cannot write the exam for that course, even if they write the examination, their paper would not be marked. A duly performed refused (DPR) on the students' record counts as a fail. It contributes a zero towards their average in their year or degree. Even though some students in this class would have DPR due to missing tutorials or handing in work late, it appears the main cause for the DPR was a lack of philosophical interpretation and conceptualisation when research indicates that the action signalled the EFAL incompetence. For the aforementioned reasons, to discuss the target language impediments, this study explores the beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa with the aid of Gibbons' scaffolding curriculum cycle (2002).

Several studies were conducted on translanguaging as a concept and its benefits to our language classroom practice. There appears to be a divergence concerning the beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices during pre-writing in this discipline. This study is an attempt to narrow that divergence. Addressing this would involve, amongst other things, depicting how translanguaging as a scaffolding theory and a teaching method was used by the study group aided or articulated by Gibbons' scaffolding curriculum cycle (2002). The central question directed is: What are the students' beliefs about their translanguaging practices in a South African university? This practice was evident in this study, comprising a diverse body of participants who migrated from various provinces in South Africa and across Africa to study at the University of Fort Hare (UFH).

Setting

The study location is the University of Fort Hare (UFH) in South Africa. The UFH was established in 1916. it is Africa's oldest traditionally Black African university (though now, it accepts students of all races). It is in Alice, a small town in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. It lies on the south-western bank of the Tyhume River, west-northwest of East London, at an

elevation of 1,720 feet (524 m). The participants are from multicultural backgrounds, resembling the diverse demographics of the population of the UFH. The targeted population participated in the study, comprising five Bachelor of Education Undergraduate first-year students. The participants range in age from 18 to 35. I am an insider, teaching them English Methodology. I sought to explore the beliefs of students or the study group about their translanguaging practices in class. The study group (participants) comprised a diverse body of students who speak all 11 South African official languages as aforementioned. I selected the participants based on their responses in classroom practice during the pre/initial stage of the writing process about translanguaging. This was achieved by scaffolding the participants' pre-writing and language use employing Gibbons' scaffolding curriculum cycle. The significance of the curriculum cycle is discussed in the Methodology section. The pre-writing process involved bilingual discussions, sometimes direct corrective/remedial and metalinguistic feedback, employing a pyramid/mind-mapping, which assisted in brainstorming (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig. 4, & Fig. 5). I collected direct testimonies from these practices about translanguaging literacies from the participants to evaluate their interaction and my teaching practice. The permission to conduct the study was granted at the UFH. This manuscript depicts the participants' shared experiences, which they can use through their linguistic resources to initiate and decode new information and understandings. The sharing of experiences was evident in this study as the participants grappled with new content to realise effective language and literacy development by using their first languages as a basis of experience during classroom discourse.

Provided the aforementioned, I am proposing translanguaging as a scaffolding theory and a teaching method to help the participants decode new concepts and deeper understandings. I combined translanguaging and scaffolding since they are inextricably linked. The curriculum cycle, conversely, would aid articulate translanguaging and its application regarding the three phases of the activity cycle, such as a) building knowledge of the text, b) modelling text and c) joint construction. Since at the core of this manuscript is translanguaging practices by the participants, I employed Roald Dahl's short story, 'The Landlady' (1959/1991), as a stimulus to illustrate the strength of translanguaging during pre-writing of a narrative genre employing the Gibbons Curriculum Cycle. This is again discussed in the Methodology section. This study examined the beliefs of the study group (students) about their translanguaging practices as a teaching method in a South African university to create an interdependent learning environment where the first language of a student could be a strong outlet to build from and to decipher the

new information presented in the target language. I used the students' pre-writing with the aid of the Gibbons Curriculum Cycle to solicit students' beliefs about translanguaging and to examine data. My role as participant-observer and the significance of pre-writing is explained later. Next, I explain the Gibbons' Curriculum Cycle (2002):

Gibbons' Curriculum Cycle (2002)

Gibbon's Curriculum Cycle involves the following:

- Building the background knowledge of the text
- Modelling text
- Joint construction
- Independent writing

I employed this curriculum cycle to emphasise its interconnectedness with translanguaging. Similar to translanguaging, the curriculum cycle emphasises the importance of building background knowledge of the content in EFAL where the participants appeared to lack in vocabulary. Such a practice may help students, providing the ability to develop control of a spoken language, considering that knowledge before any systematic system focuses on specific genres (Edgar & Padgett, 1995). After perusing various case studies about translanguaging practices across South Africa and globally, I learnt that whilst no approach can be directly transferred from one local context to another, we can all establish something useful to learn from the various contexts. Nunn (2011) refers to this situation as 'translatability', contending that skills need reinforcement, reapplication, and reinvention within a framework that both requires and encourages their use. Having reviewed the literature on translanguaging practices in South African and international context, I am convinced that translatability is a relevant theoretical framework that can serve as a link in situating the research question for this study. The research question directed, "What are the beliefs of students about their translanguaging practices in a South African university?" Provided this central question, I define translanguaging, to show its relevance to the South African Language in Education Policy (LiEP).

Translanguaging

In line with Kepe (2017), Creese, and Blackledge (2010), observed that the term 'translanguaging' is a descriptive label for specific language practice, aiming to help maximise the learners', and the teachers' linguistic resources in problem-solving and knowledge

construction. The education department as an entity is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, develop the official languages mentioned earlier, and respect for all languages used in the country (Department of Education/DoE, 1997). In the South African context, the LiEP is cascaded through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2012). This manuscript, therefore, focuses on the agency and identity of the first language as a device to learn a second or foreign language (EFAL in this case). Below, I define observation and pre-writing as quintessential devices of collecting data in this study.

Observation

As a participant-observer in this study, I had to play various roles, employing various techniques, including my five senses, to collect data. Notwithstanding my involvement with the study group, I had to constantly bear in mind my primary role as a researcher and remain neutral and impartial when collecting and analysing data relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (P.A. Adler & P. Adler, 1994).

Pre-writing

Narrative genre provides teachers with an opportunity to focus on vocabulary, an often-neglected area of grammar purposefully and with a provide context (Edgar & Padgett, 1995). Hammond (2001), emphasise scaffolding of pre-writing structure, language use and a cognizance of the importance of affording students a voice.

Methodology

The design was a qualitative ethnographic case study, whilst the paradigm was interpretive. The setting was the UFH, Alice Campus, in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 35. I was a participant-observer, therefore, an *insider,* teaching them English Methodology and Philosophy of Education. I observed the participants' translanguaging practices during our sessions from which I collected first-hand data (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1983). This study is attributable to many students in the Philosophy of Education and English Methodology classes, both of which I am also teaching, who struggled with conceptualising the new, philosophic, and often abstract pedagogical notions, impacting negatively on their DP as they scored low marks. Consequently, the institution marks most of the students as DPR, which means they cannot write the exam for that course; even if they do write the examination, their papers would not be marked. This situation motivated this study, which advocates a re-examination of translanguaging as a valid and essential component in this context. As a

participant-observer in the study group, I became aware of my role by remaining unbiased when collecting and analysing data pertinent to the problem under investigation (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1983). I selected the participants based on their concerning translanguaging practice in class. I conducted brief interviews with them, which were scaffold concerning their pre-writing and language use, aided by the Gibbons Curriculum Cycle through bilingual discussions, sometimes direct corrective/remedial and metalinguistic feedback, mind-mapping/brainstorming, practical guidance and co-construction. The methods employed to collect data included observation, pre-writing, and interviews. I believe that reflexivity should be included for the usage of diverse designs for data collection and for triangulation during knowledge generation to ascertain credibility and trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The ethical protocols were observed as I received ethical clearance from the UFH. The study group granted their consent to participate in the study. All participants were updated regularly on the research activities.

Results

I conducted this investigation to identify if, while translanguaging, the study group could benefit from using their stronger language to develop the weaker (EFAL in this case) and stimulate a deeper understanding of meaning, which may cause increased proficiency in the target language. The theme is divided into three: a) the beliefs of the study group about translanguaging, b) the translanguaging practices of the study group, and c) observation. I interviewed the five members of the study group about their beliefs on translanguaging as a theory and teaching method. They all consented to me using the interview data. There was no request for anonymity; instead, participants were keen to have their names and photographs included if needed, in any report or conference report. I, therefore, provide the names of the study group (also student teachers), as follows: Portia Lerato Jafter, Mlahleki Vuyokazi, Sephoko Siviwe, Mhlekude Asiphe, and Xhotyeni Luyolo. Each member devises their own strength.

The beliefs of the study group about translanguaging

Excerpt 1 (Jafter)

Jafter studied her primary school/elementary level and secondary school using English as L1. She only spoke the vernacular languages at home [Sesotho and isiXhosa]. She had to teach herself how to speak and write both in Sesotho and isiXhosa. She underscores her proficiency

in English as having helped her to learn other languages. Her mother also played a vital role in understanding the difference amongst the languages [English, isiXhosa and Sesotho]. Her mother helped her distinguish concerning how various alphabets sound in each of those languages. For example, the "C" in isiXhosa does not sound the same in English. Whilst the Sesotho Language does not use the 'C', instead, it uses 'K' with a different sound from 'C'. Jafter states that even though her mother encouraged multilingualism, she advocated for better proficiency in English concerning speaking, reading, and writing above her aforementioned vernacular languages.

> To be honest, when I first heard about translanguaging I was a bit sceptical. I won't lie and I just thought it was similar to code-switching and did not want to accept that it was different and so I questioned its relevance, however, when I started reading more about it and saw how it was used in the past by different researchers, I realised that this is something I used my entire life and it is a simple concept really and naturally occurring. As quite often, we use the existing language to decode and understand the new language, so, it is a teaching strategy that I would encourage my learners to use because it has worked for me even though I did not know what it was then, it can work for others too who wish to try it.

Comments

The above observations signal the stereotypes about using the African languages as media of learning and teaching or as school subjects.

Excerpt 2 (Mlahleki)

Mlahleki spoke isiXhosa at home but she also speaks Setswana, isiZulu, and isiXhosa [vernaculars] eloquently. With friends, she speaks isiXhosa and English because they speak various languages, using English as lingua franca.

> When I first heard about translanguaging, I thought it was about code-switching, but as I learnt more about it, my attitude changed, resulting in a different perspective about it. Now, I understand that translanguaging is about using the mother language as a resource to learn a new language, English in my case. As a prospective teacher, I imagine a classroom situation where

> one's learners are allowed to engage in a classroom discourse not limited to English only but also using their mother languages to brainstorm through exploratory talk. However, the subject matter discussed whether in pair work or group should be presented in the target language [English].

Comments

It is possible in a monolingual teaching situation for students to answer questions or author an essay about a subject without fully understanding it (Baker, 2011).

Excerpt 3 (Sephoko)

> I never thought that languages can coexist in the classroom situation concerning having the liberty to express your views where English domination is controlled. I never knew that learners mother languages can be used in the group discussions, through exploratory talk in English Class. The only way I knew was that learners should be taught in English as prescribed by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). But after I heard about translanguaging, I began to understand that learners' mother languages can be used through exploratory talk but presented in the target language (presentational talk).

Comments

The South African LiEP Act, 1996 recognises that cultural diversity is a valuable national asset (Doe, 1997). In the South African context, the LiEP is cascaded through a Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2012).

Excerpt 4 (Xhotyeni)

> As a prospective teacher, my problem with translanguaging is when learners will be writing tests and exams where there are no peers to discuss with, will they not be limited in unlocking new information in English as a result of being accustomed to their native languages?

Comments

The Department of Education (DoE, 1997), as an entity is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, developing the official languages, and respect for all languages used in the country.

Excerpt 5 (Mhlekude)

> Well, one thing I realised about translanguaging is that actually, we were unconsciously using this method. But now we are allowed to utilise it efficiently.

Comments

Students 'sneak in' their mother language during class discussions and this report should be observed as a way of recognising the learners' L1s through translanguaging.

Discussion

When I introduced translanguaging as a theory and a teaching method to the participants, they confused it with code-switching. Jafter had this to say:

> To be honest, when I first heard about translanguaging I was a bit sceptical. I won't lie and I just thought it was similar to code-switching and did not want to accept that it was different and so I questioned its relevance, however, when I started reading more about it and saw how it was used in the past by different researchers, I realised that this is something I used my whole entire life and it's a simple concept really and naturally occurring.

Code-switching involves an assumption of separate systems languages: two monolinguals. Conversely, translanguaging involves one integrated linguistic system where both languages are used in a dynamic and functionally integrated manner to organise and mediate mental process in understanding, speaking, and literacy, with maximum learning (García & Sylvan, 2011)

I assigned each participant with a role during pre-writing aided by Gibbons' Curriculum Cycle. They were required to author a narrative (story) with a 'twist in the tail'. My focus was on building knowledge, as the first step of the cycle. Below, I list the four steps of the cycle:

- Building knowledge of the text
- Modelling a narrative
- Joint construction
- Independent composing a story with a 'twist in the tail'

I employed the pyramid illustrated below (Fig. 1), as a device for pre-writing of a narrative genre with a twist in the tail under the theme: the translanguaging practices of the study group. This practice was intended to help the study group to conceptualise and classify new information.

The translanguaging practices of the study group

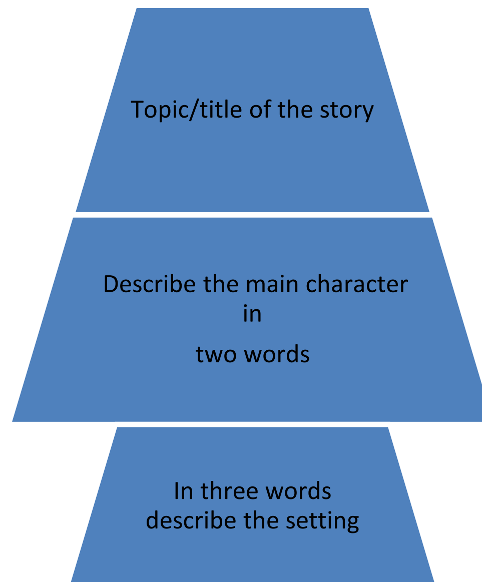
Working in groups of five, the participants had to plan a narrative genre with a 'twist in the tail' using a story pyramid illustrated below (Fig. 1), in which the study group named the main character; next described the main character in two words, then in three words described the setting. They stopped at this point because the purpose was to author their stories [the fourth stage in the Gibbons cycle]. For this report, I focus on building knowledge of the text only. To do this, and as a way of building knowledge, I presented the participant with Roald Dahl's 'The Landlady' (1959/1991). In groups, they were instructed to read the story and respond to the questions, based on it. The limited space provided for this report prevents me from presenting or attaching the story. This activity was provided to the English methodology class; however, the focus was on the study group. I draw the focus of the reader to only one activity planned by the study group under the theme: *students' pre-writing.* Even though my focus was on the pre-writing process only, the pyramid below (Fig. 1) is a pre-writing/planning activity building towards writing a full story/narrative with a 'twist in the tail'. I will shelve the full story for the next paper. To begin their pre-writing, the participants name the main character; describe the character (s) in two words; and then in three words, describe the setting as can be observed in the example below.

Pyramids

Pyramid 1 (Fig. 1), as a guide, is constructed in the target language (English). This was to provide the participant with guidelines of the structure of a narrative (Edgar & Padgett, 1995). This provision assisted the participants to focus their planning or pre-writing in concert with the correct features of the required genre. Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig.4, Fig. 5, & Fig. 6 were employed for the participants' translanguaging as an arena to present their linguistic ideas with Fig. 1 serving as a premise. This report focuses on brainstorming during a pre-writing process.

Figure 1

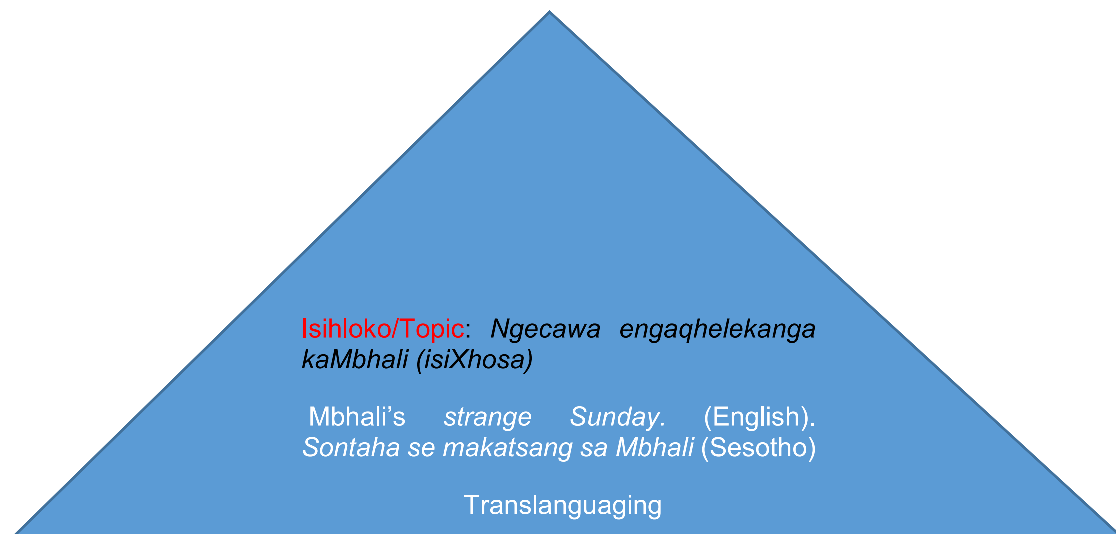
Pyramid 1 (P1)



Note. As explained, Fig.1 was used as a guide. Fig. 1 represents the first stage where the participants had to collect and build knowledge around the provided topic. Next follows the study group's translanguaging through pre-writing in IsiXhosa, Sesotho and English.

Figure 2

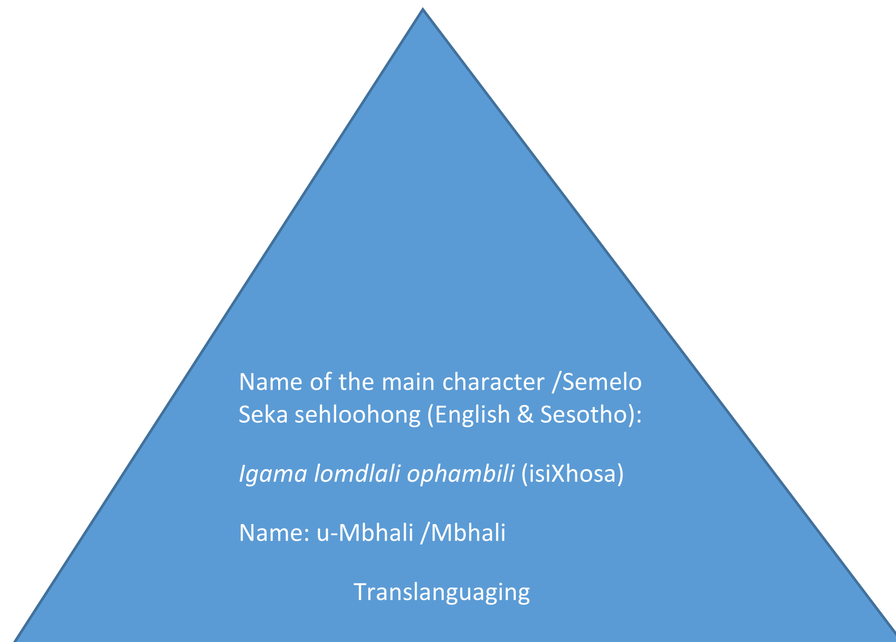
Pyramid 2 (P2)



Note: Fig. 2 depicts meaning interchange of the topic/title written in isiXhosa, Sesotho, and English (translanguaging).

Figure 1

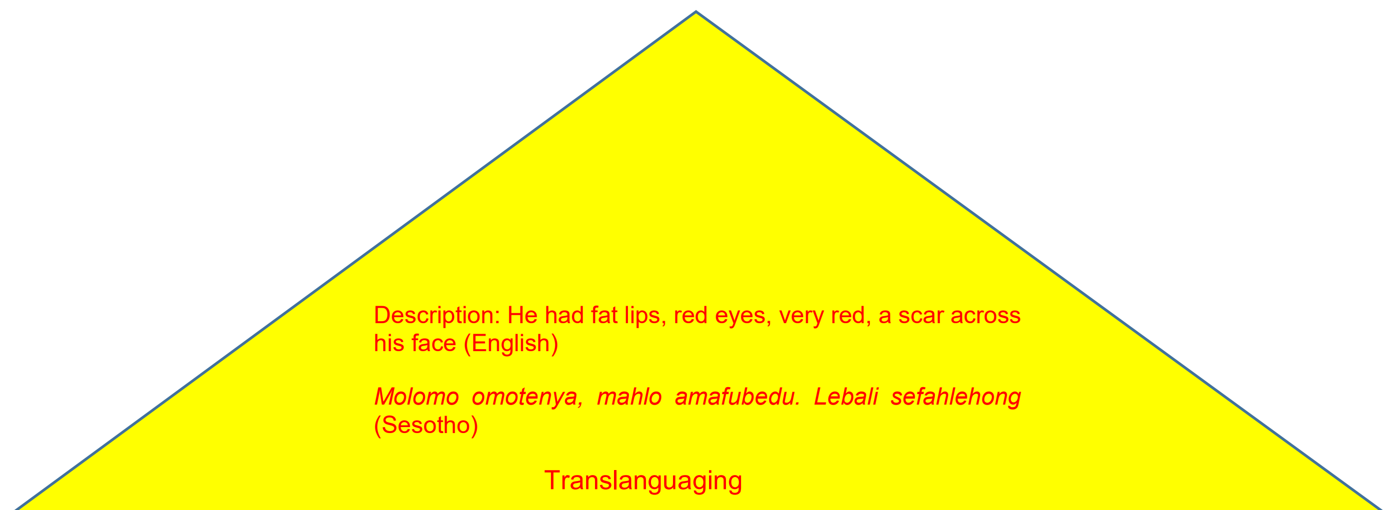
Pyramid 3 (P3)



Note. Fig. 3 represents the name of the main character, constructed in English & Sesotho, and in isiXhosa (translanguaging).

Figure 4.

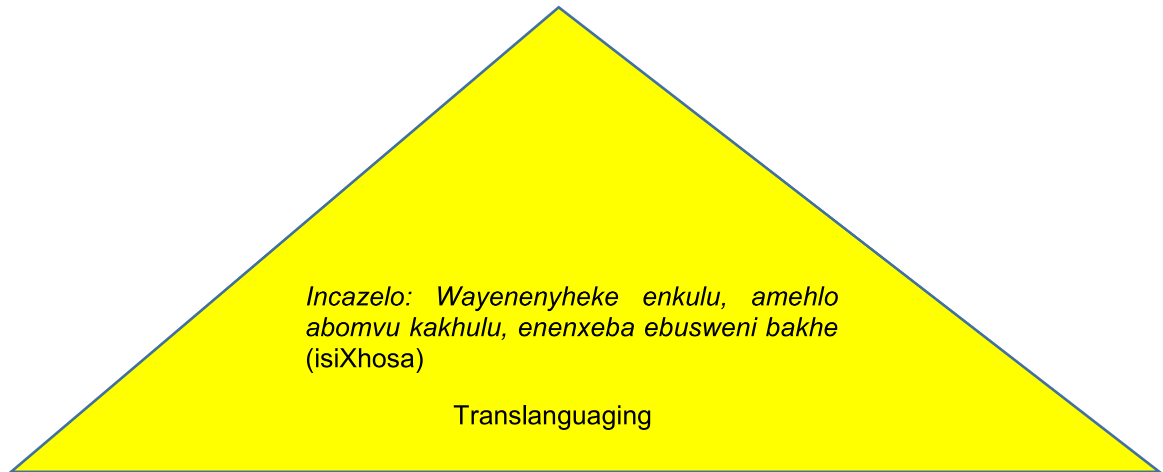
Pyramid 4 (P4)



Note. Fig. 4 represents the description of the main character, constructed in English and Sesotho.

Figure 5

Pyramid 5 (P5)



Note. Fig. 5 represents the description of the main character, constructed in isiXhosa.

Figure 6.

Pyramid 6 (P6).

Note. Fig. 6 depicts a setting description. Defining and describing characters or locations effectively and vividly are central features of narratives. Edgar and Padgett (1995) additionally concur that a narrative genre represents a terrific opportunity to teach grammar in context.

Conclusion

This report illustrates that monolingual ideologies and practices are ineffective. They do not provide a positive school experience and pedagogic with cognitive support needed for multilingual children (Lee & Canagarajah, 2018). Taglialatela (2012) affirms that classroom language practices of multilingual learners should be characterised by a discursive practice of 'languaging'. As in García and Sylvan (2011), translanguaging is not simply copying information from one language to another. According to this observation, the cognitive advantages of translanguaging were evident in this study as a feasible strategy to develop a weaker language through cross-transfer of skills amongst the linguistic repertoires that students possess (Cook, 1995). Notwithstanding prevalent negative attitudes and stereotypes associated with using African languages as media of learning and teaching or as school subjects, this study demonstrates that to take a more complex account of language use and match multilingual spaces, classroom language practices of multilingual learners should be characterised by a discursive practice of 'languaging'.

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Two Models of Reuse Situations in Language Textbooks

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Abstract

With the advent of the communicative approach and the rise of functional-notional syllabi in language teaching, the units of communicative textbooks have begun to be organized around communication situations related to cultural themes. The language objectives of the unit, on the other hand, have largely been specified in terms of functions and notions. Thus, all the unit contents logically serve these functional-notional objectives of the textbook units. At the end of the units of such communicative textbooks, the students are presented with communicative simulations or role-plays, whose function is to enable them to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities presented in the textbook unit. With the action-oriented approach, however, the coherence of the textbook unit is not provided through communicative simulations and role-plays but through mini-projects, which have the double function of both enabling the students to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit (actional reuse situations), and educating for social action. This educational dimension of mini-projects is what mainly differentiates them from both the communicative simulations and role-plays offered to the students at the end of the communicative textbooks. It should also be noted that the other difference, namely the different status of communication (both the means and the goal in the communicative approach, only means in the action-oriented approach) is also important in distinguishing between mini-projects and communicative simulations and role-plays. In this article I discuss two models of reuse situations in language textbooks and argue that only the mini-projects have the potential to train students capable of acting in a foreign language-culture as social actors.

Keywords mini-projects, action oriented approach, reuse situations, social actors

Introduction

The reference action in the communicative approach (CA), as well as in task-based language teaching (TBLT) as promoted by task-based methodologists (Ellis, 2003; Estaire and Zanon, 1994; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996), is language interaction described in terms of

functions and notions. Thus, the aim is to prepare students for involvement in language interaction in short-term contact situations as stressed in Van Ek's (1975) *The Threshold Level in a European-Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults*. To this end, communication is considered as both the means and the goal: involving learners in communicative activities with the goal of training communicators. Consequently, "the reference exercise of the communicative approach was the simulation, where the learner was asked to act as if he were a user, to communicate in class as if he were communicating in society" (Puren, 2006, p. 6). The basic function of these simulations is to create an authentic situation in what the communicative paradigm considers an artificial environment (the classroom) to allow the students to interact with each other by using functions and notions.

After the Threshold Level document, the Council of Europe (2001, 2018) introduced two further documents, which are part of the same project, namely, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume (CEFRCV, 2018), which indicated a departure from the goal of training communicators as the ultimate goal in language teaching.

> The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning (CEFR, 2001, p.9).

This short passage from CEFR (2001) indicates that the targeted actions of CA, namely, speech acts do not have full meaning in isolation. Thus, the reference action of the action-oriented approach (AoA) as indicated in this passage is social action, which alone can give full meaning to speech acts. In line with this designation, it can be stated that the speech action, which is defined as talking with and acting on the other (Puren, 2004), is put at the service of social action, which is defined as acting with others (Puren, 2004). Accordingly, unlike CA and TBLT, which consider communication as both the means and the goal, AoA considers communication at the service of social action. The above quote from CEFR (2001) also clearly indicates that users and learners of a language should be considered as social actors (social agents). This new goal, that of training social actors, is guided by the new reference situation indicated again in both CEFR (2001) and CEFRCV (2018), that of a multilingual and multicultural society along with the reference action, which is social action. Thus, it is not a

question of just training communicators who will be involved in short-term contact situations as indicated in the Threshold Level document but as Puren (2009a) states

> it is now a question of training citizens of multilingual and multicultural societies capable of living together harmoniously (and foreign and second language classes in France are mini-societies of this type), as well as students and professionals capable of working with others over the long term in foreign languages and cultures (p. 125).

Since the new reference action in AoA is social action, AoA is renamed as the social action-oriented approach (SAOA) by Puren (2009b, 2020) and social action-based learning (SABL) by Acar (2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2021b). The current dominant methodology, namely, TBLT, with its communicative tasks, would certainly be insufficient to realize these objectives since its main goal is to train successful communicators (Acar, 2021b, p. 308). In consequence, the question is which reference learning action represents social action in the classroom? Puren (2009a, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016, 2017, 2019) argues that social action in and/or outside the classroom is best represented by pedagogical projects and mini-projects and hence these are the basic reference learning activities that can train learners as social actors. Puren (2020, p.3) presents the methodological matrices currently available in school didactics of languages and cultures in France in table 1 (page 26 below).

As can be seen in the table, while the privileged learning act was the collective oral explanations of authentic documents in the active methodology, simulations and role-playing were the basic learning acts in CA. While cross-language conceptualization activities correspond to the basic learning acts in plurilingual-pluricultural approaches, real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode are the reference learning acts of the co-language and co-cultural perspectives or SABL. Although some TBLT methodologists (e.g. Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 2007) consider projects merely as a type of task, Puren (2020), in the above typology, clearly displays the rupture between CA (as well as TBLT) and SABL. Besides, Puren (2014a, 2014b, 2019) also shows the differences between communicative tasks and pedagogical projects in his different analyses. Similarly, Nunn (2020, p.52) argues that “tasks are not projects, but they can support projects and can be self-directed”. Despite these well-grounded studies, some ELT curricula, as well as researchers, still consider AoA/SABL as TBLT as discussed in detail by Acar (2021a).

Table 1. *Methodological Matrices Currently Available in School Didactic of Languages and Cultures in France*

	TARGETED SOCIAL COMPETENCES		Targeted using act	Privileged learning act
	Language competences	**Cultural competences**		
1. Reading matrix: active methodology (1920-1960)	Ability to maintain contact with the foreign language from a distance through authentic documents	Ability to mobilize and extract knowledge about the foreign culture from and about authentic documents: metacultural component.	reading, speaking out on *("parler sur")*	Collective oral explanations in class of authentic documents
2. Communicative-intercultural matrix: communicative-intercultural approach (1980-1990)	Ability to exchange information with visiting foreigners on an ad hoc basis during initial contacts or short stays	Ability to control cross-representations in interaction with others: intercultural component	meeting, talking with *("parler avec quelqu'un")*	Interactions in class in simulations and role-playing
3. Plurilingual-pluricultural matrix: plurilingual-pluricultural approaches (1990-…)	Ability to "live together", *i.e.,* to manage linguistically the permanent cohabitation with allophones in a plurilingual and pluricultural society	Ability to understand the attitudes and behaviors of others and to adopt common attitudes and behaviors acceptable in a culturally diverse society: pluricultural component	living with, talking to each other *("se parler")*	Cross-language conceptualization activities
4. Social-action matrix: co-language and co-cultural perspectives (2000-...)	Ability to "make society" and to work in a foreign language in a long-term with native and non-native speakers of that language.	Ability to developing with others common conceptions of collective action on the basis of shared contextual values: co-cultural component	acting with, consulting with *("en parler avec quelqu'un/entre nous" = "se concerter")*	real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode in class society and/or outside society

Communicative Reuse Situations in Communicative Textbooks

In communicative textbooks, the unit is the unit of communication, mostly indicated at the very beginning of the unit by the objectives of the unit in terms of functions and notions. The final production of the students (semi-free production) is realized through role-plays and simulations, whose function is to enable them to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit. In the

English textbook *Upswing English* used in the eighth grades of public secondary schools by the students about the age of 13 in Turkey for example, unit objectives are only announced as can-do descriptors under the subtitle *Language Skills and Learning Outcomes.* These can-do descriptors show the communicative objectives of each unit. For unit one (friendship), for example, unit objectives are only announced in the following way:

Students can…

• understand the specific information in short conversations on everyday topics, such as accepting and refusing an offer/invitation, apologizing and making simple inquiries.
• interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations involving accepting and refusing an offer/invitation, apologizing and making simple inquiries.
• structure a talk to make simple inquiries, give explanations and reasons.
• understand short and simple texts about friendship.
• understand short and simple invitation letters, cards and emails.
• write a short and simple letter apologizing and giving reasons for not attending a party in response to an invitation (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

Announcing objectives only in terms of communicative objectives, at the very beginning, show that the unit is a communicative unit. At the end of this unit, the final activity, which will enable the students to reuse the language content of the unit, is titled *project,* as all the final activities at the end of all the units in this textbook. The final activity called *project* at the end of unit one is:

Work in pairs. Write a dialog and then act it out. Follow the information below.

Imagine that your partner is your best friend. You invite him/her home and he/she comes over to your house. Then your dialog starts. While you prepare the dialog, you should divide it into three parts.

Part 1
Welcome your friend and let him/her come in.

Part 2
Serve food/drinks and chat. You may offer to do something fun at home.

Part 3

Say goodbye and invite him/her to come over again (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

In unit four (on the phone) of the same textbook (*Upswing English),* the unit objectives are again stated in terms of can-do descriptors, which are purely communicative, as follows:

Students can…

• understand phrases and related vocabulary items.
• follow a phone conversation.
• make a simple phone call asking and responding to questions.
• express their decisions taken at the moment of conversation.
• understand short and simple texts with related vocabulary.
• write short and simple conversations (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

The final activity of this unit, which will enable the students to reuse the language content of the unit, is again titled *project,* whose instructions are given as follows:

Group Work: Work in groups of four. Imagine that one of you works at the call center of an international company. The other three people are customers, and they phone the call center one by one. Read the role cards below and act out a call center drama in the class.

Student A: You are working at the call center of an international company. Your job is to receive phone calls from the customers and try to solve out their problems. Greet each customer, ask how you can help them and try to solve their problems. Try to be kind toward each customer.

Student B: One of your items has broken down. You phone the call center and ask whether it is under warranty. If it is, ask how you can deliver it. If not, ask how much it will cost to have it repaired.
Student C: You have bought an item from the website of an international company, but you didn't like it. Phone the call center of the company and ask how you can change or return it.

Student D: You have learned that an international company is about to start a campaign for a new product. Phone the call center and learn about the details by asking various questions (Tıraş, 2020, p.54).

These communicative simulations offer students communication situations where they have to perform a communicative task. Thus, these are simulated communicative tasks. This is a typical example of the function of communicative simulations and role-plays as providing the students with communication situations to allow them to reuse the language content, oral comprehension, oral production, written comprehension and written production activities that they studied during the unit. It can easily be observed that these simulated communicative tasks serve the communicative objectives of these units. Consequently, it should be pointed out that they are not projects although the textbook titles them as projects.

Actional Reuse Situations in Social Action-based Textbooks

Since the ultimate goal of SABL is to train social actors rather than communicators, the unit objectives in social action-based textbooks will logically be stated in terms of social actions. It should also be noted that communication in such a textbook model is not eliminated but rather its status changes from being both the objective of the unit and the goal (in semi-free production) but just a means at the service of social action. The reuse situation at the end of the units of a social action-based textbook, on the other hand, is provided by mini-projects rather than communicative simulations and role-plays. Such a model is presented in detail by Acar (2020c, p.36) in table 2 as follows:

Table 2. *Social Action-based Textbook Design*

1.Social action e.g. Be able to say it (social action of protest)
2. Two mini-projects which are variants of the same social action (at the end of the unit) (e.g. We will make an online petition to make our views known and/or we will write an open letter to express our outrage.)
3. Linguistic and cultural resources (linguistic & cultural content): a) linguistic resources to be provided in the unit (functions, notions, grammatical items, lexis, and phonology.) b) cultural resources
4. Methodological resources (methodological content): various tasks (language and/or non-language), grammatical exercises, cognitive operations, and various language activities in different modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation.
5. Evaluation: The evaluation of the mini-projects is carried out through collective self-evaluation by the students and/or an evaluation by the teacher and/or even public evaluation.

In such a model, the unit is the unit of 'mini-project' since the objective of the social action is announced at the very beginning of the unit as well as the linguistic resources that the social actors (students) will need to be able to carry out the mini-project and the social actors will follow the action-scenario of the mini-project from the beginning of the unit while at the end of the unit they will complete the final production of the mini-project. What is important to note is that in such a model, the function of the mini-project is not only to allow the students to reuse the language content of the unit but also to educate them as social actors, in other words, democratic citizens who can live together harmoniously, students and professionals who can work together effectively in a foreign language (Puren, 2009a). Consequently, a mini-project in such a model is not solely a pretext to offer a final reuse situation where the students can reuse the language resources (grammar, lexis, phonetics), functions and notions as well as oral and written production and comprehension activities that they studied during the unit. Such a textbook design is presented by the textbook *Version Originale 4* directed by Puren. Acar (2020a, 2020b, 2020d) also presents concrete mini-projects to be utilized in social action-based textbooks. What differentiates mini-projects from final communicative simulations and role-plays of communicative textbooks is first of all their educational purpose. Mini-projects also differ from final communicative simulations and role-plays in terms of the presence of a design stage as shown in the mini-project proposed by Acar (2021b, p.312).

> A: As a whole class, prepare a cookbook with local recipes to promote Turkish cuisine to the world and share it on social media like Facebook.
>
> B: Open up Facebook account with a title you choose (e.g. Turkish cuisine, recipes for the world, etc.). You can also seek ways to invite your peers from other countries to share their cuisine on your Facebook account. Decide collectively on a title for your cookbook which reflects the content of your cookbook and add some inspiring subtitles on the cover to reflect your class identity (e.g. best recipe suggestions from class 8A of secondary school X).
>
> C: Search the internet as to what a recipe includes (e.g. The name of the meal, the number of people the meal can serve, ingredients and amount of ingredients, the steps of preparation instructions for cooking, the statement of cooking time, etc.) and decide collectively on the criteria for evaluating the recipes of the groups and agree on a format for your cookbook.
>
> D: Search the internet and/or consult your parents as to which recipes best represent your local cuisine. If your parents suggest recipes in your native language, write down every detail you searched in C and translate, as a group, the parents' recipes into English. Search the internet for the relevant pictures to accompany your recipe.
>
> E: In groups, write the recipe for your meal in the format you collectively agreed on in C.

F: In groups, present your recipes in the class.

G: The other classmates will listen to you, take notes, and evaluate your recipes by using the evaluation grid you formed collectively. Make suggestions to the groups whose recipes are not in line with the criteria and format you formed and developed collectively.

H: As a whole class put together all the recipes in a single word or PDF format.

I: Share your cookbook on social media.

J. Follow up (as a whole class) on the likes and dislikes and the comments received from people about the cookbook on the social media.

The design stage of this mini-project, which is reflected in the steps, illustrates the complexity of this mini-project because a mini-project is a complex social action. The educational dimension is also reflected by the collective dimension of this mini-project as well as the autonomy given to the students in this design: *Open a Facebook account with a title you choose, decide collectively on a title for your cookbook, search the internet and/or consult your parents, decide collectively on the criteria for evaluating the recipes of the groups etc.* The final social action, *sharing the cookbook on social media*, which the students will carry out at the end of the unit indicates that the ultimate goal of this mini-project is not communication but social action. Communication, however, does not disappear in this mini-project as can be seen in the different steps of this mini-project. Thus, communication is put at the service of social action unlike final communicative tasks, whose ultimate goal is communication. As Estaire and Zanon (1994) state, “the last task in the unit, the final task, is a communication task which marks the highest point of communication in the unit” (p. 15).

Finally, the only function of this mini-project is not a pretext to offer a final resue situation but it has an educational purpose, which is to train social actors, unlike final communicative tasks, which do not have such a dimension. One of the unique characteristics of SABL is that there is a preference for real action and this mini-project reflects this characteristic since the social actors (students) are encouraged to carry out a real social action *preparing a cookbook and sharing it on social media,* which also differentiates mini-projects from final communicative tasks, which are mostly artificially simulated. Informational competence (Puren, 2008a), which is indicated at steps C and D in this mini-project, is yet another important characteristic of mini-projects that differentiate them from final communicative tasks. Mini-projects require the social actors to know how to seek and manage information while final

communicative tasks do not necessarily train students in information management. Finally, collective evaluation (self/peer/public) is an indispensable characteristic of mini-projects unlike final communicative tasks and this is reflected in this mini-project at step G (collective peer-evaluation at the end of the group products (recipes)) as well as public evaluation at step J. Puren (2008b, p.11) outlines the different characteristics that differentiate CA and SABL in language textbooks in table 3 as follows:

Table 3. *Different Characteristics that Differentiate CA and SABL in Language Textbooks*

The communicative approach	The action perspective
privileges	
the focus on the learner and inter-individual dimension (the group of 2), even if it organizes pooling to create new communication situations,	the focus on the group and the collective dimension (the large group), even if it organizes work in sub-groups to improve collective action,
because they respond	
to the objective of training of a face-to-face communicator.	to the purpose of education of a social actor.
To that end, it offers learners	
realistically-simulated situations	real-authentic actions
encouraging autonomy	
of the learner	of the group
immediately after a very directed linguistic preparation	from the beginning of the project design
in activities that promote	
individual free expression	collective decisions
and which are evaluated	
based on a criterion oriented to	based on criteria oriented to
	process : Reflection on the realization of future, ongoing and completed action (metacognition)
communication : efficiency in the transmission of information	and action: the success of the project

Conclusion

At the end of the units of communicative textbooks, communicative reuse situations are provided through communicative simulations and role-plays so that the students can reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities that they worked on in the unit. Since the goal of SABL is to train social actors, the reuse situations in social action-based textbooks are provided through mini-projects, which also have the function of educating for social action besides allowing the students to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit. This educational dimension of mini-projects is the most distinguishing characteristic that differentiates them from both the communicative simulations

and role-plays offered to the students at the end of the communicative textbooks. The second distinction, which is also important, is the change in the status of communication, which is no longer both the means and the goal, but only a means at the service of social action. Thus, the unit objectives in social action-based textbooks should be stated in terms of social actions rather than functions and notions to maintain the coherence between the objectives and the final reuse situation (actional reuse situations). Consequently, the unit content in such a social action-based textbook functions as resources to enable the social actors to be able to carry out the mini-projects at the end of the units. This indicates that the ultimate goal of these mini-projects is not to train communicators but to train social actors. Communication, however, is not abandoned in SABL but is put at the service of social action.

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Supporting Neurodiverse Students in the EFL Classroom: A Cross-Border Challenge and Responsibility

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Abstract

Typically, English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers the world over have a wide range of students in their classes who present with different learning challenges and needs. However, in recent years, the number of students with conditions that can cause more severe learning difficulties such as dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), are increasing due to more recognition and better diagnostic tools (Rogers & Dawson, 2010). While there has been a marked rise in the number of students presenting with neurological difference in the English language classroom, EFL teachers often lack specific training and guidance to best support those requiring accommodations in their classes (Lowe, 2016; Yphantides, in press). This paper weaves together a systematic, explanatory review of these neurologically-based differences and the learning challenges they can entail, and provides practitioners with an overview of some of the symptoms they may observe in their

students. It then conducts a brief comparative examination of the medical model of disability with the social model and discusses implications of the adoption of the neurodiversity model in EFL education. Finally, this paper offers evidence-based, classroom-tested solutions for helping their students with different learning styles and needs.

Keywords: neurodiversity, EFL inclusion, teacher support

Introduction

Numerous teachers, including in the EFL context, have special needs students, either with or without formal diagnoses, who exhibit present with neurodiverse characteristics in their classrooms. However, the majority are not adequately trained to respond to their students' special needs and their difficulty is exacerbated by the stigma, defined by Goffman (1963, p. 6) as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" and "a special kind of relationship between an attribute and a stereotype", surrounding developmental differences and learning challenges (Lowe, 2016; Yphantides, in press). This paper is based on a practitioner-centered workshop that the author has delivered on several occasions in Japan and abroad. It addresses topics that represent the most commonly-asked questions posed by EFL teachers about their neurodiverse students and how to best offer support. The first portion of the paper is dedicated to providing teachers with a clear and concise history of these conditions, an explanation of their neurological basis, and a brief description of how language learning can be affected. The second part of the paper explores a re-imagining of the way these special needs students are perceived within the EFL classroom. To do so, the current conversation on the social model of disability, mental disability rights, and disability pride, will be discussed. The third part of the paper is aimed at providing teachers with practical, concrete solutions for a variety of challenges faced by learning disabled students in the EFL classroom. The solutions come from people with dyslexia, ADHD and ASD themselves and have been tried and tested by the author in her EFL classroom. These include the re-shaping of the EFL environment into a supportive, inclusive learning community, methods for increasing engagement and belonging through recognition of neurodiverse strengths, and employing student-led systems for monitoring and self-regulating behavior.

Neurological Difference

Approximately 20% of the world population presents with neurodiverse characteristics and the most common diagnoses of neurological difference are dyslexia, ADHD, and ASD (Armstrong, 2010). Many children with these diagnoses, or children who lack a formal diagnosis but demonstrate characteristics of neurodiversity, are now in mainstream schools whereas in the past, those with milder symptoms may have simply been labeled as trouble-makers while those with more severe symptoms were often placed in special education or remedial courses, or institutionalized (Silberman, 2017). Because all of these conditions affect a person's ability to learn and use both spoken and written language, it is particularly important for foreign language teachers to develop a better understanding of these conditions, their genetic and neurological roots, and how they affect language learning. With this knowledge, teachers will be more prepared to devise suitable accommodations so that students with special needs can be fully included in the EFL classroom and their potential can be filled.

A Brief History

In the late 1870s, dyslexia was first discussed in the professional literature. Berlin, a German ophthalmologist who studied subjects who could not learn to read, could find no vision problems in his patients. He therefore posited that their difficulties must be attributable to differences in brain structure (Kirby, 2018). Similarly, in the late 1890s, a description of ADHD is given in the literature as "the incapacity of attending with a necessary degree of constancy to any one object" and was attributed to brain differences in patients, although the specific nature of the brain differences could not be identified (Lange, Reichl, Lange, Tucha & Tucha, 2010). Several decades later, in the 1940s, two practitioners on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean identified autism (Silberman, 2017). However, in contrast to assumptions made by practitioners working with patients with dyslexia and ADHD that their conditions were caused by brain differences, it was assumed that autism was caused by poor parenting (Silberman, 2017). As a result, therapies for autism focused more on parents than children until the 1970s when a behavioral therapy program for autistic children began at the University of California (Silberman, 2017). Presently, neuroimaging and the mapping of the human genome allows for a

deeper understanding of all three of these neurodiverse conditions and a genetic basis is being identified by researchers (Armstrong, 2010).

Genetically-based Brain Difference and Learning Difficulty in the EFL Classroom

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a common neurological difference that is found in between 15%-20% of the population, according to the International Dyslexia Association. Dyslexia is typically associated with specific reading difficulties which include diminished phonological awareness and reading fluency (D'Mello & Gabrieli, 2018) but dyslexic students also have trouble with pronunciation and learning and remembering vocabulary (Dal, 2008). Additionally, dyslexic students often have trouble with spelling (adding or omitting letters is a common sign of dyslexia), as is the inability to recognize words written in alphabetic languages (Akbasli, Sahin, & Gürel, 2017). However, there are other challenges that dyslexic people face beyond trouble with reading, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition and spelling. Neuroimaging scans show that people diagnosed with dyslexia have brain-structure differences which also affect speech, sensory processing, decision making, and impulse control (D'Mello & Gabrieli, 2018), all of which have an impact on language learning and a student’s ability to function in the classroom .

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

According to a parenting survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 10% of children in the United States have been diagnosed with ADHD and world estimates are assumed to be similar. People diagnosed with ADHD have less white matter which translates to less connectivity between different sections of the brain. As a result, those with ADHD lack a typical degree of impulse inhibition (Booth, Burman, Meyer, Lei, Trommer, Davenport, & Marsel- Mesulam, 2005). Some of the key learning challenges faced by those with ADHD are problems with executive function, or task organizing and planning, and with working memory (working memory is synonymous with short term memory) (Leons, Gerbert & Gobbo, 2009). Motivation and task engagement have been identified as

challenges for those with ADHD, as well as anxiety about performing on tests (Akbasli, Sahin, & Gürel, 2017). All of these challenges can have a negative impact on language learners, and, if not managed, can have an effect on the whole class, as EFL lessons tend to be underpinned by the communicative method and pair and group work.

Autism

Autism affects approximately 1-2% of the world population, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, however, about 10% of the population presents with one or more autistic characteristics. People with autism tend to have slightly larger brains than those without autism because pruning of unnecessary or defunct neural connections does not occur as rapidly or as completely in autistics as it does in neurotypicals, and because of this, processing speed can be reduced (Hill & Frith, 2003). Additionally, due to their difference in autistic brain structure, many autistic students also have trouble with sensory sensitivity. For example, they may be disturbed by loud noises, troubled by sudden movements, and dislike bright lighting. They may also be overly aroused by too much visual or aural information (Marco, Hinkley, Hill & Nagarajan, 2011). While processing speed and sensory sensitivities need to be considered by language teachers, the core feature of autism is difficulty with language acquisition and with developing an understanding of what is pragmatically appropriate (Tager-Flusberg, Paul & Lord, 2005). As a result of these neurological differences, the typical EFL classroom may be a noisy, distracting, exhausting place for autistic students which can compound their trouble with language learning and pragmatic appropriateness.

For example, in my own experience teaching autistic students in EFL classes in the higher education context, the constant group discussion proved to be taxing. These students, while they had much to contribute, were overwhelmed by the continuous chatter and had to withdraw several times each class in order to collect themselves and return to the frame of mind needed to communicate with their group members. Because their methods of withdrawal (putting their heads down, getting up and walking out of the class without saying where they were going, and expressing anger and frustration) were often seen as socially inappropriate by their peers, reintegration back into the group was difficult on occasion.

Medical and Social Models of Disability

For a significant period in history, disease and disorder were observed through the lens of what is now called the medical model of disability. In the 1960's, with the rise of the disability movement in Britain and the United States, a paradigm shift towards the social model occurred. Within this model, disability is framed not as being in the body of an individual but in the environment that surrounds them. Stemming from this social model is the concept of neurodiversity which advocates not only for acceptance of brain difference but celebration of it.

The Medical Model

In the 1800's, the medical model of disability arose, replacing the notion that disability was an act of God (Henderson & Bryan, 2011). Looking at disability through the lens of the medical model, one sees disability as a problem to be solved. Within the model, the disabled person is compared with the non-disabled and the challenges they face are seen as a list of deficits (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). In the medical model, the doctor is the power broker who compares patients to a certain standard and compiles a list of deficits that need to be remedied. The disabled person must play the role of a helpless individual who depends on the rest of society for support (Retief & Letšosa, 2018).

The Social Model

The social model of disability constitutes a significant paradigm shift away from the medical model. The social model conceptualizes disability as a societal issue rather than a personal one and, therefore, it is society that needs to be remedied, rather than the body of the individual. In other words, the physical and social environments need to be examined and adjusted, rather than the disabled person (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 2010). While proponents of the social model do not deny that disabled people can face significant challenge, their key message is that there is a great deal of power in adapting physical and social environments to provide the support needed by the disabled in order to facilitate their integration into society (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 2010).

Neurodiversity

While dyslexia, ADHD, and ASD have traditionally been viewed through the lens of the medical model of disability, the neurodiversity movement has prompted a shift in this perception (Silberman, 2017). The term neurodiversity, coined in the 1990s, is used to describe people with dyslexia, ADHD, autism and other neurological differences. The goal was to alter the discourse surrounding these conditions from a medical model where these terms are pathologized to a more socially-oriented model where it is recognized that the challenges faced by the neurodiverse are rooted in how they are being taught, not in their brains. Neurodiversity, however, does not stop with a shift towards the social model. Within the neurodiversity movement, conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, and ASD are recognized and respected as a naturally occurring phenomenon and are a source of pride rather than shame. Some proponents of neurodiversity argue that just as homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), so too will neurological "disorders" and they will, like homosexuality, soon be recognized as a commonly occurring, natural difference that is not to be pathologized or remedied (Silberman, 2017). Slightly different from the social model, the neurodiversity movement can also be conceptualized as a combination of the identity model and the cultural model. The identity model claims disability as a positive factor (Brewer, Brueggemann, Hetrick, & Yergeau, 2012) while the cultural model which views disabled people members of a distinct cultural group (Retief & Letšosa, 2018).

Depathologizing the Differently-Abled

In addition to the contrasting medical and social models of disability and the reconceptualization of developmental disability in the neurodiversity movement, there is also space to examine the possibility of depathologizing and destigmatizing those who are differently abled. Baar (2017) traces the history of the disability movement and its links with other social movements that were based in human rights. These include the movements for women's liberation, environmentalism and LGBTQIA+ rights. When disability rights activists banded together, the perception of disability began to shift from a pathology to a social and cultural

identity (Baar, 2017). This integration of disability into the framework of human rights led to the the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, an international mandate that was ratified by the majority of member states in one of the most significant steps towards depatholoization and destigmatization.

Adoption of Progressive Models of Disability and Diversity

With the framework or disability rights in mind, it is possible to envision the adoption of more progressive models of disability and diversity in the EFL classroom. While students with brain differences tend to be examined through the medical model by psychologists, language teachers can take a different approach towards diversity and inclusion by becoming more aware of the social and human rights models and the concept that changes in the classroom environment and the materials used could offer a great deal of support to students, more so than comparing them to their fellow neurotypical students in a deficit model. Additionally, becoming more aware of neurodiversity and the strengths that often accompany brain difference, can help EFL teachers frame their relationship to their students in a different way. The subsequent section explores some concrete examples of what EFL teachers the world over can do in order to support the well-being and success of all their students.

Evidence-Based Advice for Supporting Neurodiverse Students

The following practical tips for working with students who learn differently have been gathered by the author over several decades of teaching all types of students in the EFL classroom. They are rooted in her conversations with students who needed extra support, her participation within a number of neurodiverse virtual communities, and her communication with a variety of support professionals such as psychologists, counselors, and therapists in a number of different EFL teaching contexts including elementary and high schools, conversation schools, and higher education. They are also underpinned by the nascent body of literature that focuses on supporting neurodiverse students in the foreign language classroom.

Building Support Communities

Teachers often feel alone when it comes to supporting students who learn differently. When they notice those who are struggling in their classes, they tend not to want to approach these students because of the stigma attached to learning challenges or disabilities. Compounding the problem is the fact that teacher are often unaware of the network of support services that are embedded in some schools or they cannot easily access the services due to language and cultural barriers (Yphantides, in press). Despite these challenges, some teachers find methods of supporting their students without ever exchanging words with them about their learning difficulties (Vu & Nguyen, 2020). On many other occasions, teachers, lacking the appropriate training for coping with a variety of learners in their classroom, either ignore these learners' needs or separate them from the rest of the class by requiring them to complete different assignments from their peers (Vu & Nguyen, 2020).

Rather than working alone, however, awareness needs to be raised among teachers about how to approach their neurodiverse students and how to talk with them about the support they need to best succeed in class. When working with adults, probably the first person teachers need to approach are the students themselves who are experiencing difficulty. While these kinds of discussions can be uncomfortable, there are several different ways to broach them. For example, when working with older students in high school or university, it is possible to make an in-take form for students to fill in at the beginning of a course. An intake form is a simple sheet that probes for any special needs the student may have (including non-diagnosed issues). One of the questions on the form can be about special learning needs that the student may have. Teachers can follow up with students who express their special needs by meeting with them and making a specific plan of action, based on the demands of the course that can be revised and updated periodically. When working with younger students, it is possible to have their parents fill in the intake form. While parents and students alike may be hesitant to disclose diagnoses, they may use euphemisms on the intake form like "social anxiety", "difficulty getting along with others", "struggles with following directions" or "short attention span". All of these can alert the teacher from the very beginning as to which students may need special support. When this line of communication is open between teachers and students and/or their parents, it can be considered the beginning phase of building a support community (Connor & Cavendish, 2018).

Once teachers and students have established a line of communication, they may want to involve other students in the community as support providers. While it is important for the teacher to be closely in tune with their students with special needs, they cannot provide optimum support alone and they may want to recruit additional people. In the communicative language classroom, there is typically a significant amount of pair and group work. Neurodiverse students can feel isolated in this kind of environment and teachers need to empower and educate their neurotypical students to be supportive. Oftentimes, neurodiverse students are ignored in class because other students do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, or attitudes to work together with them (Rentenbach, Prislovsky & Gabriel, 2017). However, teachers can serve as a model of inclusion to their students and can make an active effort to recruit them into support positions, being careful to ensure that the neurodiverse student plays a key role in letting their fellow students know what kind of support they need. Peer to peer support models have been found to increase self-efficacy and self-esteem in students (Ncube, 2011).

While this support community of teachers, students, parents, and peers is vital to the success of those with special needs, it is important, if possible, to include specially-trained personnel in the community. Ideally, teachers should meet their special needs students for regular discussions in the presence of specially trained personnel. This staff can offer invaluable tips for support to both teachers and students and can, in some cases help students with other key skills like time management and self-organization through one-on-one sessions or workshops. However, many schools lack trained people on their campuses and, as a result, teachers feel it is not possible to access their expertise. However, there are a number of online groups that teachers and their students can access to avail themselves of additional support and they can ask questions about the different methods available to ease the learning process and communication in the classroom.

Celebrating Strengths

As was discussed earlier, dyslexia, ADHD, and autism have often been presented in the professional literature from a deficit-based perspective and people with these diagnoses are often viewed as problems to be fixed while neurotypicals are valued as the gold standard (Silberman, 2017). However, while brain-based differences can and do result in disability, they also result in

strengths (Silberman, 2017; Lee, Black, Falkmer, Tan, Sheehy, Bölte, & Girdler, 2020). For example, dyslexics tend to have entrepreneurial capabilities that are higher than the neurotypical population and they also have improved visual-spatial skills (Leveroy, 2013). ADHD is associated with higher levels of creativity and extreme focus on areas of special interest (Sedgewick, Merwood, & Asherson, 2019). Similar to ADHD, autism is also associated with extreme focus when dealing with areas of special interest. It is also related with systematic information processing, strong visual perception, strong technical ability, and tolerance for repetitive tasks (Scott, Jacob, Hendrie, Parsons, Girdler, Falkmer, & Falkmer, 2017). When the classroom is not only a place of supportive community learning based on the social model of disability and neurodiverse celebration, but also a place where the deficit model is eschewed and the strengths-based model is embraced, students are in a better position to be successful and to feel included.

How exactly can a teacher celebrate strength in the classroom? There are a number of methods including the project-based approach in which students can choose an area of interest and work on a project with others who share that interest. This long term work promotes increased focus, a sense of community, a shared sense of purpose, and allows for a greater amount of student-directed, cooperative learning (Nunez, 2018). Another possibility is allowing for more creativity and flexibility in the class. For example, rather than the teacher creating all materials used in class, students can make tasks for each other to complete. They can also make other materials such as color-coded card games that promote review of materials covered in class with each color representing vocabulary, grammar, or other target language point. These student-created tasks and games can allow for increased motivation, cooperation, and sense of belonging by being on a team (Oakleaf & Dodd, 2020). They also can allow neurodiverse students to showcase their creative strengths while getting support, in the context of team-work, for the areas where they may be experiencing difficulty.

Daily Support

While it is important to focus on strengths, it is also key to take note of weakness and to provide metaphorical access ramps to neurodiverse students. These access ramps not only benefit special needs students, but all students in the language classroom and are based on the concept of

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). One key area ripe for support is that of giving instructions. Neurodiverse students often have trouble following multi-step directions and, as a result, can feel lost in class. This can quickly be remedied in the following ways. First, visual support should regularly be provided for directions. This support can come in the form of a list on the board, picture cues on a handout, or on a powerpoint slide. When a task with multi-step directions is set, the visual support may not be sufficient and, therefore, teachers could also get students to confirm with each other what they need to do before starting a task. Teachers should also monitor and support neurodiverse students when a task is set to be sure they are on track. Ample praise or gentle redirection should also be used when necessary.

In addition to visual support for directions, teachers should also be aware that the fonts they use on worksheets and PowerPoint presentations can be difficult to read. Sans serif fonts or the Open Dyslexic Alta font make materials more accessible, as do darker colored backgrounds (Burke, 2020). Additionally, neurodiverse students tend to have poor spelling and penmanship. Because this sets them apart from the majority of the class, they tend to suffer from poor self-esteem and, as a result, tend to become task avoidant (Burke, 2020). One possible solution is to allow students to type their work or to use voice to text applications in class. Another solution is to focus consistently on the content of the work, rather than the presentation of the work (Burke, 2020).

As discussed earlier, ELT classrooms are often communicative classrooms and, as a result, can be exhausting for neurodiverse students. The noise levels and distractions need to be managed in order to provide them with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Additionally, while pair and group work, when supported by the teacher and peers who are aware of the needs of the neurodiverse students in their group, can be good opportunities to foster bonds between students, they can also be overwhelming. As such, it is important for teachers to provide their special needs students for a chance to opt out. While we may try to monitor students to the best of our abilities, we cannot watch for everything and often, neurodiverse students, particularly older ones, are good at masking their feelings. When situations are overwhelming, younger students may act out and older ones may withdraw. Their behavior may seem sudden but their stress may have been building up over a longer period of time. As a result, it is useful to have a card system in place that allows students to signal their feelings without words. For example, each student can have a card set including green, yellow,

and red cards. When they are feeling positive about group work, they can have their green cards displayed. When they are becoming frustrated or overwhelmed, they can take out their yellow cards to signal their growing stress and, at this point, teachers or peer support students may want to get involved to try to de-escalate the situation. Finally, students should have the opportunity to put down a red card to signal their need to take a break for a certain period of time. If students put down a red card, they can be encouraged to withdraw into another area of the classroom and work on a preferred activity like quiet reading. Certainly, teachers may feel that students could potentially abuse the card system. However, with regular use and careful monitoring and discussion between teachers and students, this card system can be a valuable way of teaching students to monitor their behavior, self-regulate, and share their feelings with others. Such self-management strategies have been found to correlate with greater independent academic performance and increases in on-task behavior (Crosland & Dunlap, 2012).

Conclusions

The main thrust of this paper has been to put forward an argument in favor of EFL teachers adopting a conceptual framework for practice that is based on neurodiversity rather than the current medical model that is used in schools. In order to shift to a neurodiverse model, teachers can employ several strategies including: (1) the re-shaping of the EFL environment into a supportive, inclusive learning community by reaching out to both parents and students to determine levels of need and modes of accommodation, (2) exploring methods for increasing engagement and belonging through recognition of neurodiverse strengths which include project-based learning and student-created materials, and (3) developing student-led systems for monitoring and self-regulating behavior. This paper argues that EFL teachers are in a unique position to lead the institutions that employ them in this area because the neurodiverse students' challenges are strongly related with the work of language learning. However, our role as language teachers does not stop with the linguistic support of neurodiverse students. As Rentenbach, Prislovsky and Gabriel (2017) aruge, educators need to lead others to appreciating the benefits of neurodiversity, taking a moral stance embedded in a human rights approach. Additionally, as Block (2018) points out, there has been a narrative turn in our field as of late and research has become oriented towards culture and identity-based injustices. This exploration can

serve as a small contribution to this research. However, as practitioners, the key is in applying the findings of research to helping each student reach their potential.

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Information Literacy in a Social Action-Oriented Approach: From Communicative Competence to Informational Competence

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Abbreviations

SAOA : Social Action-Oriented Approach
CEFRL : Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Introduction

The authors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CFERL) present the new approach they are promoting at the very beginning of their text:

> *The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as "social agents",* i.e. *members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning.* (p. 9)

It is really surprising that, twenty years after this publication, some didacticians still consider the "action-oriented approach" thus defined as a simple extension of the communicative approach. However, one does not need to be a specialist in hermeneutic analysis to see in this passage the affirmation of an essential difference between the reference actions of the two approaches: those of the communicative approach are the acts of speech; those of a new approach, called "action-oriented", are "tasks not exclusively language-related", activities (which) "form part of a wider social context" and are carried out "within a particular field of action" by "social agents".

Even if, as we can see in this passage, the authors use the notions of *task*, *action* and *activity* in a very confused way, even if afterwards, in their whole text, they are only interested in "communicative language competences", it seems that what they are opposing to **acts of speech** are **social actions**, even if they never use this last expression. This is why I propose to call this new approach the "Social Action-Oriented Approach" (SAOA). This name also distinguishes it from "Task-Based Learning", in which the tasks have been designed historically as communicative tasks.

This break, the implications of which the authors of the CEFRL were unable or unwilling to draw, is made necessary by the phenomenon which, in the course of history, is always at the origin of the emergence of a new methodology, namely a change in the social objective and the social situation. When the communicative approach was promoted by the Council of Europe in the mid-1970s, it was mainly to prepare citizens and professionals from European countries for travel to other European countries. Here

is, for example, what J.L.M Trim wrote in the preface of a 1980 English version of Threshold level English (J.A. van Ek, 1975):

> *Nevertheless, by far the largest single group of learners, everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country.* (Trim, 1980)

The political project of the Council of Europe is not at all the same at the end of the 1990s, because it takes into account the progress of European integration, with, in particular, the importance taken by migrations within Europe. This change of objective and social situation is now a matter of "meet[ing] the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (p. 3).

That explains the importance given to the competence specifically needed for life in such a society, namely plurilingual and pluricultural competence. The authors of the English version of the CEFRL, including the same J.L.M. Trim mentioned above, write:

> *[…] in a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components.* (CEFRL 2001, p. 6)

The authors of the CFRL have also not been able, or willing, to draw all the consequences that appear if we consider the demands that a social actor must face in a multilingual and multicultural society. It is no longer just a matter of communicating with others (through communicative competence) or even living with others (through plurilingual and pluricultural competence), but of working with them and "making society" with them. The competence required for information literacy in the professional field and for civic engagement goes far beyond communicative competence: it requires **informational competence**, which can be defined as **knowing how to act on and through information as a social actor**.

1. Information literacy, an informational competence

UNESCO published in 2007 a book by Jr. Forest Woody Horton entitled *Understanding Information Literacy: A Primer*. Appendix B presents the "Information Literacy Life Cycle Stage" which is in fact what can be called an "action scenario" of information literacy:

1. Realize that a need or problem exists that requires information for its satisfactory resolution.
2. Know how to accurately identify & define the information needed to meet need or solve problem.
3. Know how to determine if the needed information exists or not, and if it does not, go to Stage 5.
4. Know how to find needed information if known to exist, and then go to Stage 6.
5. Know how to create, or cause to be created, unavailable information (*i.e.* create new knowledge).
6. Know how to fully understand found information or know where to go for help if needed to understand.
7. Know how to organize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, including source reliability.
8. **Know how to communicate and present information to others in appropriate/ usable formats/ mediums.**
9. Know how to utilize information to solve problem, make decision, or meet need.
10. Know how to preserve, store, reuse, record and archive information for future use.
11. Know how to dispose of information no longer needed, and safeguard information that should be protected.

I emphasize: the communicative approach, which largely favors activity #8, does not allow students to be trained in information literacy in a foreign language. As for the communicative textbooks for adults, they do not take into account all these different activities, so they do not even allow these learners to implement the informational competence that they have already acquired in their mother language.

We are no longer, in today's modern societies, in the situation that prevailed half a century ago, in the mid-1970s, when the "communication paradigm" prevailed. It was thought that the more we communicated, the more progress was assured. It was the time when, if a company was in trouble, the

managers invited a business communication guru; when, as another example that may seem incredible now, some psychiatrists assumed that autism in children could be caused by a pathogenic behavior of the mother, especially in the field of communication.

The disease that strikes us all now is so-called "infobesity". We spend more and more time deleting from our e-mail inboxes messages, as we say colloquially in French, "dont nous n'avons rien à **faire**" ("which we have no interest in at all"), literally: "of which we have nothing **to do":** the primary criterion for managing information is not communication, but action. This is why in companies, the instruction has been, for years, to limit itself strictly to "the right information to the right person at the right time", and in educational systems, the training of students in information literacy consists in teaching them first to evaluate and select information, before, eventually, communicating it to those who will be interested in it or who will use it to act.

2. The consequences of not including informational competence in the CEFRL descriptors

I chose the "Cooperating" grid to illustrate these implications because one would hope that in the 2018 Companion Volume (COE 2018, p. 101), which has an entire section on SAOA ("Implementing the action-oriented approach," p. 27), this grid would bring out the action-oriented purpose of all cooperation, which is to reach a decision, such as the ones that will necessarily have to be made together by students in order to carry out the tasks given as examples in the following passage from that section of the Companion Volume:

> *Above all, the action-oriented approach implies purposeful, collaborative tasks in the classroom, whose primary focus is not language. If the primary focus of a task is not language, then there must be some other product or outcome (e.g. planning an outing, making a poster, creating a blog, designing a festival, choosing a candidate, etc.).* (p. 27)

In the reproduction below, descriptors taken from the 2001 CEFRL appear in blue script, descriptors added in the 2018 supplemental volume in black:

COOPERATING	PROSIGN
Note: This scale is developed further in the scales for *Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers* and *Collaborating to construct meaning*.	
C2	Can link contributions skilfully to those of other speakers, widen the scope of the interaction and help steer it towards an outcome.
C1	Can relate own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.
B2	Can give feedback on and follow up statements and inferences and so help the development of the discussion. Can summarise and evaluate the main points of discussion on matters within his/her academic or professional competence.
	Can help the discussion along on familiar ground, confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc. Can summarise the point reached at a particular stage in a discussion and propose the next steps.
B1	Can exploit a basic repertoire of language and strategies to help keep a conversation or discussion going. Can summarise the point reached in a discussion and so help focus the talk.
	Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding and help keep the development of ideas on course. Can invite others into the discussion.
A2	Can indicate when he/she is following.
A1	*No descriptors available*
Pre-A1	*No descriptors available*

We can see that in all the descriptors from level B1 onwards, the cooperation is about communication ("the conversation", "the discussion"). And this is how the authors of the French translation of the text understood them:

- They have translated "evaluate" (B2) as "évaluer l'intérêt" ("evaluate the interest"): the criterion of evaluation is about the contents of the communication in themselves, and not in relation to an action to be performed, in which case the corresponding criterion would have been "évaluer la pertinence" ("evaluate the relevance").

- They translated "an outcome" (C1) not as "un résultat" ("a result"), which would have allowed an action-type interpretation (an outcome can be a written production, a decision taken) but as "une conclusion" ("a conclusion"), a term that closes the communication itself.

The set of descriptors from B1 to C2, as well as the French translation of these two terms, show that the authors of the *Companion Volume* have remained locked into the paradigm of communication, in which communication is both the means and its own goal. The conception of interaction betrayed by these

descriptors is that of interlocutors who talk to each other in order to exchange ideas and agree on them, and not that of social actors who consult each other before acting.

In an article published in 2009 on the website of the Association française des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (APLV), I presented the following criticisms:

> *The descriptor chosen for the highest level of competence (C1-C2, "Can relate own contribution skillfully to those of other speakers")*[1]*, emphasizes individual competence and not the effectiveness of participation in joint work. On the scale of competences of a social actor, the descriptors proposed here for levels B1 and B2 are certainly more important than this personal know-how only in language proposed in C1 and C2.*
>
> *This scale also considers another personal "skill" such as the one already retained above in the descriptor for level C2 of the "Overall spoken interaction" grid, p. 74 ("Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it."). The valorization of these two skills - placed as descriptors of the higher levels - apparently comes from a conception of collective work where the main issue would be to facilitate language communication and make it efficient.*
>
> *But here we are really in the middle of a communicativist ideology, which the authors of the CEFRL have decidedly failed to overcome: in order to cooperate well, it is not enough to communicate well; knowing how to communicate obviously makes it possible to solve communicational problems, but it does not make it possible to solve, and may on the contrary have the effect of obscuring, the actional problems (i.e. the different conceptions of action) and the different stakes (personal, collective and social). Actional efficiency requires that these problems and stakes be made explicit and debated by the social actors, to the point of assuming the risks of confrontation and even rupture: it is precisely the competences necessary for these activities of explicitation, debate (confrontation of ideas) and management of what used to be called "group dynamics" (confrontation of persons and groups) that are the "high level" competences expected of a social actor*[2].

[1] Note: In the then current version of the CFERL, the C1 and C2 levels were presented as such: C1. *Can relate own contribution skillfully to those of other speakers. – C2. As C1.*

[2] At a conference of German-speaking academics at the University of Giessen (Germany) in 2002, which was

In the new version of the grid proposed by the 2018 *Companion Volume*, not only is this criticism of the C1 level descriptor ignored, but the C2 level takes the same orientation (cf. "Can link contributions skillfully to those of other speakers"). The opportunity was lost to propose for this C2 level an actional descriptor such as "Can propose to stop the discussion in order to make the necessary decisions or to write the expected common text."

Knowing how to manage communication in SAOA means knowing when to stop a discussion. It also means knowing when not to communicate so as not to hinder the discussion. It would have been necessary to complete the following levels as follows (my additions in bold italics):

> *B2. Can summarize and evaluate the main points of discussion on matters within his/her academic or professional competence.* ***Can avoid speaking on a point of discussion if unsure of his/her academic or professional competence****.*

> *A2. Can indicate when he/she is following.* ***Can indicate that she is not following what is being said at any given time.***

At A1 and Pre-A1 levels, the authors of the *Companion Volume* have added "No descriptors available", whereas if a person is present at a discussion that is to lead to action, but does not have the level, by not communicating, he or she is not helping the discussion, but is helping the action by letting others discuss effectively. The following descriptors would also have been necessary from SAOA:

> *A1. Can decline the invitation to cooperate in language if he/she does not feel able to, so as not to disturb others.*

> *PreA1. Can indicate, if necessary, by mimicry and gesture, that he/she cannot cooperate.*

---

entirely devoted to a (very) critical analysis of the CEFR, Hans Barkowski remarked: "It is [in this document] a concept of ideal communication (in the sense of Habermas): the facts communicated are always real, there is a consensus between those who participate in the communication and who, moreover, consider themselves to be equal partners" (Friederike Delouis Anne, 2008, p. 25).

It was also an excellent opportunity to use "non-verbal communication", which is part of communicative competence.

3. Informational competence in a SAOA French certification, the “Diplôme de compétence en langue”

There are two official certifications for foreign languages in France:

– CLES, Certificat de Compétences en Langues de l’Enseignement Supérieur (CLES, www.certification-cles.fr/);

– Diplôme de compétence en langue (DCL, www.education.gouv.fr/le-diplome-de-competence-en-langue-dcl-2978).

These two certification assessments are of the SAOA type because they evaluate the degree of effectiveness of the use of the foreign language in the workplace: that of a university student, for the CLES, and that of an employee in a company, for the DCL. They were designed based on an identification and analysis of the different tasks they are likely to perform in a foreign language in their studies or in their professional activities.

The following table corresponds to the "assessment scenario" of the DCL, which is based on a simulated mini project.

Phases	Activities	Duration
1	Reading written material	1h20
2	Listening to/view audio materials	
Preparing the oral interview	Taking notes for the oral	20 minutes (preparing the interview)
3 et 4	Presenting and proposing your choice	20 minutes maximum
	Discussing and questioning	
5	Writing a text (letter, preliminary project, etc.)	40 minutes

The candidate's first document in the dossier is an assignment letter that gives him a fictitious identity and position in a company where he has been asked to write a working document, for example a letter or

a draft of the project (phase 5). In Phases 1 and 2, he/she will have to select only relevant information and eliminate irrelevant information from the reading and listening comprehension documents provided. Information can be important within the document, or interesting in itself, but it must be eliminated if it does not constitute a resource for the draft: this is an essential difference between comprehension in SAOA and comprehension in the communicative approach: in the latter, it is a question of capturing the maximum amount of information; the more information the document has communicated, indeed, the more successful the communication is.

In the first version of this scenario, there was an additional phase after the note-taking, which unfortunately had to be removed to lighten the certification tests. It consisted of a telephone interview between the candidate and an examiner playing the role of an informant within the company. The examiner was instructed to provide additional information to the candidate, but only that the candidate requested. What was evaluated therefore was one of the components of informational competence, namely the ability to identify in a dossier the missing information that would be necessary or at least useful to effectively carry out the work requested.

4. The implications of informational competence in the didactic units of language textbooks

In order for informational competence to be worked on in language textbooks, it is necessary that the didactic units be conceived on the basis of a “mini-project” with its action scenario (Acar 2020a, 2020b, 2021), and that they integrate a documentary dossier on which the students will be able to practice the different activities such as those proposed in the UNESCO book mentioned above.

Most of the textbooks of foreign languages currently published in France claim to be based on the SAOA without the following necessary condition being fulfilled: to integrate in each didactic unit documentary dossier at least one written or oral document on which the following instruction will be proposed: "**Listen to/read carefully this document and identify in it the information which is not there."** This instruction is absurd in the communicative approach, but it has an obvious meaning in SAOA, even if it is implicit: "[...] identify in it the information that is not there when you know that you need it to carry out your action".

If we want to train students to be information literate, *i.e.,* to be able to act on and through information as social actors, it is necessary that students should be asked then to fill in the missing information

themselves: They will have to research, evaluate, select, prioritize, and reformulate it before integrating it with available information already considered relevant.

In the French as a foreign language textbook *Version originale 4* (level B2, Paris: Maison des langues, 2012), after every two didactic units, a "Professional task" is proposed or interested learners on a specific "Documentary file", which is closely related to the themes of the two previous units, among which the learners will be able to find other elements of information and other examples that they will judge relevant for the task indicated below at the end of the scenario, in 3.B.

The scenario following didactic units 3 and 4 is as follows (pp. 54-55):

1. Introduction

Listen and select the words that you think represent the business world.

> *A. Listen to these stories and then summarize the arguments of each. Discuss in small groups.*

2. Background information

> *B. You will then choose the sentences that best express your point of view to propose an answer to the journalist's question.*
>
> *C. Read the following article. Identify the contexts in which the term "culture" appears.*
>
> *D. Look for terms in the text that are more specifically associated with business management and the workplace.*
>
> *E. Synthesize the most important elements of the text to make an account (written or oral) with the help of its articulations.*

3. Task

> *A. Make a list of work attitudes that are characteristic of younger and older generations.*
>
> *B. You will be moderating one of the roundtables proposed by this company: gather your arguments and develop the outline of your argument.*

It can be seen how in this scenario the final task is prepared by activities representative of informational competence, in particular the search, selection, prioritization and reformulation of information; and how

the common task requires learners not only to talk to each other, but to work together with the goal of making common decisions.

Conclusion

The shift from the communicative approach to SAOA leads to a paradigmatic break in information literacy: This has strong immediate implications for the activities required of students and the criteria for evaluating their production.

All learners need native language information literacy in their daily lives. While the communicative classroom prepares school students for possible future use of the foreign language, SAOA the classroom, because it requires learners to make a constant and conscious effort to seek out, understand, and manage information, can function not only as a foreign language-culture classroom, but also as an incubator of cross-cutting competencies. As for adults, their already acquired informational competence can be directly exploited in the service of their learning strategies.

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Silent Letters

(An Anthology of English Poems by Seema Jain)

A Review

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Seema Jain's anthology of poems *Silent Letters* is an eclectic and balanced mix of thought and feeling – a deep thoughtful insight into myriad issues tempered with a heartwarming empathy. Her eponymous poem titled 'Silent Letters' shines a light on all those who "hover in the background"--- be it "a hapless woman," "a small boy at a wayside dhaba," an expectant mother forced to go for female foeticide , the silent tears of parents condemned to "a life of neglect, want and apathy in their twilight years" or the members of the third gender community. In other words, the poet brings to light the people who are made to lead, silent uneventful, subterranean lives, whose 'otherness' is scoffed at, either unaccepted or totally ignored. The salience of this idea is a strong undercurrent in this collection of poems. The poet wants to "resist" the wrong done to them. She envisions a world where none feels caged and "none is condemned to a deadening silence." She looks forward to a subaltern assertion in the context of their everyday precarious experience as is reflected in the following lines of her poem "Silent Letters":

> If only they could gather courage
> Resist the wrong and
> Speak up for righteousness (p.24)

She yearns for a world without social inequalities, where no voice goes unheard, where everyone is "ungagged." If this entails a radical re-ordering of the societal structures, then be it so.

Seema Jain emerges as a poet of protest when she deals with the trials, tribulations and travails of being a woman, as is evident from her poems titled 'The Sprouting Seed,' 'The Casting Couch' and

'Slap.' In these poems, a stark version of reality in all its ugly nakedness confronts us. It does not repel us, but nudges us to be awake, to be alive to and register the nuances of the complex interplay of human relationships and interactions within a social system. Not that the poet is not affected by the confining social constructs that women have to confront. Whenever the pain of women gnaws at her heart, she disappears into 'The Hidden Oases' in the recesses of her heart and rejuvenates herself with "gurgling gushing guffawing springs," "chirping birds and frolicking swings" and "music, laughter and jubilant dancing."

Here one of her poems 'Why My Lord! The Duchess to the Duke' based on Robert Browning's iconic dramatic monologue 'My Last Duchess' deserves a special mention. Browning's 'My Last Duchess' epitomizes a dominant patriarchal discourse wherein a woman's existence is inside a panopticon. And in that constraining space, she is constantly disciplined and controlled, watched and also most easily judged. But in Seema Jain's literary appropriation of this poem titled 'Why My Lord! The Duchess to the Duke,' the Duchess with her courageous "Adieu! My Lord!" gives a classic jolt not only to the Duke but also to the patriarchy that defines him. The Duchess not only demythologizes the male concept of a woman but also declares it loud and clear that the essentialism of being born a biological female will no longer limit or obstruct the exercise of her free will or the incidence of that biology will no longer militate against her sense of self worth. The Duchess dominated over and eventually slain in Browning's poem is seen as an enraged woman in Seema Jain's poem who speaks out here against the injustice meted out to her and dares the Duke openly:

> My Lord! Had you been man enough
> You could have at least talked to me
> But then, for that you needed to regard me
> As a human being and not a mere artifact (p. 27)

In Seema Jain's adaptation of this well-known poem, narrated from the Duchess' point of view, the Duchess shakes not only the Duke's sense of exceptionalism and haughtiness but also the sense of entitlement he thinks his title entails. Here we clearly hear an unmistakable and timeless resonance of Nora Torvald's classic slamming of the door on her husband's face in *A Doll's House* written by the great feminist Henrik Ibsen in December 1879. Nora dares her husband and asserts her identity as she flounces out of the door into the falling snow outside, leaving her husband Torvald open-mouthed in disbelief. In Browning's poem written in 1842, the Duchess is slain before she opens her mouth whereas Nora earns poetic justice for herself. And the Duchess in Seema Jain's poem, before she bids adieu to the Duke confidently declares:

I'm sure one day justice will prevail
And posterity will judge your true avail. (p. 27)

Seema Jain in this poem through the alchemy of words has beautifully and creatively transformed the classical dramatic monologue of Browning and through this literary appropriation has opened up this celebrated monologue to different interpretations and newer meanings.

There is an indisputable feminist ring not only in this poem but in Seema Jain's other woman-centric poems as well. Her poem "Slap" articulates the pain of women, victims of psychological violence, that often goes unnoticed in comparison to the physical acts of violence:

Some slaps fall on the face
And are visible…
Some others… invisible slaps
Fall Imperceptibly
On the soul

The wounds deadlier deeper
Take years to heal
But the imperceptible scars
Always remain. (p. 35)

In the following lines of her poem "Casting Couch," like a roving and sensitive camera eye, the couch itself describes what sordid realities it stands a witness to:

If I had a tongue in my every screw
I would shock you with the tales I knew
I am that camera eye no one fears
People often unclothe their secrets here.

The poet pitches for a level playing field for men and women. She is optimistic that patriarchal mindsets which are like icebergs will thaw one day, for thaw they must, as is reflected in the following lines from her poem "The Icebergs:"

But as thousands of
Small sparrows together
Can cover the whole sky with their wings
And alter the direction of winds
Mountains can likewise be moved
Skies conquered
If there is fire in the heart
And iron in the soul. (p. 32)

In some other poems of the collection, the poet Seema Jain observes and comments upon some of the harsh ugly and bitter truths of our day-to-day realities. The poem "Leaders" mounts a scathing attack upon the selfish, power hungry and bigoted clan of leaders:

The power brokers coining every day
New narratives of deceit and falsehood
For the consumption of the blinkered masses
Worship demons in the name of God
Demonise all other Gods but theirs
Reaping rich harvests through hate and poison (p. 44)

The poem "A Tribute to all Poets" beautifully comments upon the role and relevance of poets at all times:

Poets of the world rejoice!
You the conscience keepers of mankind
The flag bearers of finer human values
Of empathy brotherhood love and peace
The moral custodians of this world (p. 83)

The section titled **Corona Times** brings out the pain and suffering of the young and the old alike during the contemporary global spread of corona virus. "The Unbidden Adieu" brings out the unpalatable and ugly reality of the shifting paradigms of human relationships when people can't even bid adieu or accord due dignity to their near ones who have died due to the disease:

Such is the dread of contagion it creates
With Covid-19 one forfeits even one's last rites
No family member, no relative can even see the face
Of their loved one whom they held so dear once (p.99)

The poet highlights the crisis of thousands of migrant labourers forced to return to their homes during the sudden lockdown amidst the pandemic:

The buildings they erected brick by brick
Did not offer them shelter
The fields they ploughed and grew crops in
Failed to allay their hunger ("Migrants" p. 93)

The poem "The New Race of Warriors" salutes the front line workers who have emerged as warriors in this changed battlefield while her poem "Nature's Balance" highlights how the pandemic might be nature's way of reclaiming its space for its other creatures appropriated by man in his greed and acquisitiveness:

Thank you Nature for correcting the balance
And for allowing us to claim our space
How does it feel Man in your quarantined zoo
Wake up or there's more in store for you!! (p.95)

In the present corona times where darkness, desolation, death and decay march hand in hand with forces of evil & divisiveness, the poet's faith and belief for a better tomorrow comfortingly endures like a little earthen lamp lit in a hut and the resolve of that little lamp:

I will light thousands of lamps like my tiny self
Which in turn will illumine many millions more…..
But together we know we can dispel darkness
And make hope and light reign supreme.
And bring joy and cheer on everyone's face
("The Storm and the Earthen Lamp" pp. 79-80)

In short, in this anthology of poems, the poet through her evocative verses, which are devoid of all ostentation and high-flown jargon, showcases a happy co-mingling of the typical and the topical. The humour and the cutting-edge satire on politics in a poem like 'The Defamation Suit' lives in the mind long after we have put down the book. Her urban and urbane content makes us hear the silence of the lambs, the muffled sobs and sighs of the lives less lived and marginalized. And this is what makes this collection immensely readable.