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Contents

Benefits of Translanguaging Pedagogy and Practice (Corinne A. Seals) 1

Mother Tongue Other Tongue poetry competition: insights for language education (Malika Pedley) 9

English and target language use in the Scottish modern language classroom: Teacher and pupil attitudes and perceptions (Maggie Mroczkowski) 21

Bon Trabalh? Reflections and observations from Occitan immersion education – lessons for Gaelic Medium education in Scotland? (Ingeborg Birnie) 35

Modern Languages during a pandemic: how instructional videos, Conti's MARSEARS framework and strong routines have enriched my practice (Sonja Fedrizzi) 46

Recent Publications – Abstracts and Weblinks 51

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Issue 36, Autumn 2021, 1-8

SCILT Scotland's National Centre for Languages

Benefits of Translanguaging Pedagogy and Practice

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Abstract: A new flexible approach to language learning and teaching – translanguaging – has become a popular topic in recent years. This article discusses what translanguaging is (including how it describes theory, practice, and pedagogy) and why it is a paradigm shift in how we understand language. Then, this article turns to the particular case of the Wellington Translanguaging Project in Aotearoa New Zealand, first describing the language context of the country. The Wellington Translanguaging Project's methods of data collection and analysis are then discussed, along with the findings of the project and how they relate both to new speakers (those encountering the target linguistic varieties for the first time in school) and heritage language speakers (those with a family connection to the target linguistic varieties). The findings are then discussed, including the ability of a translanguaging pedagogy to empower students and to encourage them to actually use more of the target linguistic varieties. The article ends by looking to other recent findings in pedagogical translanguaging research, showing both the qualitative and quantitative benefits of such an approach.

Keywords: translanguaging; Aotearoa New Zealand; language teaching and learning; critical pedagogy; student empowerment

What is Translanguaging?

Translanguaging is a theoretical framework, a description of language practice (i.e. language in use), and a pedagogy. As a theoretical framework, translanguaging is a paradigm shift in how we understand language. Translanguaging is political, revolutionary, and radical because it is critical of established prescriptivist discourses that tell people that there is a right way and a wrong way to speak (e.g. an established "standard") (Canagarajah, 2013). This theoretical position also acknowledges that there is a monolingual bias in how we talk about languages (including code-switching), assuming that we turn one language "off" to turn another one "on". Translanguaging rejects this monolingual bias and advocates for a multilingual foundation to the theory, which recognizes that speakers have a complex, intertwined linguistic repertoire that they draw from flexibly as needed (García and Wei, 2014). Therefore, one of the primary goals behind translanguaging is to bring more equity to the way speakers (and their linguistic repertoires) are treated in the classroom and society. No one way of speaking and no one linguistic variety is better than any other.

Translanguaging theory is also based upon normalizing translanguaging practices, which are commonplace every day in societies all over the world. Translanguaging as a practice is "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015:p.283). It is the practice

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of “shuttling” between language varieties (Canagarajah, 2011). Within these practices are what those coming from a monolingual viewpoint would normally describe as codeswitching. Yet, “a translanguaging lens does not preclude the existence or use of codeswitching and codemeshing. However, naming translanguaging is also naming an activist position,” (Seals, 2020:p.122).

Thirdly, translanguaging also exists as a pedagogy. When translanguaging theory lays the foundation and translanguaging practice is the goal in the teaching and learning space, a translanguaging pedagogy is created. A translanguaging pedagogy embraces and builds upon “the ways in which [multi]lingual students and teachers engage in complex and fluid discursive practices that include, at times, the home language practices of students in order to ‘make sense’ of teaching and learning, to communicate and appropriate subject knowledge, and to develop academic language practices,” (García, 2014:p.112). A translanguaging pedagogy is about empowering students, allowing and encouraging them to make use of all linguistic resources at their disposal to transform the learning space into a pedagogy of possibility.

In the next section, the Aotearoa New Zealand language context is discussed, followed by the introduction of the Wellington Translanguaging Project. The latter is a working research-teaching model of starting with a translanguaging theoretical framework, studying translanguaging practices, and applying both to the creation of a translanguaging pedagogy.

Aotearoa New Zealand Language Context

Aotearoa New Zealand is currently known as a ‘superdiverse’ country, having more than 160 languages actively spoken around the country (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). According to the most recently released Census data, the top spoken languages in respective order are English, te reo Māori, and Samoan. There are also very large diaspora communities who are speakers of Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Tongan, Hindi, Tagalog, Afrikaans, German, Spanish, and French, to name just a few (Statistics New Zealand, 2019).

Aotearoa New Zealand has three official languages – two are de jure (by law) and one is de facto (by common use). English is New Zealand’s de facto official language, which is not surprising, given that it also holds the spot for the most spoken language in the country. Te reo Māori became Aotearoa’s first de jure official language in 1987, recognizing the Indigeneity of its speakers to Aoteaora New Zealand. In 2006, New Zealand Sign Language joined te reo Māori as a de jure official language, recognizing that New Zealand Sign Language is a language in its own right and one that is only natively spoken in Aotearoa.

While all mainstream schools in Aotearoa are conducted primarily in English, there are bilingual, multilingual, and immersion educational options also available throughout the country. Additionally, mainstream schools themselves are also expected to make active efforts to include Māori reo (language) and tikanga (culture) in their daily classroom activities. However, the frequency with which Māori reo and tikanga can be found

throughout New Zealand schools varies widely, often dependent upon the financial and human resources available to each particular school (Barr and Seals, 2018). As found by Barr and Seals (2018), schools that have the financial resources for upskilling and professional development activities around Māori reo and tikanga often do not have human resources in the form of teachers who have both fluency and confidence in the language. Conversely, schools that have the human resources, often do not have the financial resources for activities such as buy-out of teaching to support cross-faculty and staff training.

In places like Aotearoa where linguistic varieties are plentiful and creativity in maintaining them is needed, translanguaging becomes a very promising opportunity to bridge language abilities between and across teachers and students, building everyone's proficiency. Furthermore, a translanguaging framework recognizes that the main goal is meaningful communication and that in order to accomplish this, people should be able to draw upon and build on their linguistic repertoires as needed. This is the space in which the Wellington Translanguaging Project operates.

Wellington Translanguaging Project Background

At the beginning of 2016, the Wellington Translanguaging Project was established, with the goal of understanding more about how children make use of multilingual systems of communication when in a teaching environment that supports the free and fluid use of multilingualism. As the Principal Investigator, I decided to focus on children in early childhood education centres (i.e. preschools) so that we could investigate what happens during children's first encounters with language use in a structured educational setting. This is important because we wanted to uncover what children are inclined to do and what they are able to do with language before encountering an educational environment that is heavily focused towards one particular language (often the societally dominant language).

Two early childhood education centres partnered with us in the greater Wellington, New Zealand area. One was an a'oga amata (Samoan early childhood education centre), and one was a puna reo (Māori early childhood education centre). These two centres were chosen for their representation of Aotearoa's demographics, as well as their desire to learn more about supporting children's multilingual development, including various home languages. For the a'oga amata research team, two research assistants and I made up the ethnographic data collection team, and an additional two research assistants joined us for data coding, transcription, and analysis. For the puna reo research team, two research assistants, an associate investigator, and I made up the ethnographic data collection team, and an additional four research assistants joined us for data coding, transcription, and analysis. It was very important for us to have multicultural, multilingual research teams in the Wellington Translanguaging Project, representing the communities with which we were working, as well as the greater landscape of superdiverse Aotearoa.

To take an ethnographic approach to our research meant spending time with the communities with whom we were working, including at both school and community

events to which we were invited. We also spent time with the teachers, students, and members of the communities before and after any actual data recording so that they could get to know us and so that we could better know them. When it came time to record data, we set up video and audio recorders around the common areas of the a'oga amata and puna reo so that everyone could get used to their presence, and we made sure they were as noninvasive as possible. Then we began recording. At first, the cameras were a major talking point at each centre, which is absolutely fine when it comes to contemporary understandings of qualitative research. Researchers must always be aware of their influence on the research setting, so this is something that we embraced as an opportunity to help the students further understand what we were doing. After a few days, interest in the cameras waned, and everything was "back to normal".

We recorded, while helping with anything with which the centres asked for assistance. We spent three months recording at the a'oga amata and two months recording at the puna reo (the agreed upon time with each community). After recording finished, we had a total of over 600 hours of usable data, which has been hugely important in helping us to understand the norms of language and interaction in these multicultural, multilingual early childhood education centres in Aotearoa.

To better understand these practices, we analysed the data through multiple approaches collaboratively as a team, including grounded theory (using emergent categories from the data and applying these through a cyclical analytical process), interactional sociolinguistics (an approach to discourse analysis taking into account full knowledge of the context), linguistic landscapes (analysing language presence and use in place and space), syntactic analysis, language socialization, and Indigenous approaches including the application of tikanga Māori (traditional values) and Samoan va (relationships between people and spaces). Some of our project findings to date are explored in the sections that follow.

Turning Practice into Pedagogy

After extensively analysing the Wellington Translanguaging Project data, we crucially found that translanguaging practices were already being regularly used by some of the teaching staff at each location, as well as by some of the students. The translanguaging practices they were using were allowing them to build natural bridges across semantic and conceptual meaning in their linguistic repertoires as well as cultural norms and expectations (see Seals et al, 2019 and Seals et al, 2020b for specific examples).

However, in talking with the teaching staff, many were not sure what the effect of their translanguaging practices was on the students' learning, and many were unsure of how to proceed in a structured pedagogical way. Noting these concerns, we worked with the teachers and with multiple speakers of the languages to create resources that built on translanguaging practices already in use while also incorporating a structural element that ensured the children were receiving exposure to content and meaning across the linguistic varieties of use in each centre (cf. Seals et al, 2020b).

We also learned more about how translanguaging functions in practice and as a pedagogy by asking the teachers and speakers of all of the linguistic varieties we were using to review drafts of the resources and provide acceptability judgments (i.e. what 'sounds right' and what does not). We then took this information and adjusted the materials until they were acceptable, while also taking note of the syntactic features that were identified as needing adjustment (see Seals et al, 2020b, and Seals and Olsen-Reeder, 2020 for examples of these resources and information on their systematic creation). Through this process, we remained in partnership with the communities, putting their needs first, while also reaching a deeper understanding of translanguaging.

Benefits of Translanguaging for Heritage Speakers and New Speakers

After creating our translanguaging pedagogy based on the schools' natural translanguaging practices, we trialed it with the schools. The teachers reported that, despite the teachers' initial worries regarding the "mixing of languages", the students responded very positively. Importantly, the benefits of translanguaging applied to both new speakers and heritage speakers of Samoan and te reo Māori.

New speakers are "individuals with little or no home or community exposure to a minority language but who instead acquire it through immersion or bilingual educational programs, revitalization projects or as adult language learners… not of course specific to minority language contexts per se" (O'Rourke, Pujolar and Ramallo, 2015:p.1). Heritage language speakers are "people who have a recent or ancestral connection to a language that is not the dominant societal language in their current region of residence… may still identify with (a) particular heritage language(s) based on their personal background, without having to actually have proficiency in the language(s)… include immigrant, Indigenous, and ancestral languages of either kind" (Seals and Shah, 2017:p.4).

In trialing the translanguaging pedagogy, teachers reported that new speakers were more likely to "give it a go" with the target linguistic variety, incorporating it into their speech where previously they used little to none of it. Also, heritage language speakers were more likely to continue speaking to their peers in the target linguistic variety without switching out of it to English. Overall, the students displayed more confidence in using the target linguistic variety when they were encouraged to translanguage, and they increased rather than decreased their use of the target linguistic variety (see Amosa Burgess and Fiti, 2019 for more on these results).

These positive results join those of other recent research into the outcomes of using a translanguaging pedagogy. For example, in research in Basque Country (Euskadi), Cenoz and Gorter (2017) found that students in a translanguaging setting performed equal to or better than their single language immersion peers on standardised assessments. Morales, Schissel and López-Gopar (2020) found an overall trend amongst students learning through a translanguaging pedagogy of increasing scores on language assessment after a year. Out of 20 students, three students performed equally on

translingual and English-only tasks, four students performed better on English-only tasks, and the majority 13 students performed better on translingual tasks. Tamati (2016) found that when allowed to translanguage, the Māori secondary school students she worked with in Aotearoa performed equal to English-dominant speakers, in the top socioeconomic locations in the country, on standardised English language tests. In research with secondary school students learning English in Vietnam, Seals et al (2020a) found that students felt more empowered in their learning and that they were able to create more meaningful dialogue in the eventual target language performance.

Finally, Galante (2020) conducted research with 127 international students in a Canadian English for Academic Purposes programme. She found statistically significant differences in the end of course academic English vocabulary test scores, with those in the translanguaging group scoring higher ($M = 6.15$, $SD = 1.5$; $p < .01$) than those in the English-only group ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.57$; $p < .01$). Students' diary entries showed that students in the translanguaging group felt normalized and included in the classroom community instead of othered, they were able to access more linguistic meaning making with their full repertoire, they built more metacognitive awareness of similarities and differences in vocabulary items across languages (especially with idioms and discourse markers), translanguaging increased students' awareness and noticing during vocabulary learning, and students felt more agentive in their learning.

The above are only a few of the many results being reported currently about the benefits of a translanguaging pedagogy and of normalising translanguaging practices in teaching and learning contexts, for both heritage speakers and new speakers of the linguistic variet(y/ies). Hopefully, more research (both qualitative and quantitative) will continue to be conducted, enabling us to better understand the short-term and long-term effects of a translanguaging pedagogy in different settings.

As a final note, it is important to stress that any and all research done with communities (such as that done by the Wellington Translanguaging Project) needs to be conducted in partnership with the communities and must be guided by the needs and goals of the communities involved.

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi – Māori Whakataukī

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Mother Tongue Other Tongue poetry competition: insights for language education

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Abstract: *Mother Tongue Other Tongue* is a poetry competition run by SCILT and which values the diversity of languages spoken and learnt by Scottish pupils today. As part of a PhD in sociolinguistics which aimed to experiment an inclusive approach to languages in a minority situation, fieldwork was conducted on the 2015-2016 edition of MTOT. Interviews were led with groups of participants and poem entries were analysed, shedding light on pupils' experiences as they gradually embraced their plurilingual identities and forged a new social group, the plurilingual community. This paper first provides a summary of this doctoral study before considering implications for language education. MTOT shows how *creative writing across languages* can enhance all pupils' language learning and identity experience, through any language chosen and regardless of their levels of proficiency. This perspective leads us to reflect on the importance of considering a language as a social object and the role of its speakers/learners as agents.

Keywords: 1+2 policy, *Mother Tongue Other Tongue*, translanguaging, mediation, language appropriation

Introduction

The Mother Tongue Other Tongue poetry competition (MTOT) was at the centre of my PhD (Pedley, 2018), its edition of 2015-2016 becoming my fieldwork. Led by Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) since 2014, this initiative has been celebrating the diversity of languages learnt and spoken by pupils across the nation[1]. My investigations took place at a time when the 1+2 Approach (Scottish Government, 2012) could be explored and tested, leading to educational projects[2] uncovering languages, language skills and innovative approaches to language education. What lessons can we learn from the Mother Tongue Other Tongue experience in light of current educational policies? Drawing from my research, this paper aims to give insights into approaching language education using creative writing activities, redefining the learner's agency, and the primary school teacher's role.

1. An inclusive approach to language diversity in Scotland: MTOT fieldwork

1.1. Context

A critical approach to multilingualism was at the centre of my PhD in sociolinguistics: the aim was to experiment an inclusive approach to languages in a minority situation, that is to consider links between linguistic situations and communities commonly thought of as

[1] SCILT's MTOT webpage : https://scilt.org.uk/MTOT/tabid/5841/Default.aspx (viewed on 09/07/21)
[2] To name a few : Language of the Month run by schools, Word Wizard or LinguaChef run by SCILT.

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apart, despite being relevant in common geographical contexts. Specifically in the Scottish context, this meant, for instance, listening to the voices of Scots, Polish or Urdu speakers as they recount their stories of living multilingually. Adopting an emic and qualitative approach, I restricted my population sample to children who had participated in SCILT's 2015-2016 edition of *Mother Tongue Other Tongue*.

MTOT invites pupils from Scottish primary and secondary schools to write a poem in a chosen language, along with a commentary in English. The competition is split into two categories: *Mother Tongue* hosts poems in languages known outside Scottish education and *Other Tongue* poems in languages learnt at school. First created by Routes into Languages[3], SCILT has been running this competition since 2014 to celebrate language diversity and promote language learning in Scotland. My investigation on 2015-2016 participation aimed to measure the impact of MTOT on children's experience of local multilingualism, the language of the poem and their own plurilingual competence (Council of Europe, 2001). As a collective initiative which requires a high level of personal investment with specific language repertoires, my hypothesis was that MTOT fostered an inclusive vision of languages relevant to the local context.

1.2. Methods of investigation

1.2.1. Corpus

In order to analyse children's experience of MTOT, I collected two types of data[4]. Ninety-six poem entries formed the first corpus: all submissions for the Mother Tongue category and entries in Gaelic (10), British Sign Language (2) and Scots (1) for the Other Tongue category, representing altogether the thirty-six languages showcased that year.

Semi-guided interviews were conducted with groups of participants and their transcription formed the second corpus of investigation. Forty-nine pupils from four primary schools in the Glasgow area were interviewed, representing eighteen languages showcased that year[5]: two groups were pupils from a Gaelic-medium school who had all entered the competition with Gaelic as the language of the poem in P6/P7 (6 pupils in each group). The seven other groups (P3-P4; P5-P6; P6-P7) were run by two English as an Additional Language teachers who work over three schools. Pupils attended their class either because they needed EAL support or because they were willing or encouraged to join the competition. One of the two teachers participated in the interviews.

1.2.2. Analyses

To understand the message children tried to convey from a poem written in any language to a commentary in English, I used the notion of mediation, a language activity

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[3] A consortium of English and Welsh universities : https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/mother-tongue-other-tongue (viewed on 09/07/21) - Today, the competition is still run in England by Manchester Metropolitain University: https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/ (viewed on 09/07/21)

[4] The two corpora are available on the French National PhD archive website: https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-02055796/file/These_Malka_PEDLEY_Corpus_annexes.pdf (viewed on 09/07/21)

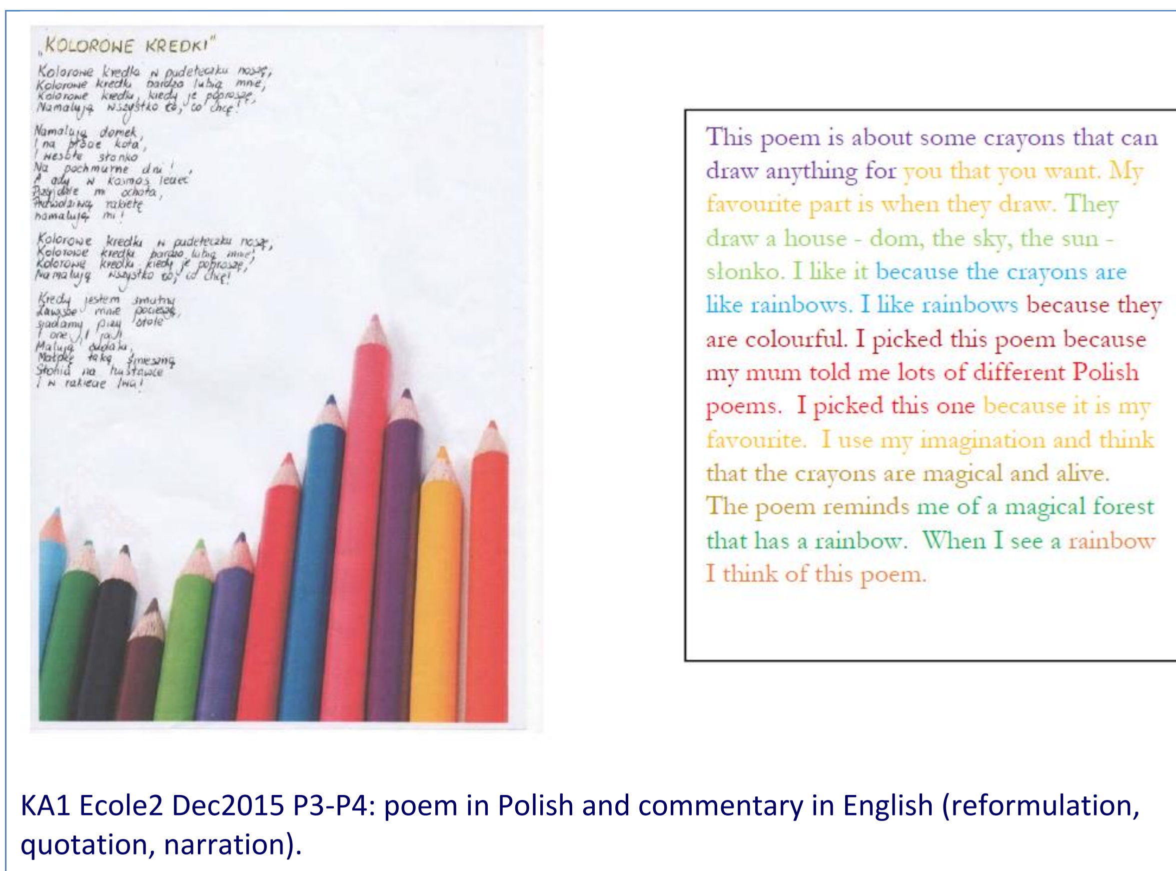
[5] The five most represented languages in the interview population sample were: Polish (16 pupils), Gaelic (11), Mandarin (3), Swahili (3), Arabic (3) (Pedley, 2018, p.161).

presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001 ; 2018) and defined as such by Cavalli & Coste (2015, p.26-27):

> *In the CEFR, the notion of mediation is defined as referring to the language activity of reformulating, orally or in writing, for the attention of one or more third parties, an oral or written text to which those third parties do not have direct access. This may take the form of a record, summary, translation etc. Mediation is therefore the production of a text from a source text for the purpose of transmitting its content (if only in condensed form).*

I identified three types of mediation strategies used within the commentary part in English:

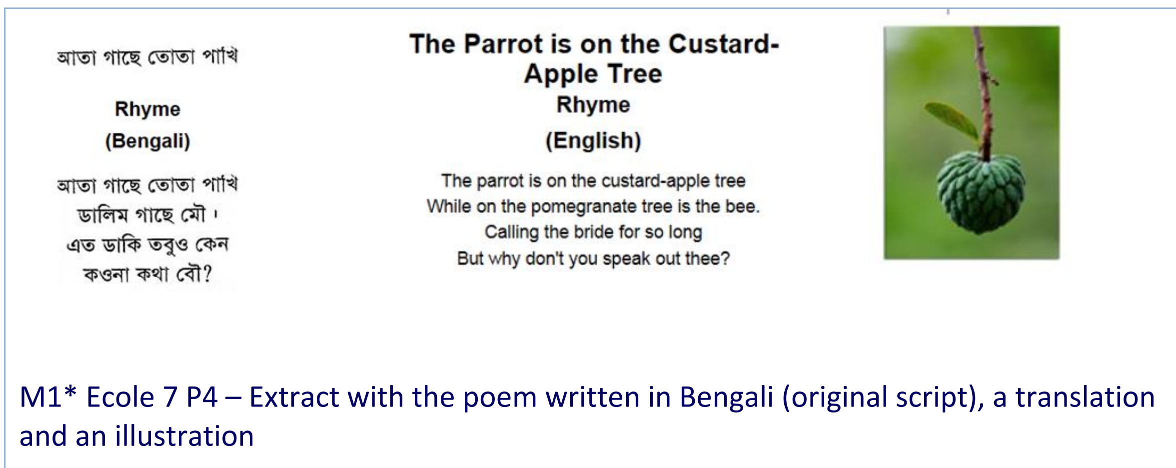
- Reformulation: 90% of the entries started with a sentence summarising what was perceived as most important in the poem.
- Narration: children gave contextual details of the poem and personal accounts of it.
- Quotation: some children quoted their favourite part of the poem (in its original version or as a translation) with a short explanation.



KA1 Ecole2 Dec2015 P3-P4: poem in Polish and commentary in English (reformulation, quotation, narration).

Some children used other visual or textual elements to make meaning:

- Illustration: a drawing or a photograph gave the reader a visual access to the content of the poem.
- Translation: 30% of the productions included a translation of the poem, mostly in addition to the commentary in English.
- Transliteration: some entries featured the poem in a transliterated version (writing in the original language using English phonetics), as a solution to transcribe (if the author did not have access to the language written code) or as a way of giving the reader access to the sounds of the poem.



M1* Ecole 7 P4 – Extract with the poem written in Bengali (original script), a translation and an illustration

Malayalam Poem.

Poem
RosaPoove RosaPoove
Ente Sundari Poove
Ninne Kaanan Enthu Chanthan
Ente Punnara Poove
Njan Vannu Ninne Kaanan
Nee Koode Varumo ?.

Meaning.
Roseflower Roseflower
You are my beautiful flower.
You look so wonderful
You are my cutest flower
I came to see you always
Can you come with me ?.

N* Ecole3 P5 - A poem in three versions (original script in Malayalam, transliterated version, translated version)

These mediation strategies give readers some access to the content of the poem and allow children to process their experience, as well as their relationship with the language used.

In addition, the interactional analysis (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1990) of the interviews showed that, despite a highly introspective process, the overall experience was driven by a collective drive, that of the participating group. Children experienced both a personal journey and a collective one, strengthening collective system beliefs on languages and the group dynamic.

1.3. Results

Although children used different languages, at the end of the project participants identified themselves as part of a group, with their MTOT peers, giving rise to a *plurilingual* community: week after week, as they join the group and work on their poems, children express themselves in and about the language they chose, with the confidence that they will be respected and admired by their peers who show interest, solidarity, and empathy. The plurilingual community is a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) that can grow beyond its first circle, according to the concept of imagined community (Anderson, 1991). This result shows that children can be open to an inclusive approach to languages relevant to the local context. In these extracts, two pupils (interviewed separately) compare their plurilingualism (Edo/English; Gaelic/English) with that of their peers (Polish/English ; French/English) :

M. *How did it feel to talk about and to speak in Edo at school?*

LU. It feels … just normal (…) like speaking Polish (…) I don't know speaking Polish in school like if you are like Polish is … it just feels normal to me (…) - [Ecole1 Dec2015 LU-SI]

SO. it's not different at all/ if you're like French for example and you haven't spoken any English and then you come and move here and you speak English like/ in France they'd be like oh is it any different but it's not (…) – [Ecole4 Avr2016 P7-1]

Through MTOT, children became aware of their plurilingual competence (Council of Europe, 2001; 2018) and valued the language showcased by their poem. However, when it came to expressing wishes and motivation for language learning at school, various choices were expressed: some imagined taking up the language of the poem as a subject, some preferred to keep the language outside of school and others expressed a desire to learn a different language at school. Very often, children would justify their choices with economic, work-related and mobility arguments. These statements showed limits to an inclusive approach to language diversity: children are already aware of the symbolic values (Bourdieu, 1982) languages play in today's globalised world and will address their choices according to the capital they associate with a language.

MTOT is an opportunity for children to showcase their skills in languages, whether these are formally taught or not at school. According to the 1+2 policy, through the course of their primary and secondary education, children will learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue. For many reasons, mostly practical, it is unlikely that the 36

languages featured in the 2015-2016 edition of MTOT will be available as formally taught subjects at school. This was not the ambition behind the MTOT project, and nor was it its goal to teach the languages. Instead, MTOT questions language learning and multilingualism: rather than questioning how to teach languages and which languages to teach, this initiative opened up to the importance of recognising language repertoires and understanding *why* languages can be learnt, from the individual's perspective.

2. Creative writing *across* languages to enhance the language learning experience

Each *MTOT* contribution combines two texts: a poem in a language other than English along with a commentary in English. These two texts complement each other and their combination "makes meaning" as a coherent and complete piece. They also reveal two distinct approaches, the commentary being the result of a reflexive process – in English – following the production of a poem in the other language. We consider "creative writing *across* languages" as creative writing activities involving several languages within the same text or in distinct texts that, when combined, trigger the writer's reflexivity on multilingual practices. In this second part, we reflect on how creative writing across languages may enhance all pupils' experience of language learning. Drawing from the study on MTOT we question learners' agency and relation to languages. Then, we consider pedagogical implications and limits to foster such enhancement.

2.1. The language learner as an agent

2.1.1. Language as something to do

With the ambition to "showcase" language diversity, *Mother Tongue Other Tongue* welcomes all languages. Since there is no guarantee that the judges will understand the language of the poem, the latter cannot be assessed formally in terms of language production and proficiency. This means children have more freedom to experiment sounds, shapes, meanings and, in doing so, explore their creativity beyond the limits of named languages. *Mother Tongue* participants may then act as language experts, as, very often, they have more knowledge of the language used than their teachers or their peers. For *Other Tongue* participants, this space represents a unique opportunity to play and experiment with the language that is usually, whether consciously or not, represented as one that the teacher "masters" and that pupils learn to "acquire".

This concept of language as something to do and experiment with gives pupils agency in the languages they choose, regardless of their levels of proficiency. This is highlighted in the mediation activity, the first purpose of which is to convey meaning and interact with the *other.* In addition, children are able to reflect on their literacy and language practices.

2.1.2. Language as an entity to relate to

Despite demonstrating an ability to envision more inclusively languages encountered collectively through MTOT, children show that they are aware of the symbolic values of languages in the world today (Bourdieu, 1982), when they express reasons for choosing specific languages to fit into their curriculum. These values are socially constructed and shared beliefs.

Although the general population recognises the advantages of being plurilingual (Scottish Government Scoial Research, 2016), language learning uptake and attainment in Scotland (Doughty, 2017 a ; 2017b) are still low. Véronique Castellotti (2017) highlights the need to give space for the learner to connect with the target language and build a tailored project and relationship, as the individual project of the language learner is often left unconsidered. As she defines it, *appropriation*[6] does not mean people should aim to possess the language but rather engage with the language, each time in their own singular way. Her straightforward question "why do we still learn languages?" in a globalized world, calls for a personal insight into language learning and teaching (Castellotti, 2017, p.51)[7] :

A person appropriates a new language and experiences a new linguistic and cultural setting in their own way, because appropriation is each time different and depends on the person's history and projects.

MTOT was the opportunity for children to encounter the language of the poem in a very personal and singular way. Through this experience, children showed, each in their own way, that they relate to languages as social objects. Many aspects come into play to explain the extent to which and the reasons why we relate to, learn and practise languages. This partly explains why children reacted differently to the idea of having the language of the poem taught at school.

Has mother tongue other tongue changed the way you see Tagalog?(…)

Well kind of/ you know/ like I used to see it as just a language that I didn't really know but now I really see it as a/ my language and some/other people's language (…) – [Ecole3 Dec2015 P5-P6]

2.1.3. Language to belong

A need or a desire to communicate with specific people can be a driving factor for learning a language. School exchange programmes have helped pupils experience authentic situations in which to practise a language and interact with its speakers. However, language learners are rarely made to feel as language speakers. That is, they are not made to feel that they belong to the target language community.

Danièle Moore (2005) explores the imaginative power of young children engaged in exploring foreign languages. As they produce "Chinese" inspired graphic items and include them in daily creative activities, children start identifying as Chinese speakers. As the author shows, what matters is not whether these children can be considered as legitimate members of the Chinese-speaking community, but rather that through their projection as members of such imagined community, they open their intercultural and plurilingual awareness and potentials.

[6] Translation from French in the original text "appropriation".
[7] My translation from French.

2.2. Pedagogical implications to foster this approach

For language learning to become meaningful, a pedagogy based on experimenting with languages and developing the learner's agency in the language and within its community should be fostered in education. Does this approach fit with Scotland's *1+2* scheme for language learning? And does it comply with *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*? Here, we consider space for such an approach to be fostered, implications for teachers, and inspirational resources to be used.

2.2.1. What the current educational policies say

In this paper, we have tried to show that each child should be allowed to find their own voice, their own project, their own motivation and aspiration to become a language learner, a language speaker. *CfE* highlights the importance of "empowering" pupils in many ways. Educators, when designing curricula, are encouraged to "listen to learners and be[ing] informed by their motivations and aspirations" as well as "empower [them] to have agency in their learning with opportunities for personalisation". These features are represented through the four capacities promoted by *CfE*[8].

As it appears in the *1+2* documents – or rather, considering the lack of recommendations given – the L3 constitutes a *radical space* for pedagogical exploration[9] and, as such, could be the ideal opportunity for such creative and envoicing activities to take place. However, creative writing across languages does not need to be restricted to one language or even one subject area, as it bridges interdisciplinary practices with, for example, expressive arts, health and wellbeing, social studies or technologies (IT).

2.2.2. The teachers' role and pedagogical framework in this approach

As he recounts a multi-literacy experience in a London school, Charmian Kenner shows children's awareness of the boundaries between activities and their specific parameters (2000, p.142):

'Shall I do some more Chinese? We always do Chinese on this table'. She then added to me, in the tone of an order, 'When we do Chinese, you get the glittery pens out!' Thus, she had identified a conjunction of language with place (the writing table), people (me) and writing materials (glittery pen) — the elements of a potential literacy practice involving 'Chinese' at school.

This means it is possible for a teacher to adopt various roles, from being the facilitator of a creative writing workshop, to an instructor as a language teacher. Parameters such as schedule, space, material or even participants (in the event of an artist's visit, for instance) will help the teacher frame the activity within a specific project and following specific targets that pupils need to be aware of. In turn, children will recognise these

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[8] From https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/ (viewed on 09/07/21)

[9] This was presented at *TedELL online conference* (Portugal) in November 2020 during the symposium held by Pedley, M. McPake, J. Roxburgh, D. Anderson, L. "The transformative power of local linguistic encounters". A publication of this presentation is due in 2022.

features and boundaries, as they are sensitive to literacy practices and events defining their daily routine at school[10].

Allowing children to experiment with languages beyond limits requires a shift in mentalities towards what it means to be plurilingual and to be a language learner. Although interactions in class mostly remained in English (when English is the language of instruction), MTOT showed that translanguaging practices in creative writing may be allowed (Kleyn & Garcia, 2019, p.79):

A translanguaging pedagogy thus shifts ideologies about language, positioning named languages in their important sociocultural and sociopolitical plane, while expanding the linguistic capacity of learners to make meaning. The focus of teaching is not the language and its structure per se, but the development of the learner's language repertoire as they add new features that become their own, and as they develop understandings of which features are appropriate for communication.

A translanguaging pedagogy relies on *stance, shift* and *design.* A teachers' translanguaging *stance* is one that appreciates that learners all have unique repertoires composed of a variety of linguistic features they combine to make meaning in context. Teachers have to be able to *shift* positions with learners, who may, in some respects, have more expertise than them. Finally, translanguaging pedagogy requires teachers to set a *design* which is communicated to learners, so that they know when, where, why and how to practise translanguaging (Kleyn & Garcia, 2019).

2.2.3. Creative writing across languages: legitimacy beyond the realm of school

Scotland is a multilingual nation and has been for centuries (McPake, 2006, p.12-13). Its vibrant culture through storytelling and poetry has shown contacts between languages. The *Curriculum for Excellence* highlights the importance of providing an education that is locally coherent, embedded in Scotland's social, historial and cultural context. It encourages the use of "the outdoors and our built and cultural heritage to support learning"[11]. In January each year, schools across Scotland celebrate Robert Burns' poetry and, in doing so, celebrate Scots (openly or not) for its vibrant creativity. To introduce creative writing across languages and show that it is a legitimate form of expression, many writers can be celebrated, representing Scotland's multilingual culture, past and present. Jackie Kay, Scots Makar and ambassador for MTOT, expresses her plural selves and plural language identity in her poetry. Her collaborative poem, *Threshold,* recited to open her first Parliamentary session in 2016, is a great example of a powerful and legitimate text incorporating a multitude of languages. Her lines "*It takes more than one language to tell a story, Welcome, One language is never enough, Welcome*" are voiced

[10] In my PhD, I demonstrated that pupils were aware of the specificities of MTOT in terms of literacy practices and events (Street, 2000). It is this awareness and the safe-space it provided that enabled them gradually to engage in the project and nurture their plurilingual identity (Pedley, 2018 : 273-274) . – a paper treating this dimension is under publication.

[11] https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/ (viewed on 09/07/21)

in a dozen languages[12]. Her text is still available for readers to contribute to and add a translation on the Scottish Poetry Library website[13].

Threshold

Find here what you are looking for:

Democracy, in its infancy: guard her

Like you would a small daughter -

And keep the door wide open, not just ajar,

And say, in any language you please, welcome, welcome

To the world's refugees.

(…)

It takes more than one language to tell a story,
Welcome
One language is never enough
Welcome

Conclusion

Based on my doctoral fieldwork on the 2015-2016 edition of MTOT, this paper aimed to present implications for language learning and teaching in primary education. Creative writing across languages activities, such as the MTOT initiative, foster children's reflexivity and empowerment of their literacy and linguistic skills. Although this approach does not aim to replace formal language teaching methods, we argue that it enhances learners' experience of languages triggering appropriation, in other words enabling them to consciously relate to languages and build their own meaningful learning project. To ensure that plurilingualism becomes the norm in the next decade, such an opportunity should be given to all pupils, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds and proficiency in languages.

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[12] Full video available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmLxjUNVtQU (viewed on 09/07/21)
[13] https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/threshold/ (viewed on 09/07/21)

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English and target language use in the Scottish modern language classroom: Teacher and pupil attitudes and perceptions

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Abstract: Modern language teachers in Anglophone contexts face a unique problem in motivating their pupils to learn languages other than English, given its global predominance. In an effort to better cultivate a multilingual society, the Scottish government is currently rolling out the 1+2 initiative, which guarantees pupils the opportunity to learn two modern languages in addition to their mother tongue. Unlike other Anglophone contexts where the amount of target language use may be policy driven, Scottish teachers are at liberty to decide how much target language to use in the classroom. There are few studies to date that explore attitudes toward language use in the Scottish language classroom in general, let alone pupil attitudes specifically. As 1+2 is expected to be fully implemented across Scotland by 2021, an understanding of the factors influencing pupil perceptions, such as the teacher's language use practices, will become increasingly important in raising awareness of the Anglophonic language learning experience. This paper presents an exploratory PhD case study that conducts questionnaires and interviews with teachers and pupils of Spanish, French, German and/or Italian in Scottish secondary schools. Additionally, the use of metaphor analysis and a cartoon storyboard-drawing task offer a creative alternative in seeking to better understand wider social and emotional dimensions influencing pupils' thinking.

Keywords: language attitudes, monolingual culture, Anglophone language learners, language use practices, creative methods

Introduction

English is an undeniably useful language. Despite Phillipson's (1992) critique that the assertion of English throughout the world has resulted in the oppression of other languages and their respective cultures, the fact remains that English is still needed and sought after in a way that other languages are not (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). For teachers of modern languages such as French or Spanish, the widespread status of English as a lingua franca poses a problem. This is not a new problem, as Chambers (1993, p. 15) previously pointed out:

> *"We can show our pupils maps of where French/German/Spanish/Russian are spoken. We can show them statistics of the numbers of people who speak these languages as their mother tongue. We can discuss their importance in the world of trade and commerce…No matter how hard we try, however, the fact that most of our pupils already have a relatively high level of competence in the world business language #1, and can make themselves understood almost anywhere, can pose us a problem in terms of motivation"*

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In Scotland, school uptake in most modern languages continues to decline (Scottish Government, 2012). Gayton's (2016) recent study conducted with 13 Scottish modern language teachers revealed that what Chambers (1993) stated resonates with them; that English is viewed as more important than other modern languages and that motivating pupils to learn English in other parts of the world is likely to be easier than motivating pupils to learn languages other than English. Additionally, the teachers in that study felt that government initiatives to improve modern language uptake do little to positively impact on pupil and parent language learning attitudes. This is a particularly interesting finding in light of the 1+2 initiative, which is soon to be fully implemented. It remains unclear whether 1+2 will be effective in encouraging pupils to communicate confidently in more than one language. Perhaps an exploration into the practices currently taking place in the language classroom must first be considered before we can fully understand how best to address language learning needs in Scotland.

L1 (mother tongue) or L2 (target language)?

With respect to L1 and L2 use in the language classroom, researchers and practitioners alike have both supported and challenged positions that propose total or partial exclusion of L1 (Macaro, 2001). Proponents of L1 exclusion might argue that even conducting administrative tasks (giving instructions, redirecting off task behaviors, discussing tests and quizzes, etc.) in the target language offers authentic opportunities for language that should not be overlooked (Cook, 2016). Moeller and Roberts (2013) venture that using a so-called 'maximal' L2 approach fosters intrinsic motivation, though there are few to no studies to date that examine a link between high amounts of L2 usage and pupil motivation.

Many teachers likely support the use of L1 in the classroom among earlier-level language learners, and for building classroom rapport regardless of learner level. Forman (2010, p. 71) summarises seven other common principles influencing teachers' decisions to incorporate L1 into the language classroom, which can be seen in Table 1.

1	**Cognitive**	*L2 knowledge*	to explain L2 vocabulary, grammar, usage, culture
2	**Affective**	*solidarity*	to facilitate easy, "natural" interaction amongst students and teacher
3		*interpersonal development*	to develop collaborative, team-work abilities
4	**Pedagogic**	*time-effectiveness*	to make good use of limited classroom time
5		*comprehensibility*	to convey meaning successfully
6		*inclusivity*	to ensure that all students can participate
7		*contingency*	to respond to immediate teaching/learning needs

Table 1: 7 principles of L1 use in L2 teaching (Forman, 2010, p. 71)

In addition to the cognitive, affective (i.e. emotion-related) and pedagogic reasons for using L1 summarised above, the decision of how much L1 to include in the language classroom has also been framed by policy, pupil uptake and sociocultural perspectives in language teaching research.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages recommends conducting 90% of classroom time in the target language (ACTFL, 2010). Yet according to survey data gathered by Hlas (2016), teachers in American classrooms of Spanish felt they needed to use L1 to combat low pupil energy levels and decreased enrolment; despite potential advantages to maximal target language input, a 90% target language policy could likely pose detriments to the pupil language learning experience. In the UK, where no such language use directives are in place, little is known about teachers' L1/L2 use practices and beliefs. Historically, L1/L2 research has primarily been investigated through quantitative analysis of the amounts of L1 used in the classroom, and its functions (Lin, 2013). A qualitative focus on L1/L2 use could paint a more complex picture of how language use practices impact on the language learning experience, but this is not enough. Lin (2013) suggests that we also need to "situate the classroom in its larger socioeconomic and political contexts and to re-examine the pedagogic goals of the classroom to see if they are really serving the needs of the students" if we are to continue embracing and broadening alternative perspectives on L1/L2 research (p. 213). Swain and Lapkin (2013) explored the use of L1 in classrooms of 'linguistically homogenous' Canadian pupils framed by constructs in Vygotskian sociocultural theory, which emphasises how social interactions play a fundamental role for language development (p. 102). Ultimately, they recommend that pupils be able to use L1 freely in order to negotiate meaning, build confidence and draw comparisons across linguistic

repertoires. While their study takes a critical stance toward principles of immersion education, their contribution still reflects the descriptive, repetitive and arguably defensive nature of existing literature on L1/L2 practices to which Lin (2013) refers.

Challenging monolingual language perceptions in the Anglophone context

Following sociocultural perspectives of the language classroom, Levine (2014) has advanced the notions of L1/L2 use, or codeswitching, as an integrated and dynamic system of codes co-constructed by both teacher and pupils. Levine depicts the language classroom as a multilingual space, but in many Anglophone contexts, the language classroom may still reflect a predominantly monolingual environment. Free use of L1 does not necessarily equate to a systematic and pedagogically effective blend of L1 (predominantly English) and target language. So how does language use in modern language classrooms in the Anglophone world contribute to pupil desire and/or willingness to use the target language? Do the language practices in place have any effect on the way that pupils view language use and on their intrinsic desire to want to speak multiple languages? Situating the Anglophone language classroom within its larger social and political context, as Lin (2013) implores, could reveal implications for how language use practices contribute to attitudes and perceptions toward multilingualism in the English-speaking world. The uncertainty as to whether Scotland will establish stronger relationships than other parts of the United Kingdom with Europe makes the Scottish language classroom a particularly interesting and timely research focus.

What pupils actually know and think about multilingualism remains unclear. Lanvers (2015) states that pupils in the UK tend to have little knowledge about languages across the world. In an effort to enhance pupil awareness, Lanvers, Hultgren and Gayton (2019) designed an intervention lesson pack that explicitly instructed pupils on the cognitive benefits of being able to speak multiple languages, as well as on the global spread of English. They found that transparency regarding these topics could help to change pupils' attitudes, and perhaps even discourage hegemonic attitudes towards English. A study that purposefully draws on pupils' thoughts could be one of the first to share insight from the young learner's mind on topics such as language identity, language learning motivation and multilingualism.

Turning Practice into Pedagogy

After extensively analysing the Wellington Translanguaging Project data, we crucially found that translanguaging practices were already being regularly used by some of the teaching staff at each location, as well as by some of the students. The translanguaging practices they were using were allowing them to build natural bridges across semantic and conceptual meaning in their linguistic repertoires as well as cultural norms and expectations (see Seals et al, 2019 and Seals et al, 2020b for specific examples).

However, in talking with the teaching staff, many were not sure what the effect of their translanguaging practices was on the students' learning, and many were unsure of how

to proceed in a structured pedagogical way. Noting these concerns, we worked with the teachers and with multiple speakers of the languages to create resources that built on translanguaging practices already in use while also incorporating a structural element that ensured the children were receiving exposure to content and meaning across the linguistic varieties of use in each centre (cf. Seals et al, 2020b).

We also learned more about how translanguaging functions in practice and as a pedagogy by asking the teachers and speakers of all of the linguistic varieties we were using to review drafts of the resources and provide acceptability judgments (i.e. what 'sounds right' and what does not). We then took this information and adjusted the materials until they were acceptable, while also taking note of the syntactic features that were identified as needing adjustment (see Seals et al, 2020b, and Seals and Olsen-Reeder, 2020 for examples of these resources and information on their systematic creation). Through this process, we remained in partnership with the communities, putting their needs first, while also reaching a deeper understanding of translanguaging.

Teacher and learner beliefs

Furthermore, a study that compares teacher and pupil attitudes and perspectives toward language use practices in the classrooms, as well as their wider implications, could reveal crucial mismatches or gaps in the Scottish context worth further investigation. This may offer teachers important opportunities for reflection on their practices. Many studies to date have shown mismatches in teacher and pupil attitudes and perceptions toward the classroom language practices. In a study that investigated the effect that teacher L1/L2 use has on pupil L1/L2 use, Chavez (2016) found that university students in American German-learning classrooms were less likely to imitate teachers who used L2 exclusively than teachers who maintained a more even L1/L2 balance. This suggests that learners are not necessarily more likely to use L2 the more L2 input they receive, contrary to the idea that maximising L2 input primes the learner for more L2 output (Cook, 2001). Brown (2009) pointed out that teachers perceived higher levels of enthusiasm in using L2 among their pupils than pupils actually reported, yet Levine (2003) found that teachers perceived higher anxiety levels associated with L2 use than pupils reported. Investigations of pupil attitudes and perceptions alongside teacher attitudes and perceptions have tended to be at the tertiary level. Hall and Cook's (2013) large scale study revealed that learners wanted more opportunities for L2 spanned across 17 different primary, secondary and tertiary settings. However, this study was conducted in EFL/ESL learning contexts. The question remains as to what extent modern language (ML) learners in Anglophone contexts want opportunities for L2 use, let alone the extent to which they are *aware* of their own attitudes towards L2 use. A study that not only explores attitudes and perceptions among both teachers and pupils in the Anglophone context, but one that also takes an in-depth approach in seeking to understanding how and why they may be important in promoting multilingualism and a multilingual identity among Scottish communities, is therefore pertinent.

Rationale for the current study

To sum up, studies of language learning classrooms have dedicated ample attention to English learning contexts, given the global relevance of English as a lingua franca. Teachers of languages other than English are now faced with the difficult task of encouraging their students to see why learning French or Spanish, for example, is just as warranted as being able to speak English. For the 1+2 initiative to be successful, this is becoming an especially relevant challenge in Scotland. Though 1+2 aims to promote communicative proficiency in at least 3 languages, there is little guidance as to how teachers are to most effectively implement this initiative. As a result, teachers make individual decisions on how best to approach L1/L2 use in the classroom, which are likely to be anchored in a wide range of unexplored pedagogical and philosophical differences among Scottish language teachers. Understanding their language use attitudes, and perhaps even more importantly their pupils' attitudes towards language learning and language use, could be a step towards raising awareness on the topic of multilingualism in Scotland as well as in the Anglophone world.

Methodology

The current study, which is part of a doctoral project being carried out within the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, aims to provide a snapshot of teacher and pupil attitudes to the English and target language use practices in Scottish modern language classrooms. The study also questions how language use attitudes may relate to wider aspects of the pupil language learning experience in Scotland, such as motivation and identity.

In August 2019, emails were sent to head teachers at over 70 schools in Edinburgh, East Lothian, West Lothian, Falkirk and Fife. Head teachers who approved of the study forwarded information to their modern language departments. Of the 70, ten modern language teachers expressed interest, with six maintaining contact after initial correspondence. The difficulty of accessing schools in Scotland has certainly presented a challenge. Despite this, I hope that teachers might see the potential value that this research presents in terms of opportunities for reflection and for allowing teachers to glean information on pupils' perspectives. In order to fit around teachers' already demanding schedules, data collection procedures are organised flexibly with each individual teacher's timetable.

I chose to include classes of S1-S3 modern languages (French, Spanish, Italian and/or German) in order to target the crucial period that takes place before pupils choose whether or not to continue learning a language. Ethical approval from the University of Edinburgh and respective councils was sought prior to the distribution of consent forms and data collection.

I addressed the first and third questions relating to teachers' attitudes and perceptions using questionnaires and interviews. With pupils, I decided to integrate traditional methods (questionnaires and interviews) with more creative methods suitable for this

age group. For example, questionnaires include a section eliciting metaphors, which Fisher (2017) advocates for their potential in revealing wider affective and social dimensions of pupils' thinking. Additionally, a cartoon storyboard drawing activity serves as both a prop for easing pupils into interviews and as an alternative way to reveal pupils' perceptions on how they associate themselves with the languages used in the classroom (Brenner, 2006; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015).

Initial Findings

A small-scale pilot study was carried out with a teacher of S2 French and five pupils in one secondary school. The teacher questionnaire revealed that the teacher strongly encouraged ample use of L1 in her classroom by both the teacher and the pupils, as well as an integration of both French and English for many tasks, which are summarised in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Language	**Task**
English	• Explaining a grammar topic • Discussing administrative information • Addressing/redirecting off task behaviors
English & French	• Giving instructions on a task • Introducing a cultural topic • Interacting with a pupil outside of class • Building rapport • Assisting during a communication breakdown/lack of comprehension • Establishing class solidarity • Giving oral and written feedback • Responding to pupil use of English
French	• Defining an unknown word

Table 2: Teacher beliefs on teacher English/TL functions

Language	Task
English	• Thinking
English & French	• Doing a cultural activity • Doing a grammar activity • Asking a question/asking for help
French	• During pair & group work/negotiating meaning • Speaking with classmates during class • Using survival phrases (asking to go the bathroom, water fountain, etc.)

Table 3: Teacher beliefs on pupil English/TL functions

Notably, the teacher feels that her own language use should include a mix of French and English, while her expectations for pupils included a mix of English and French, as well as French only for certain tasks (during collaborative work, speaking with classmates, using survival phrases). Contrary to Swain and Lapkin's (2013) recommendations, the teacher believes that pupils should negotiate meaning and collaborate on an activity using the target language. This could likely be an ideal vision for many modern language teachers, which begs the question: How can language teachers encourage pupils to want to use the target language amongst themselves? Is this a realistic goal in the Anglophone learning context between S1-S3 and if not, why?

Pupil questionnaires corroborated many of the teacher's sentiments toward English use in the classroom. All five pupils report satisfaction with their teacher's current use of English and target language. Interestingly, four out of five pupils believe that they use too little French and too much English in the classroom. As can be seen in Figure 1, pupils believe that the teacher should use English or a combination of target language and English for many tasks.

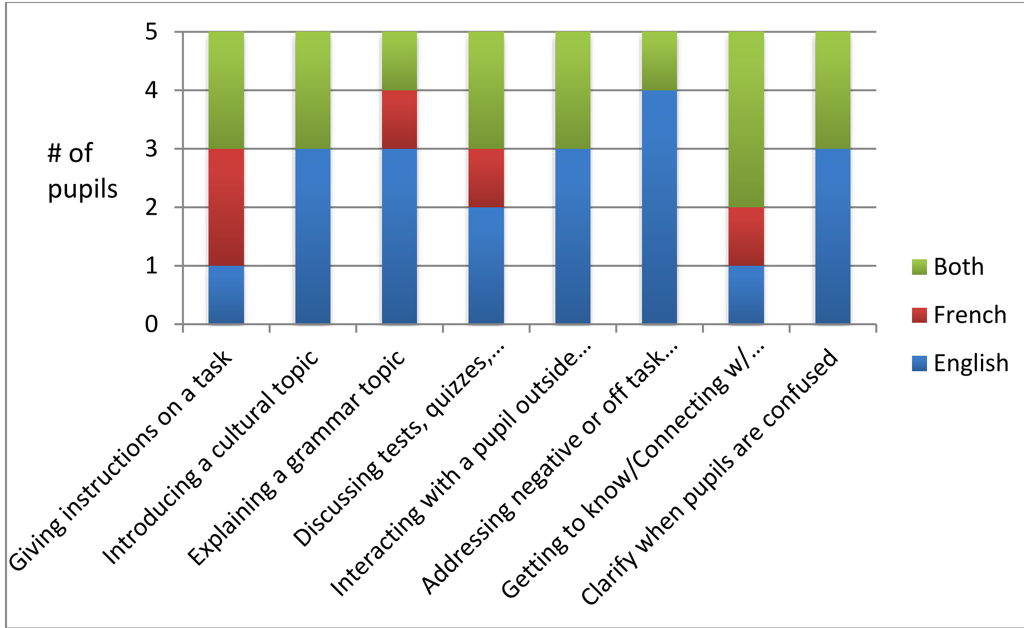

Figure 1: Pupil beliefs on teacher English/TL use

When giving instructions, two pupils believe that the teacher should use only French and one pupil believes that grammar and administrative items should be discussed in French as well as for the purposes of getting to know a pupil. In terms of their own English and target language use, which can be seen in Figure 2, pupils have a mix of personal expectations.

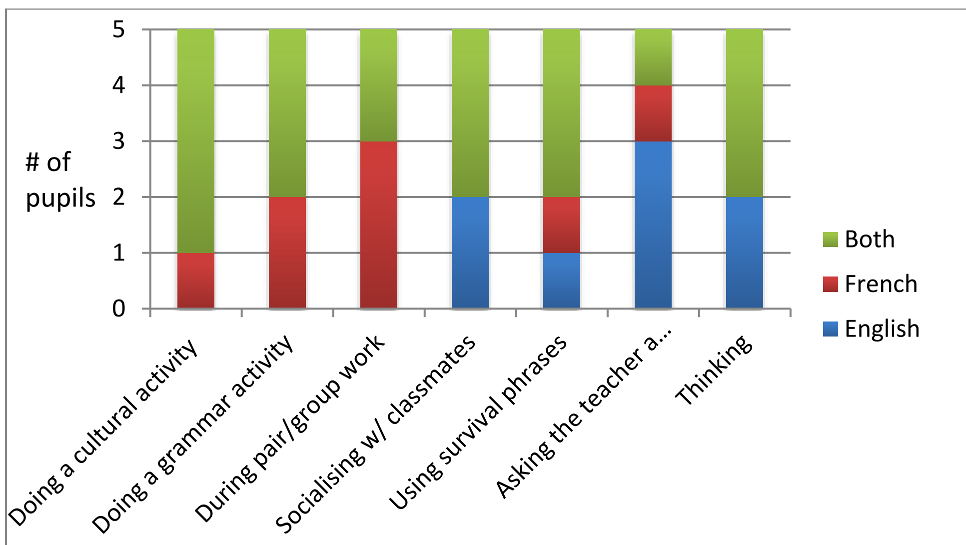

Figure 2: Pupil beliefs on pupil English/TL use

Most pupils tend to believe that a blend of English and the target language should be used for many tasks, though three agree with the teacher in their belief that only the target language should be used during collaborative tasks. Pupils were also asked to relate their experience of learning modern languages in the form of a metaphor, which

was accompanied by a 'because' clause to allow for expansion. These were analysed thematically, the themes of which are summarised in Table 4.

Theme	Description of metaphor
Food	• Food that one enjoys • Food that can be built up, has layers adding to its complexity (e.g. burger, sandwich) • Food that is healthy but not enjoyable
Person	• Someone difficult to understand (e.g. a baby) • Someone with characteristically dull or bookish features (e.g. monotone voice, glasses) • Someone curious • Someone both quiet and loud/energetic
Difficult/Impossible task	• Training a bumble bee
Painful experience	• Jumping in front of a bus
Surmountable challenge	• Learning to ride a bike

Table 4: Pupil metaphors

One pupil stated that learning French was like,

> *"learning about another version of myself…"*
>
> …because…
>
> *"…I feel like my personality changes when I speak French. I think I become more confident."*

This pupil's insight touches on multilingualism, motivation and identity. The use of French makes the pupil imagine a different self, echoing aspects of Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self-System. This theoretical framework distinguishes between the ideal self (visualising oneself using the target language for personal fulfilment) and the ought-to self (visualising oneself meeting target language goals as a result of external pressures, such as from a teacher or parent, or for instrumental purposes, such as succeeding in an exam).

The 50-minute teacher interview explored how the teacher perceives English and target language use in the classroom to relate to topics such as pupil motivation and the idea that Anglophone language learners tend to be poor linguists. The teacher's thoughts on a target language only policy in the classroom match similar criticisms made toward

target language only policies that marginalise other languages in contexts where English is the language being learned (Li, 2014; Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

> *"It would worry me that if I said no English in this classroom, that they would feel, 'Why can't I use my own language? Is there something wrong here? Why am I only having to use this when I don't understand it?' And I think it might create a wee bit of hostility towards the language they're trying to learn."*

The teacher also expressed uncertainty as to whether pupils are aware of dominant and oppressive English ideologies. When asked what the teacher thought pupils enjoy most about French, the teacher responded that pupils' own use of target language would likely be high up on the list, more so than the teacher's use of target language. Yet the teacher also expressed the difficulty of trying to encourage pupils to "just sit and ask each other" questions in the target language. Further investigation is needed as to how language use attitudes and perceptions, as well as other influential factors, relate to pupil willingness to use target language.

Before commencing interviews with pupils, they completed a cartoon storyboard activity. The activity prompted pupils to draw 4 scenes taking place in their French classroom. Pupils were encouraged to think about which language(s) best reflect their experience of a typical French lesson. Two examples are shown in Figure 3.

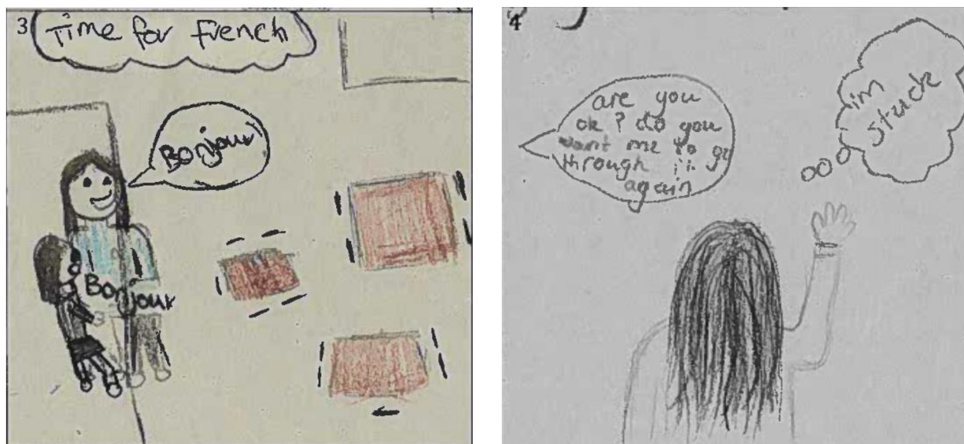

Figure 3: Pupil cartoon storyboard scenes

The image on the left shows the teacher and pupil exchanging a greeting in target language. The image on the right shows the pupil thinking in English while the teacher provides help and clarification in English. The images were used to warm pupils up for the interview setting and to further prompt discussion.

Of the five pupils, two participated in 15-minute interviews. One pupil describes the teacher's target language use as a challenge but one that the pupil doesn't mind. Regarding own target language use, this pupil admitted to using English during walk-around communicative activities on "those days you can't be bothered." The other pupil also relayed that few pupils use target language during the same activities, though not for lack of ability. After conducting these pilot interviews, a further follow up has been added to the interview schedule to probe more deeply into why pupils believe

themselves and their peers to be hesitant to use target language, as well as to see whether pupils are aware of notions of English dominance as a potential influential factor. When asked if pupils see themselves using French in the future, one pupil replied,

> *"Well if I was in France then yeah, but I don't think I'd have to do it if I was just workin' in Edinburgh in an office. I wouldn't have to speak French."*

This pupil does not see the need for learning languages in terms of future career, unless the pupil were to move to a French-speaking country. This once again raises the question as to what motivates pupils to want to use target language. Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton (2019) point out that language policy documents or government reports tend to advertise a need for languages in terms of employability and for university qualification. Perhaps promoting instrumental value is not an appropriate target for early adolescents. Is it possible to get pupils to simply enjoy learning languages?

Impact of this study

Understanding teachers' language use attitudes could be a step towards helping teachers in Anglophone settings such as Scotland demonstrate the importance of modern languages to their pupils, many of whom may believe that knowing a language other than English is unimportant for future career and/or academic goals due to the pervasiveness of English. The parallel use of qualitative, creative and some quantitative methods with both teachers and pupils may also help to provide a more complete picture of the perspectives that shape the language use and the language learning experience in Scotland. This has the potential to heighten pupils' awareness of multilingualism and identity in the Anglophone modern language context, which is an area of research receiving more attention (Fisher, Evans, Forbes, Gayton & Lui, 2018). This may in turn heighten teachers' awareness of the impact of their language use and language teaching practice. This study could be one of the first to inform extensively on pupils' perceptions in the Scottish secondary school classroom, and could be a catalyst for further research incorporating creative methods. In addition, the snapshot of the Scottish context that the current study will provide may also lead to the possibility for a longitudinal study that observes how motivation in the Scottish 1+2 context fluctuates over time and beyond S3.

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Bon Trabalh? Reflections and observations from Occitan immersion education – lessons for Gaelic Medium education in Scotland?

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Abstract: Gaelic Medium Education (GME) has grown in popularity since the early 1980s, but Scotland is not unique in providing an immersion minority language education programme in the public education system. This article discusses a visit by the author to the Toulouse area of France, where she joined the French School Inspectorate team tasked with supporting teachers delivering Occitan medium education at pre-primary and primary school level. The observations from visiting different Occitan Medium classrooms and speaking to children, teachers and teacher educators are then used to reflect on the differences and similarities with the Gaelic medium context here in Scotland and whether any lessons can be taken forward.

Keywords: immersion education; developing intercultural understanding; minority languages; Gaelic

Introduction

In Scotland around 3,700 children are currently enrolled in Gaelic Medium primary education across 61 locations in 14 local authorities (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2020). Although this represents a relatively small proportion, 0.9%, of the overall primary pupil population, it makes an important contribution to the efforts to support and maintain Gaelic in Scotland (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2018), with Gaelic Medium Education (GME) aiming to ensure that children achieve 'equal fluency and literacy in both Gaelic and English' (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (Scotland), 2011). Scotland is far from unique in providing opportunities for learning and teaching (indigenous) minority languages in the education system, with the Welsh and Irish medium education contexts perhaps the most frequently used in comparisons with the provision in Scotland (see, for example, O'Hanlon, 2014, Walsh and McLeod, 2007)

Other (non-anglophone) educational contexts have also made provisions for the inclusion of minority languages to be used as a medium of instruction in their educational model, often, as is the case for Gaelic, to support the acquisition of the language where intergenerational transmission, where the language is used in the home and passed from the caregivers to the child, is limited or has disappeared altogether (McLeod, 2010). The way and extent to which a minority language is used as a language of instruction in the classroom will vary depending on the context, but also on the national and local policies relating to language and education. Exploring these not only provides a valuable insight into different educational models, but also creates

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opportunities to identify best practice and how these might be taken forward to the Gaelic Medium (GM) classrooms.

In my capacity of lecturer in Gaelic education at the University of Strathclyde, I was, therefore, delighted to be invited by the University of Bordeaux to visit their campus in Toulouse to learn about the French educational system, focussing on the role of languages in teaching and learning, including the delivery of minority language education (Occitan) in primary classrooms and discuss the role of immersion education in both Scottish and French classrooms with students, teachers, university staff and members of the French School Inspectorate. During my visit, in April 2019 I had the opportunity to speak with staff and students at Bordeaux University but was also invited to visit a range of Occitan medium classrooms; a bilingual *école maternelle* (pre-school / nursery) class in a rural setting with twenty-one children aged 2 – 6 , an inner-city middle primary school class as well as a small class of twelve 6-year-olds in a small town with a high proportion of immigrant families and high levels of socio-economic deprivation where all languages spoken across the community were celebrated and included in the teaching and learning process.

This visit to the Toulouse area provided me with a unique insight into the French educational system and the variety of different ways that languages are positioned. The role of the various languages in and for education in France was exemplified throughout my visit and resonates with many of the initiatives here in Scotland to support the teaching and learning of 'modern foreign' languages, heritage and community languages and Gaelic. The focus of this article will be on the way in which Occitan medium education is delivered and how this compares to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Scotland.

Occitan and Occitan Medium Education

Occitan, or the Oc Language (Langue d'Oc) is a member of the Romance language family and is the collective term for the 6 different language varieties (dialects), which are spoken in the southern regions of France and in neighbouring countries. All the dialects of Occitan are considered to be endangered and at risk of disappearing, in particular 'Lengadocian', the dialect of the region that I visited, which has been categorised as 'severely endangered' by UNESCO (Moseley, 2010). As has been the case for Gaelic (see MacKinnon, 2011), both the number of speakers and the use of Occitan have dramatically declined.

The increasing dominance of French in all aspects of public life, including media, public administration and education, where the use of regional language, even in the playground, was prohibited until 1983 (Escudé, 2019) has resulted in an estimated reduction of 99% of Occitan speakers over the last century (Kremnitz, 2017). This decline in speakers also meant that fewer and fewer families are bringing up their children as first language speakers of Occitan, with Occitan Medium Education only introduced into the French public education system in the early 1980s (Escudé, 2012). Occitan Medium Education, as is the case with other regional minority language

education (such as Breton), occupies a precarious position in the public education system as a result of France's institutional monolingual ideology towards language, enshrined in the second article of its constitution, which states that the language of the Republic shall be French (Määttä, 2005).

The strength of this official ideology was highlighted recently when a bill allowing the safeguarding minority languages was passed by the parliament in April 2021. This bill, also known as the 'Molac Bill' after Paul Molac, the independent MP from Brittany who presented it, would have allowed public schools to offer all subjects in a minority language. After an appeal by the Education Ministry, the Constitutional Council, France's highest constitutional authority, ruled that some of the aspects of the bill, including the clause relating to immersion education, contravened the second article of the constitution and these were subsequently removed. This has since resulted a wider constitutional debate around the position of regional languages and their inclusion in the public education system.

In the short-term the consequence of the Molac Bill amendment is that Occitan, together with other regional minority languages in France, can only be used for a maximum of 12 hours (50% of all teaching hours), with the remaining 12 hours of teaching and learning having to take place through the medium of French, as has been the case since 1983 (Escudé, 2019). The French education system has a national curriculum which consists of two stages of primary school (the Basic Learning Cycle (for pupils aged 6 to 8, including the last year of pre-school) and the Consolidation Cycle (for pupils aged 8 to 11) (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2015). This national curriculum is centrally organised and administered through the 18 regional authorities (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2020). This national curriculum follows a timetable as prescribed by the government in terms of hours allocated to each of the five curricular areas[14] on a weekly (and yearly) basis and also prescribes which language (French or a regional language) can be used (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 2015) (see Table 1).

Subject area	Taught in French	Taught in Occitan
French	9 hours	-
Occitan	-	1 hour
Maths	-	5 hours
Physical education	1 hour 45 minutes	45 minutes
Foreign living language	45 minutes	45 minutes
Art and art history	45 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
World exploration	45 minutes	2 hours

[14] Languages for thinking and communicating, methodologies and tools to learn, training of the individual and citizens, natural and technical systems and world representations and human activity.

Total	12 hours	12 hours

Table 1: Distribution of subjects according to the language of instruction - adapted from Escude (2019)

The directives around the 50/50 division in teaching time is strictly adhered to in the schools and might include a “one teacher, one language” approach, where children have one teacher for the Occitan medium lessons and another teacher for the French medium lessons. The reason behind this approach is at least in part pragmatic. There is a shortage of teachers who are proficient in Occitan and able to deliver Occitan immersion education and this, therefore, allows one teacher to work with two groups of children within a setting, thus increasing the capacity for delivery. In some instances, this approach also means that children physically move between different classrooms, creating a physical separation between the two languages.

Observations and reflections from the classroom

From my visits to several different Occitan medium classrooms and speaking to the teachers it was very clear that that there is a high level of awareness of the dominant position of French in the community and that this brings challenges in terms of Occitan language acquisition and use by the children. In the classrooms this was acknowledged through daily activities at the start of each session which supported the children in their transition from French, the language of the home, the community, and the school social contexts, to Occitan.

This transition was led by the teacher and although the activities varied according to the teaching cycle of the class and the children’s proficiency in Occitan, all had common elements, which will be familiar to many (immersion) teachers: taking the register, writing down the time and the date and describing the weather for the day. This allowed for the reinforcement of simple, day-to-day language. Older children would then be asked to comment on a current news story in the language (this was the week in which the roof of Notre Dame in Paris had caught fire), and younger children being asked to recall the days of the week and the numbers.

Another significant feature of the transition and early part of the session was the use of Occitan (children’s) literature, and in particular storytelling, which can be used to support the development of children’s oral language (Wright and Dunsmuir, 2019). Many of the stories used in the early years Occitan classrooms had a highly cyclical and repetitive element, exposing the children multiple times to the same words and phrases, allowing them to build their understanding and vocabulary of Occitan and allowing them to become familiar with the sounds and pronunciation of the words, whereas for the older children this often took the form of poetry recital, a feature of the French education system[15].

These activities also served a further purpose and that was to strengthen the children’s social knowledge of the Occitan culture (Mello, 2001). The emphasis on Occitan culture

[15] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36500648

and heritage came through very strongly in all the classes that I observed. Children are introduced to Occitan culture through songs, dance, and poetry from an early age and throughout primary school they collect these in a separate folder (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Example of Occitan poem for the early years

The *école maternelle* that I visited was a very clear example of how the cultural and linguistic elements were blended into the learning and teaching activities. In the morning the children started with a story about a cat in search of milk. This introduced the children to the names of (farm) animals, the sounds they make and the agricultural cycle (milk comes from cows, cows eat hay, hay comes from dried grass, the grass is dried after the farmer cuts it, the farmer cuts it after the grass has grown with the help of the sun and the rain) – a very important feature of traditional Occitan life. There was a high level of repetition of vocabulary in the story, helping to reinforce the vocabulary and the grammatical structures introduced (Yeung et al., 2020).

The story telling activity was then followed by a music and dance session with children practising the traditional songs and dance performed at the festival in the village. Silvia Ortega, the Occitan medium teacher of the *école maternelle*, explained that this emphasis on Occitan heritage was aimed to foster a sense of identity and understanding of the culture, a view supported by Churchill (2002). All the teachers I spoke to recognised the need to create a clear distinction between "French culture" and "Occitan culture" through what Fishman (1991) calls 'prior ideological clarification', an understanding of why they are learning Occitan and what makes it different and unique from the majority language (in this case French).

In the case of Occitan this was particularly pertinent as French and Occitan are *Ausbau* languages (Kloss, 1967, Kloss, 1993), meaning that the languages share the same linguistic features and belong to the same language family. This makes Occitan (relatively) easy to learn and comprehend for speakers of French and Spanish, especially compared to *Abstand* languages (such as Gaelic and English) where there are no overlapping linguistic features. It was clear from my observations that all the Occitan immersion teachers actively used thsee similarities in their teaching and learning approaches, with children being encouraged to explore the similarities and differences as part of their Occitan language acquisition (see Figure 2).

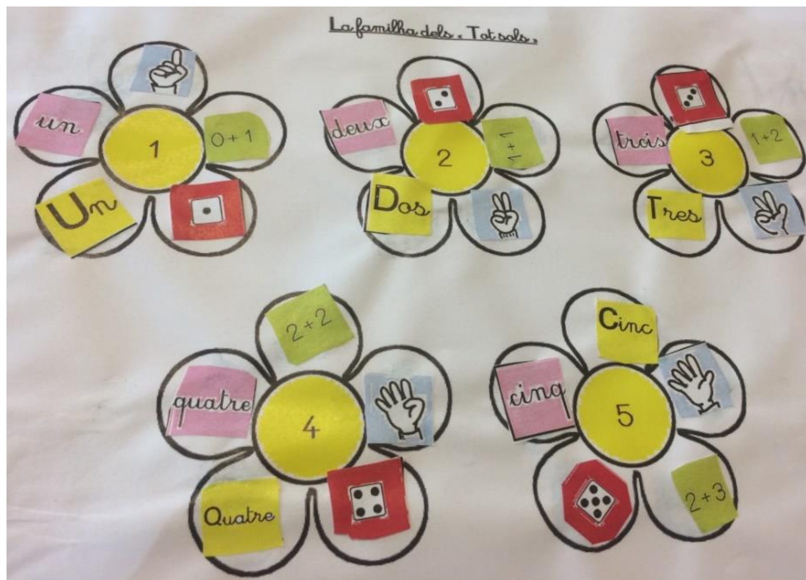

Figure 2: developing metalinguistic skills through numeracy

Comparisons with GME in Scotland

Both Occitan and Gaelic have featured as a medium of instruction in primary classrooms for a similar period, and have faced, and are facing, similar challenges in terms of teacher recruitment and the availability of resources and authentic materials for teaching and learning, and both models have an overt aim to ensure that the children are bilingual in French and Occitan and Gaelic and English respectively. However, the way this is conceptualised in the classroom is very different, with Gaelic, unlike Occitan, recognised by the authorities as an official language of Scotland 'commanding equal respect to English in Scotland' (Scottish Parliament, 2005). Although the provision of the act, as argued by McLeod (2014), is relatively weak, and does not create rights for speakers to use the language or for children to be educated through the medium of Gaelic, it did create Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Gaelic language board, which became responsible not only for the promotion of the Gaelic language and culture but also for the growth and development of Gaelic (medium) education.

This different socio-political context means that unlike the French immersion model which is based on a 50/50 split in teaching time between French and Occitan, the use of

Gaelic across the seven years of primary school will typically be higher, consisting of two phases: ‘the early stages of learning through the medium of Gaelic and where no other language is used, is referred to as total immersion. The next phase – where the development of the other language (English) is introduced – is referred to as immersion but with all the curriculum continuing to be delivered through the medium of Gaelic’ (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (Scotland), 2011). This means that throughout the seven years of primary education, the majority of the teaching and learning will take place through the medium of Gaelic, although the extent to which English is included in the upper stages of primary school can vary (O’Hanlon, 2010).

The exposure of children to the Gaelic language in the primary education system is, therefore, significantly greater than that of their peers in Occitan immersion settings, but despite this increased input teachers still face similar challenges to their colleagues in the Occitan medium classroom, namely how to support children in the acquisition of a minority language where this is not the language of the home, the family and the community, and, in the majority of cases, the wider school setting. Whereas in the Occitan contexts the acquisition of new vocabulary and even grammatical structures might be supported by the similarities between the two languages, this is not the case for Gaelic, where the grammatical constructs and vocabulary are significantly different from English. This means that GME teachers need to develop different strategies to support metalinguistic awareness, and ensure that children acquire the correct grammatical features, especially those which are significantly different from English, with teachers across GME only more recently starting to use a direct approach to correcting errors in grammar and pronunciation (Macleod et al., 2014), with McPake et al. (2017)

Furthermore, whereas in France Occitan is considered a regional language, with clear geographical links to local and cultural heritage in traditions, in Scotland the discourse around Gaelic is more complex. Although the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers live in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Mac an Tàilleir, 2010), Gaelic in Scotland is not geographically bounded by local authority or area, with GME available in 14 local authorities across Scotland (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2020), resulting in what Stephen et al. (2011) have termed ‘cultural dislocation and assimilation’ (p. 15). This means that the inclusion of Gaelic in the education system needs to carefully consider the varying local contexts to allow children to create meaningful and relevant links between the language and the cultural traditions, even in those areas which are not traditionally associated with the language (Oliver, 2010).

This raises questions of how ‘Gaelic’ GME is, with Stephen et al. (2011) identifying that ‘Gaelic education has tended to present a culture offer and not a merely linguistic one; children are given the opportunity to engage with ‘Gaelic culture’ [but] the meaning of the terms ‘culture’ generally and ‘Gaelic culture’ more specifically is rarely explored’ although it is typically focussed ‘on the artistic aspects of culture, especially song and

music' , for example participation in the Mòd[16], a traditional Gaelic festival including song, music, dancing, drama, sport, and literature, or the Fèisean[17], community-based arts tuition, As identified by Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998), there is a danger for Gaelic, as there is for Occitan, that a focus on performance and outward manifestations of "the culture", including song and dance will create a "success experience" for the teachers and the children, but do not necessarily result in language acquisition (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1998). Smith-Christmas (2016), for example, in her study of a bilingual Gaelic / English family, has found that these opportunities have resulted in children increasingly treating Gaelic as a performance language rather a language for communication, a finding supported by Dunmore (2019) who found that only around 20% of those educated through the medium of Gaelic continued to use the language as an adult.

Reflections and lessons

Both the Occitan and Gaelic languages face similar challenges in terms of their long-term survival. The education system is an important mechanism for language acquisition, with the overall language aim of both contexts that children become proficient in both the majority language of the community as well as the minority language. However, in addition to the way the model is conceptualised, there are some differences between the two contexts which might affect the overall outcomes in terms of the long-term survival of the languages, both linguistically and socio-politically.

The close linguistic proximity of Occitan to French (and Spanish) means that teachers can use the children's existing meta-linguistic awareness of French to support the acquisition of Occitan. Many of the direct language teaching inputs focus on actively exploring the differences and similarities, with a clear focus on ensuring that the differences in grammatical structures, vocabulary and pronunciation are understood by the children. In Scotland, because Gaelic and English are *Abstand* languages, this has resulted in a different approach, with the premise that 'children will quickly acquire the target language (Gaelic)' if they are placed in an environment in which the target language is used exclusively' (Pollock, 2010), with less emphasis on formal teaching of language and grammar.

A further important difference is the link between the language and the culture. Occitan, and in particular each dialect, is geographically bounded to a specific region, with its own cultural traditions, and these are overtly included in the teaching and learning process, primarily to set Occitan apart from the dominant majority culture and language, exactly for the same reason that facilitates the learning of Occitan, namely its proximity to French. In GME classrooms this link between language and culture is less overtly present and promoted, with a reliance on stories or nursery rhymes translated from English (Stephen et al., 2016) and which are typically based on British or Scottish-English cultural traditions and stories. This, conversely, might precisely be as a result of

[16] https://www.ancomunn.co.uk/nationalmod
[17] https://www.feisean.org/en/

the Gaelic Language Act and the promotion of Gaelic 'as an official language of Scotland' (Scottish Parliament, 2005), and the inclusive approach towards GME as not belonging to one particular group or geographical location.

This might, however, be about to change once the revised General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Professional Standards for teachers come into effect in August 2021. These revised professional standards, for the first time, explicitly refer to Gaelic Medium and the need to 'demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of … the distinctive culture, context and ethos of the learning community including Gaelic medium ethos where appropriate' (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021). This, therefore, opens the opportunity to consider and debate the role of Gaelic culture in education, and what an authentic Gaelic ethos and culture might look like in the different contexts and locations across Scotland where GME is available.

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Modern Languages during a pandemic: how instructional videos, Conti's MARSEARS framework and strong routines have enriched my practice

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Abstract: In this article I review how I adapted my teaching in response to the challenges we faced in modern languages due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the switch to blended learning. I introduce methods and digital tools that helped me engage with students remotely, but that will also be useful in the classroom. I also discuss how I have adapted Gianfranco Conti's EPI method for blended learning.

Keywords: Covid-19 Modern Languages teaching, blended learning, Modern Languages teaching during lockdown, EPI method, Gianfranco Conti method, hybrid learning, digital tools, MSClassNotebook

I am a Modern Languages teacher at Broughton High School. Since 2007 I have taught French, Spanish, German and EAL in Austria, Australia and now Scotland. My Twitter handle is @MissFedrizzi and I share ideas on my blog mflteacher.webnode.co.uk.

> *"We can't (and we shouldn't) go back to 'normal' school. Working digitally, with the resources to support this, has to be built into the way we teach and the way children learn for the future."* (Scottish Government, 2021)

The last year has brought a huge change to the educational landscape. Overnight, teachers not only had to adapt to their new virtual, blended learning environments but also, once back in the face-to-face classroom, adjust their teaching to Covid-19 safety requirements. Despite the initial shock to the system of lockdown number one, I soon embraced our new virtual learning environment and realized that this period of change would give me an opportunity to progress my teaching and accelerate a long overdue transition to digital tools, which would now no longer be held back by tradition and by a lack of resources.

In this review, I would like to outline the three pillars upon which my teaching has been based over the last year: Firstly, how instructional videos have allowed me to overcome social distancing in the ML classroom and how they will remain a big part of my teaching following a return to 'normal'. Secondly, how I use Gianfranco Conti's EPI method in a 'blended' learning style to increase student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Thirdly, I would like to share how, in particular this year, strong routines have helped build relationships, regardless of whether students are in classroom or at home.

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When the pandemic hit in March 2020, I found myself in front of MS TEAMS wondering how to deliver class content in a way that students would still engage with despite us not being in the same room. My first breakthrough moment was the rollout of MS ClassNotebook in our school's Teams environment, something that seemed particularly challenging at first, not only to me but also to our students. Low digital literacy was certainly an issue that had to be addressed in order to get all of our students to a level where they could participate in online classes effectively. I knew that, in class, videos would often raise their interest, so I started posting videos of other people explaining the content I wanted them to explore. Engagement, however, remained low and some research on how universities increase engagement with so-called massive open online courses (MOOCs) revealed that for students it is crucial that their own teacher is featured in the video content. I then came across a webinar by the MFL pioneer Joe Dale, who was sharing tools on how to produce one's own videos. Despite my initial hesitation as to whether this would be the right moment for my very own Hollywood debut, I soon started creating "how-to" videos, using online recording software such as *Loom* or *Screencast-o-matic*. For example, I recorded a video on how to redraft Directed Writing tasks for Higher Spanish within ClassNotebook, providing a detailed step-by-step walkthrough. Within weeks of uploading these videos, I noticed a change in attitude while engagement improved significantly. More homework was submitted and what was submitted was of higher quality.

Including instructional videos in regular in-class lessons has a variety of benefits that will make them an integral part of my future model of blended learning. When students are on their own device, like a tablet in class, or in the computer room, instructional videos give them control over the pace of the information. They can pause, rewind and re-watch according to their own needs, and differentiation is taking place. The fact that not only students but also their parents and caregivers have access to these instructional videos can support learners better outside of school.

Upon returning to the real classroom, I initially thought I that I could go back to teaching the way I had before lockdown. However, I soon realised that the Covid safety requirements would make this impossible. Modelling sounds through a mask, for example, would quickly give me a hoarse throat. Even worse, students could not properly hear what I was saying, nor could they see the movements of my lips whilst enunciating sounds. I thought back to the instructional videos I had made during lockdown and developed plan B: I would record and show students short videos on modelling sounds to raise their awareness for particular sounds and sensitise them to common errors. The fact that students were already used to me giving them instructions through videos while learning remotely paid great dividends and the in-classroom sound modelling videos were received very well.

Modern Languages classrooms rely on collaborative learning and personal interactions that build relationships, which are a key element of successful teaching. Overcoming social distancing rules was therefore an important obstacle to tackle. Through the

generous sharing of information regarding digital tools by the “MFL Twitterati” — a UK wide language teacher community on Twitter, I was able to weave a variety of tools into Gianfranco Conti’s “extensive processing instruction” (EPI) method (Conti & Smith, 2019) upon which my lessons are based. The EPI method is a research-based approach that focuses on teaching “chunks” through sentence builders to model the target language. Students go through a rigorous processing phase before moving into target language production. Students therefore achieve fluency sooner than with traditional models, they experience greater self-efficacy and become more confident linguists.

Not every digital tool has been useful for reaching the individual milestones of the Conti MARS EARS framework (Conti, 2021). I must confess at this point that I have been guilty of being blindsided by flashy apps and websites that looked fun but had little to do with getting my students to their desired learning outcomes. To avoid going off-course, my mantra has been “tasks before apps” when choosing digital tools for both face-to-face and remote teaching.

For modelling and awareness raising, I have been using tools such as the *Flippity Manipulatives* combined with *Vocaroo* voice recordings to give students access to my voice (not that of a voice actor) in French and Spanish for word ordering activities. The well-known *Mentimeter* website has served me well for all stages of the MARS EARS process, starting with spotting grammatical or syntactical differences during the stage of awareness raising to narrow reading activities for the stage of receptive processing. When entering into the structured production phase, word clouds and narrow translation activities have regularly been part of my lessons. For grammar lessons, in which I mainly use sentence builders to explore the sound, spelling, individual syllables, word boundaries and lexical retrieval, *Mentimeter* has been useful to check my learners’ understanding anonymously.

Figure 1: Example of the usage of Flippity Manipulatives combined with Vocaroo audio recordings

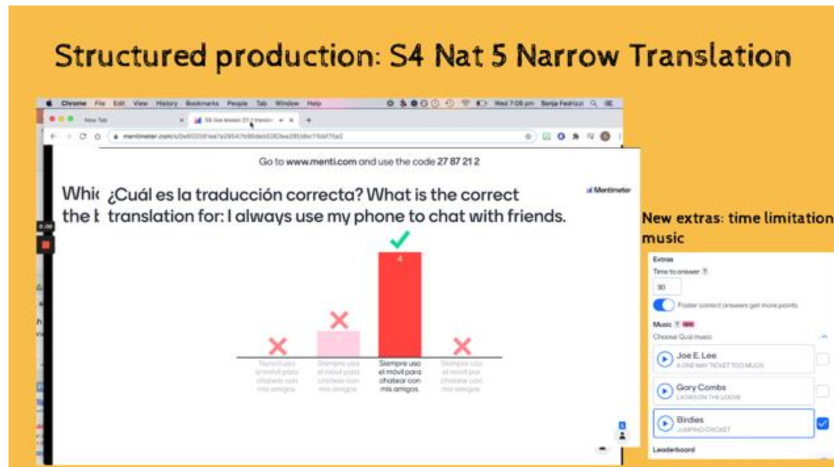

Figure 2: Example of the usage of Mentimeter with an S4 Spanish class

When entering into structured production, digital mini whiteboards, such as *whiteboard.fi* have been part of my remote and in-class lessons. They are extremely useful for most of the MARS EARS tasks as they increase engagement and generate positive learning experiences. This year, in particular, they were an excellent help for students to build camaraderie as we spent so much time apart. To instil a team spirit and give my students a sense of feeling connected, I have also used *Padlet* for collaborative tasks in the structure production phase. Both remotely and in class, my Higher and Nat 5 students have used it to write texts together, with me giving them instantaneous feedback. For any type of receptive processing activities, I have used *Wordwall*. This website has been a huge time saver because content can be recycled and used in different types of games once created. Overall, I have aimed to identify, and become proficient in, digital tools that not only integrate well into my blended learning approach but also seem likely to be useful back in the "normal" classroom beyond the pandemic.

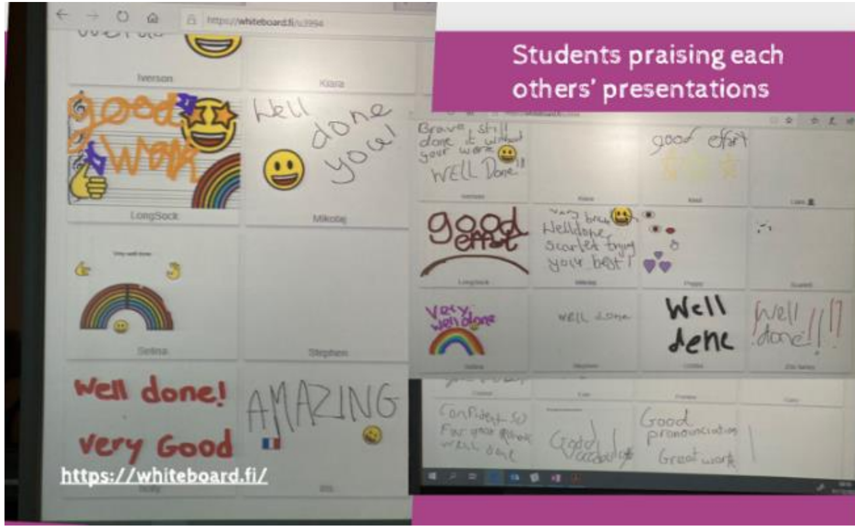

Figure 3: Example of the usage of Miniwhiteboard.fi with an S1 class praising each other's work

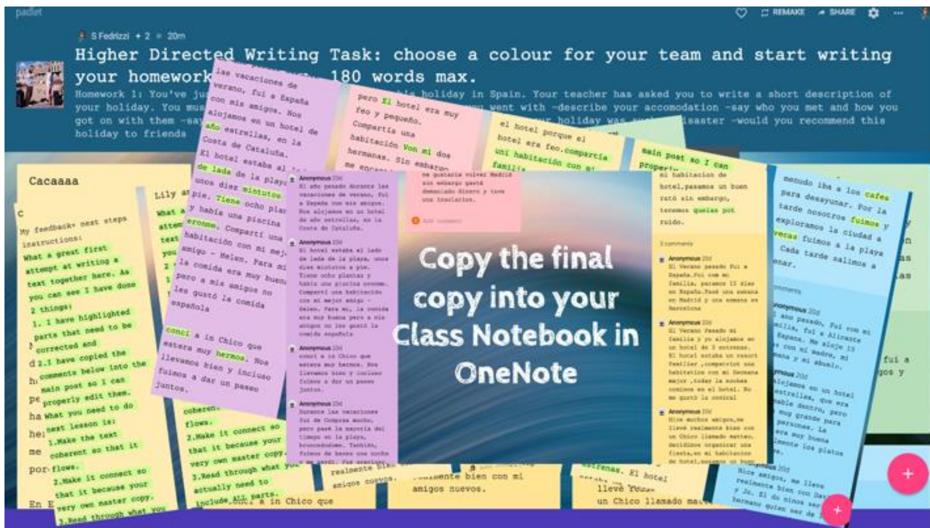

Figure 4: Example of the usage of Padlet for a Higher Spanish Class using collaboratively

Having covered video recordings and digital tools, I now would like to outline my third pillar of teaching, which is strong and consistent classroom routines. Undoubtedly, strong routines improve the "flow" and enable learners to be more focused and attentive during lessons. With the stop-start nature of the last school year, I have found it even more important to have a set routine to make up for lost time in class and remotely. At the beginning of each lesson I share my expectations and learning

intentions with my students. I have used a series of settling tasks, which have proven particularly useful during the chaotic climate of the past year due to Covid-19 safety regulations. Before the pandemic, I would usually only include content-related tasks, such as sentence builders on greetings or the current topic. This year, however, I included tasks with more personal questions, for example “Does wearing a mask at school bother you?” The purpose of this has been to give students a place to talk about all of these changes. Furthermore, due to social distancing rules in class, often there was no way for students to get to know all of their peers (other than those sitting right next to them). I wanted to give them an opportunity to just have a ‘natter’ and connect with each other. Apart from settling tasks, I use task sets which rotate every four weeks to minimise disruption, and students already know what I mean when I say “Let’s do a delayed diction”. Therefore, we do not lose precious class time, and behaviour management is easier as students know what they need to do. During live lessons, I made sure that students knew what our 30-minute sessions were about by displaying a holding screen (see image) which remains visible throughout the online lesson. Remotely, I used the TEAMS chat function for activities that would “normally” require students to put their hands up to answer questions. I noticed that the chat function helped students who might normally not have felt confident in an actual classroom to participate and volunteer their answers in a chat box.

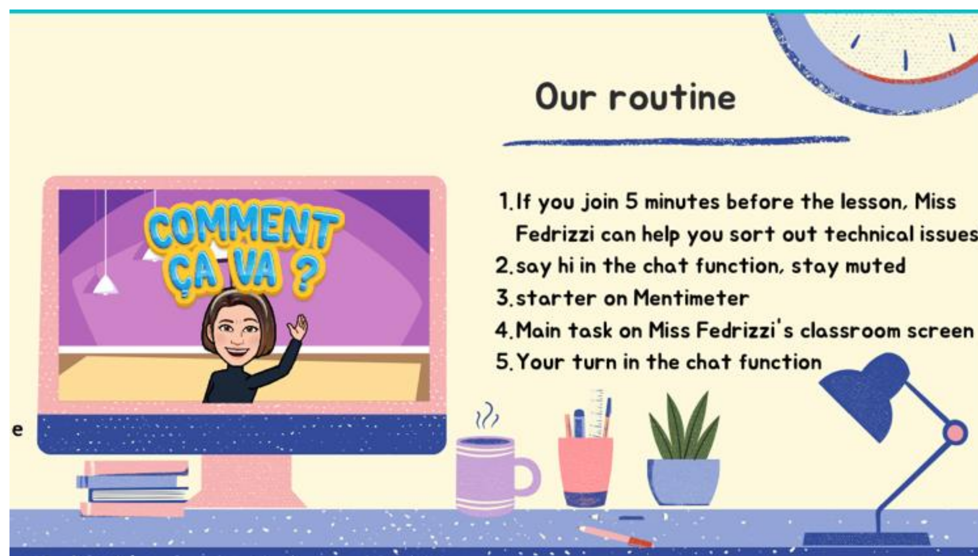

Figure 5: Example of “holding screen” during a live lesson in lockdown 2021

A new chapter emerged in education in 2020. Engaging and motivating students throughout lockdown and now in a blended learning environment has forever changed how we design and deliver classes. The next year will bring renewed uncertainty and surely many new challenges. We will have to assess how well students coped with phases of disruptions due to isolation and remote learning and we will have to make

sure to lend extra support to get everyone back to the same level. I am convinced that instructional videos, together with a few carefully selected, versatile and high-quality digital tools to support the EPI method and routines that allow students to connect with each other will help me address these challenges and, and that they will remain key elements of my ML teaching beyond the crisis.

Lastly, I wanted to express thanks to my colleagues at Broughton High School and the MFLtwitterati community for constantly giving me the opportunity to grow by sharing their best practice with me, be it through sharing meetings or social media. Without them, I would not be the teacher I am today. No teacher is an island. In order to thrive and create the best learning outcomes possible for our students in our specific settings, we need to rely on a community that nurtures and inspires us, that helps us grow by supporting us through our failures and that celebrates our success. I consider myself fortunate to be able to learn from educators who have generously been sharing their methods, resources and expertise through social media.

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Recent Publications – Abstracts and Weblinks

Davis, R. (2021) Silenced Voices: The secret bias against 'Community' Languages that is holding back students and the UK

"Silenced Voices" reveals how thousands of BAME students are at risk of being denied GCSEs and A-Levels in community languages this year. Last summer A-Levels in all community languages including Bengali, Polish, Arabic and Chinese plummeted 41% and GCSEs by 28% because the government failed to put in place measures to accredit them during lockdown. This report argues that this failure is symptomatic of a wider British bias against community languages. Alongside powerful testimonies from teachers and students, it lays out a road map for change that will better serve social justice and the British economy.

Critchley, M., Illingworth, J., Wright, V. (2021) Survey of Language Provision in UK Universities in 2021

Extract from Executive Summary […] 53 institutions responded to this survey. Of these institutions, 49 offer degree programmes in languages, while the other 4 deliver languages on IWLPs only. Our research suggests that modern language provision is available in 91 UK institutions, of which 71 offer degree programmes and 81 offer institution-wide language programmes. This year's survey therefore represents the most comprehensive coverage of UK modern language provision since this initiative was launched in 2018. There are, however, limitations to the coverage, since some institutions have only provided half the picture, with responses only from IWLP or degree programme provision, rather than fully accounting for both. The trends in the language offering identified in the 2018 and 2019 surveys continue. French, Spanish and German remain the three dominant languages on degree programmes, and the rise of Chinese is confirmed as it takes fourth place ahead of Italian in this survey for the first time. Russian and Portuguese have also both seen a significant increase on previous surveys. This survey asked about the availability of ab initio languages, which was not explored in previous surveys, and found that this is a widespread practice, with most institutions offering most languages from beginner level on degree programmes. […]

Collen, I. (2021) Language Trends England 2021

Headline findings:

- Language teaching was suspended at one in five primary schools in January 2021 due to Covid-19. The impact has been felt more acutely in deprived areas;
- As a further result of Covid-19, 64% per cent of responding primary schools and 38% of state secondary schools have no international activities within their school, a

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huge increase on previous years. Very few virtual international activities have been initiated or maintained;

- Teachers in state secondary schools report that two in five pupils in Key Stage 3 did not engage with language learning during the first national lockdown, leading to time lost to language learning for a lot of pupils;
- Withdrawal of some pupils from language lessons continues to be a concerning issue at Key Stage 3;
- There has been a large decline in the number of pupils entered for GCSEs and A levels in 'Other Modern Languages' (i.e. languages other than French, German, Irish, Spanish and Welsh);
- Whilst French is the most popular language at Primary, Key Stage 3 and GCSE, Spanish is the most popular A level language for the second year in a row.

Mill, B., Tinsley, T. (2020) Boys studying modern foreign languages at GCSE.

Entries in modern foreign language (MFL) GCSEs have fallen since 2014. Boys' rate of entry and attainment in language subjects are consistently below those of girls. Notwithstanding the overall trends in language learning, there are schools, trusts and local authorities (LAs) in which boys' language entry and attainment at GCSE are both relatively high given their context. This report takes a statistical approach to identifying those schools. Our analysis has identified schools with pupil intakes that are statistically associated with low language attainment at GCSE, but that are, in practice, achieving substantially higher entry and attainment for boys than might be expected given national trends.

SCDI's Skills & Employability Leadership Group (2020) Upskilling Scotland: The Future of Skills and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Extract from Executive Summary […] This report sets out how Scotland's people, businesses and organisations can compete and thrive in this emerging global context. Our vision is of a high performing Scottish economy. An inclusive, responsive and world-class learning ecosystem and labour market should empower our highly skilled workforce to perform at its highest level, driving high levels of productivity, wages, global competitiveness and inclusive and sustainable economic growth across all sectors and all geographies.

This will require a paradigm shift in how we think about and invest in learning, with a much greater commitment to lifelong learning for everyone at all stages of their life and career to accelerate reskilling and upskilling across the workforce. Upskilling Scotland is our route through the Fourth Industrial Revolution to social and economic prosperity for all. […]

British Council (2020) Language Trends Wales

Comparison of these figures with previous years may be problematic due to the impact of Covid-19 on school examinations in 2020. They are nonetheless indicative of longer-term trends and continue to highlight the overall low numbers of learners of languages

in education in Wales. Furthermore, as challenges continue to grow for schools amid the pandemic, this has the potential to impact language trends and promotion going forward – a situation that will have to be monitored closely.

Looking at the trends in modern foreign languages (MFL), there has been a 53% reduction in GCSE language entries over the last 10 years and at A-level numbers have dropped by 48% over the same period – and the rate of decline is increasing.

Bowler, M. (2020) A Languages Crisis?

Press release: This paper takes stock of the state of language learning in the UK, as the country teeters on the edge of Brexit and becomes used to being led by the first Prime Minister in over 50 years to have studied Languages at university.

The author, Megan Bowler, a Classics student at the University of Oxford, looks at the broad benefits to individuals, society and the economy of learning languages. She also shows the UK has sunk far below other European countries in the proportion of young people who are familiar with another language, and she explains how this is now hitting university Languages Departments.

Packed with case studies and based on a wide range of source materials, the report ends with a list of recommendations for policymakers and educational institutions throughout the UK, including: making Language courses more interesting to study; reintroducing compulsory Languages at GCSE (where this does not already exist); and ensuring migration rules encourage the supply of those who can teach Languages.

British Academy (2020) Towards a national languages strategy: education and skills

Languages are strategically vital for the future of the UK, as we look to recover from the coronavirus pandemic and strengthen our relationships across the world. But there is overwhelming evidence of an inadequate, longstanding, and worsening supply of the language skills needed by the UK to meet future needs. We need urgent, concerted and coordinated action at all levels from primary schools through to university and beyond, and this has brought us together, as five organisations working across different education sectors and across the UK, to present proposals for the education and skills component of a UK-wide national languages strategy.

We have sought to be creative in identifying new solutions. We have taken a joined-up, holistic approach which is coherent across the education and skills systems and which can, where appropriate, be implemented across the UK, to maximise the return which can be achieved. We have sought to learn lessons from previous languages strategies and recent initiatives, and have recognised that while there is a cost for implementation, this can be modest and the responsibility for meeting those costs does not have to rest solely with government. This strategy seeks to build on existing initiatives and to increase their impact, led wherever possible by the language education community itself. Some of the actions are short-term fixes; as medium-term, more

substantial, actions are implemented, these immediate fixes should no longer be required.

National Association of Language Advisers (NALA) (2020) The languages curriculum and disadvanted students

This report that interrogates how socio-economic deprivation affects engagement with the languages curriculum for secondary students in England.

The report presents the findings of a survey of 556 language teachers, consultants, advisers, teacher trainers, and trainee teachers, and makes a number of recommendations that seek to make the languages curriculum more inclusive.

Extract from Executive Summary […]

The majority of language teaching professionals who responded, feel that the current GCSE content disadvantages some students including:

- socio-economically deprived students
- students with less typical family life, e.g. children in care
- those who are less able
- those with special educational needs

The majority of respondents feel that this disadvantage impacts on pupil motivation, engagement, and performance.

The current content disadvantages some students and is considered unnecessary for effective language learning by the majority of respondents.

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