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Parallel Sessions 1

Transition to HE (1)

Supporting post-16 Language Learners Online: a multi-lingual approach

Lucy Jenkins - Cardiff University

As an immediate response to the Covid-19 crisis, the MFL Student Mentoring Project (based at Cardiff University) is offering Year 12 and 13 students the opportunity to engage with an exciting 12-week programme which aims to motivate continued interest in languages and enhance skills in readiness for University or professional life. The programme features over 70 interactive classes and offers a series of supportive resources for pupils to complete individually. The programme includes a variety of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. These include a variety of live and pre-recorded lectures, seminars which take a 'flipped learning' approach, and language conversation and taster classes. The seminar and lecture series centres on a variety of cultural themes which students might encounter at university, stretching their research and analysis skills, whilst also challenging them to make connections between school disciplines likely taught in silos. All sessions are delivered by Student Mentors, with some participation from University Academics. The programme aims to support students as they transition to the next phase, providing in particular much needed support between a pupils' last days of school teaching and the beginning of university life. Led by student mentors, the project is founded on a model of near-peer role modelling and strives to introduce pupils to good examples of online learning in order to reassure them about the blended learning approaches they will encounter during their first year at University. This presentation will examine student feedback relating to the project to draw conclusions about the success of this method of engaging. We hope that the project will motivate, enthuse and generate skills that will ease the transition to a new mode of learning and make the new context of learning seem less daunting.

Supporting students through different levels and types of study (TBC).

Caroline Lynch - Cardiff University.

The transition from the focussed and delineated study of A Level modern foreign languages to the broader more contextualised work often found in undergraduate MFL curricula in Higher Education is a significant one. This is further compounded when students who have signed up to the traditional on-campus university experience find that they are studying languages through a blended provision of limited face to face / synchronous contact and directed self-study activities. This presentation explores how we support students as they move through these different levels and types of study. It argues that we can best support students by recognising and acknowledging the difficulties and challenges that are part and parcel of the transition from A Level to Undergraduate level study in a blended learning environment, by developing strategies for mitigating or easing these as much as possible, and by providing structure and clarity in online learning. The presentation also outlines some of the support mechanisms that are being put in place to manage student expectations of what studying a language remotely at University involves and to enable students to prepare themselves for university life post-COVID. It looks at how we support students' linguistic, personal, and social development and the opportunities we provide which facilitate further engagement (or re-engagement) with language learning, and how we foster a community of language learners online. Focusing on how we can provide students with the tools, knowledge, support and guidance that they need to confidently and capably navigate an intercultural, multilingual, transnational landscape (within HE and beyond), it considers the importance of integrating inclusivity and accessibility into all of our encounters with students, and of teaching students how to think and act inclusively.

New methods in language learning (1)

Metacognitive awareness in L2 listening: A transition from doing listening into teaching it.

Jesús Toapanta - University of Alberta/Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador.

Language learners often experience anxiety and frustration when doing listening comprehension in the language classroom. Learners perceive second language listening (L2 listening) as the most difficult skill (Graham, 2006) and often experience high levels of anxiety as L2 listening is frequently associated with evaluation (Vandergrift, 2011). In the language classroom, L2 listening is usually taken for granted. The amount of time assigned to developing this skill is often minimal when compared to the amount of time for other class activities. In fact, L2 listening is regarded as the Cinderella of the language skills (e.g., Nunan, 2002). Instruction in L2 listening has mostly relied on the comprehension approach. This approach informs and guides instructors on how to conduct L2 listening in the language classroom, but it does little to help learners address L2 listening more tangibly. In other words, while pre-listening activities, intensive and extensive listening, and post listening activities (Field, 2012) provide guidance to instructors on how to conduct listening comprehension in the language classroom, this scheme does not necessarily provide learners with guidance on how to address L2 listening more strategically. In this regard, Graham (2017) noted that instructors do listening in the language classroom, but rarely teach it. This paper shows that it is possible to go beyond the comprehension approach and to actually help learners address L2 listening more strategically. It presents the results of an intervention study which implemented group discussions of the factors associated with successful L2 listening (i.e., MALQ Factors) followed by individual reflections. The results of this study support previous findings and show that it is absolutely feasible to teach learners how to listen in the second language classroom.

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Online translation as friend, not foe: using online translations as parallel texts to access literature for modern language learning

Ulrike Bavendiek – University of Liverpool.

Online translation tools have increasingly been used by students to assist them in their language work. This is often considered to be problematic, especially when activities involving machine translations remain undeclared and are carried out in connection with summative assessments. The need for online assessments during the pandemic has escalated the problem, as teachers realised that their students' performances often reflect their familiarity with the tools, rather than their linguistic skills. In the proposed presentation I will argue that a reflected approach to online translations should be taught for the benefit of the students. I will show how machine translated, parallel text can be used to enable even learners at beginners and intermediate levels to access literary texts for their language learning. Parallel texts as 'texts accompanied by their translation in one or several other languages' (Véronis 2000) have long been used for foreign language learning. Presenting the translation in the reader's first language alongside the target language text, parallel texts offer access to literary texts, to their stories, characters and plot developments, without the need for time-consuming vocabulary and grammar searches, which would otherwise distract from the enjoyment of the texts. Parallel texts thus counteract the decontextualization of the foreign language classroom that often comes with mundane and decontextualized controlled input (Widdowson 1998).

The proposed approach builds on the problematic nature of machine translations, with their inconsistencies and obvious mistakes, to encourage students to close read affected extracts in the original foreign language text and to suggest a better translation. The activity allows students to work on short literary passages in the foreign language, whilst enabling them to engage with the entire text, its plotline, characters, and cultural content. Data gathered from student questionnaires and video recordings are used to demonstrate and evaluate the activity.

WORKSHOP 1:

From face-to-face to online in Foreign Languages Teaching: an outstanding experience.

Christina Rodríguez Oitavén – University of Oxford.

Foreign Languages (FLs) teaching and learning is normally associated with the dichotomy of teacher (preferably a native speaker)-student, in a face-to-face environment in a classroom or in an immersion setting. Educators become the principal source of knowledge, maintaining the role as facilitator of the learning process (modulating structures, interaction patterns, providing feedback, etc.). In December 2019, an online language-teaching project was carried out by a group of FLs tutors at the Language Centre of the University of Oxford. Excellent feedback and results were attained which contributed to our course offer expansion: both face-to-face and online. This not only allowed us to pilot a new way of delivering FLs language lessons ahead of the unprecedented health crisis, but also to open and expand “Oxford to the world”. Supported by the learning platform CANVAS, a two-hour weekly asynchronous teaching schedule was implemented through carefully designed “learning pathways” focusing on an interactive multimodal learning environment (discussions, grammar quizzes, videos, etc). This permitted students to interact with the learning content, time to reflect on their responses, as well as promoting interaction among them. Students were offered a weekly 30-minute live session to further engage with their tutors and peers. Scaffolding strategies to promote interaction were implemented in the asynchronous learning by assuring that tutors were actively engaged in the learning process. This took place by participating in personal introductions and presentations, participating in discussions, encouraging students to pose questions, and sharing learning strategies and experiences as well as providing timely feedback. The aim of this workshop is to present samples of different levels of Spanish as a Foreign Language learning pathways where a communicate approach and inductive grammar learning are emphasised. Furthermore, samples of learner-instructor and learner-learner interaction will be introduced as well as different ways of providing timely or immediate feedback according to the type of activity and students’ needs.

Parallel Sessions 2

Transition to HE (2)

Transition from A Level to Degree education: exploring ways to help language students with this step into a Degree Program.

Ana Carrasco and Ester Borin Bonillo – Cardiff University.

Times have changed, new technologies make distances smaller and the world is globalized. Those changes are present in all levels of the education system, where academics/teachers encounter the challenge of teaching a generation that has been born in a digitalised environment and in most cases lack the literacy skills expected in Higher Education. Transition from A level to degree level is proving to be problematic. Nowadays many 18-year olds opt for degree courses. Those students come from a system where their independent study and analytical skills were mainly guided towards the preparation of specific exam questions, hence the culture shock Year 1 students experience when they arrive to university. They have moved from an educational system that provided them with very clear guidelines regarding their language learning development and their assessments, to a system where there is very little feedback and students are expected to be independent learners. Such sudden change in their learning environment has a chain effect in the students: they start by feeling that the support and guidance that they need is not there, which subsequently leads to a feeling of discontent and therefore less involvement in their studies. Ultimately, this situation can drive some students to drop off. It is evident that teachers in HE need to take into account more than ever the educational environment that Year 1 students have established their learning in, and adapt to the new situation by helping students adjust to the new system while developing their skills as part of a continuous process and not compromising their well-being. The aim of this project is to create a learning environment where students feel guided while developing their language skills and critical thinking. In order to establish that “secure” learning environment, this project investigates ways to enhance students’ experience not only in the classroom but also outside of it. A “Year 1 blog Spanish” helps to create a sense of community and enables students to continue their learning progress outside the classroom in a non-academic environment. Furthermore, the use of a blog could act as a conduit to build up a stronger relationship between students and teacher, something that the actual system of teaching hardly promotes. Involving students through this emotional dimension leads to a better learning experience and ultimately better academic results. This informal learning environment helps students not only to be exposed to the language outside the classroom but also to build self-confidence and as a result become more independent learners. The presentation will briefly explain/show how this project is created and developed and how it can favour student engagement. This project has become more relevant in recent months when all educational institutions have been forced to migrate to remote delivery of teaching in response to Covid19.

Culture in language studies and culture of language studies: impulses for transition.

Cathy Hampton - University of Warwick.

This paper will argue that ‘doing languages’ is an essentially transitional – rather than transactional – process, and that we can usefully embrace the idea of ‘transition’ as a pivotal value within the discipline of modern foreign language study. If transition implies movement, then it fits very well with the aim of developing open-ended critical and self-reflective skills, as well as cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural thinking, in our students. However, this often sits uneasily with the image of MFL as a discipline with concrete outcomes: fluency, careers in teaching or translation, useful only if you travel, etc. We will trace key staging posts in Warwick students’ apprehension of MFL study as a cultural and transitional experience across the 2019 -20 academic year, looking at a cross-section of projects running in different year groups. Our study is particularly interested in the ideas and artefacts produced when students think collaboratively about what the culture of their discipline is, how they relate this to the notion of language-as-culture, and how they build on this in their own learning and through peer activities/initiatives. We will examine the following examples: first-year student

exploration of 'what is culture?' in induction week; year abroad student creation of 'bridge-the-gap' resources to help first years post-lockdown prepare for second-year study; students in all years sharing the notion of language-as-culture in a Widening Participation initiative. We will conclude by asking what these initiatives can teach us about the celebration of language study as a way of thinking (an epistemology based on transition) that offers highly pertinent ways to interact with the labile nature of 21st century society. And we will suggest that it is our job as teachers to push students to grapple with cultural materials that may sit outside their comfort zone in order to do this.

Online teaching and learning (1)

A preliminary study on online Chinese teaching for adult learners in the UK – Taking Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate platforms as examples.

Luxi Yang and Chuyi Wang – Confucius Institute, University of Manchester and University of Reading.

In the post-pandemic era, online interactive live stream teaching has quickly evolved in Chinese language and has become the first choice for Chinese distance teaching in educational institutions in the UK and even globally. The adult learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language in the UK are primarily university-credit students majoring in Chinese or taking Chinese as an optional course, as well as members of the general public taking non-credit-related courses in the Confucius Institutes and other Adult Education Institutions. As two of the most widely used online interactive live stream platforms for adult Chinese teaching in the UK, Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate have obvious advantages in terms of the classroom interaction, the full range of teaching functions, and the user experience, the functional design of the two platforms are quite similar as well. This study adopts the mixed research methods, aiming at learners in different levels and types of courses from six Universities, one Confucius Institute and one Adult Education Institution in England and Wales. 95 questionnaires were collected, 12 students and 8 teachers were interviewed. The study found the advantages and disadvantages of online Chinese teaching compared with face-to-face teaching and discovered the main factors affecting online teaching quality. The results show that although online teaching is slightly not as efficient as face-to-face teaching in certain aspects at this stage, the overall consensus is very positive, especially in the flexibility in learning place, inspiring in autonomous and active learning, the convenience of reading and access to learning material, effectiveness in writing practice and feedback provided, and the lesson satisfactory level with the platform support. The main factors affecting online teaching are: class engagement and interaction, support and feedback from teachers, learning attitude and online lesson psychological adaptability. This study also provides coping strategies.

Student-centred learning and formative assessment: a possible answer to online language teaching and learning.

Miao Li - University of Calgary.

In order to limit on-campus social interactions and slow the rate of transmission of COVID-19, University of Calgary has transitioned to online teaching since March 17th, 2020. These past few months have seen instructors working individually and collectively to overcome personal, technological and pedagogical challenges. Central to these discussions are the need to increase student engagement and develop effective assessment formats. As a French instructor, I taught two language courses (beginner-intermediate levels) and one literature course in the 2019 Winter and 2020 Spring semesters, with class sizes of 30-35 students. These experiences allowed me to compare, in practice, synchronous and asynchronous teaching modes. Based on feedback from students and personal reflection, a synchronous learning environment fostering student-centered learning and using formative assessment is best suited in the context of online language teaching and learning. Not only does this approach respond to students' increased stress level due to the lack of face-to-face communication, it also tackles the issues of student attention span and engagement, as well as academic integrity. Our presentation will start with a brief discussion of factors that affect students'

behavioral patterns and academic performances during online teaching and learning. We will then present the modified versions of six activities/assessment used in language teaching: quizzes, skit, oral assessment, voice dubbing, flipped classroom, and forum discussion. We will discuss how these activities, use pre-class, in-class or post-class, improve student engagement and retention of course material. Some of these activities, with minor adaptations, can also be applied to teaching online literature courses.

WORKSHOP 2:

How can an alternative form of assessment improve student engagement and motivation in the current context?

Carmen Álvarez-Mayo - University of York.

The main purpose of the workshop is to share good practice and look at how an alternative way of assessment can improve student engagement and motivation. Discussion and creativity can be part of the teaching and learning process, embedded in a language module. Student assessment that fosters discussion, research and reflection and allows learners to practise all language skills: listening, reading, writing and oral interaction will contribute to the development of good study habits, promoting self-regulated learning as well as critical thinking. Foreign language students will be better-equipped learners, developing invaluable continual development skills for their academic and professional careers. In this workshop, we look at the benefits that telecollaboration, peer work, discussion and independent work can provide to students, having a successful impact in their transition to: HE, online learning, autonomous learning, and the development of critical thinking skills. Participants will examine different ways to design L&T resources and gather ideas and inspiration to plan innovative assessment in the current context.

Activities (subject to a slight changes):

1. Introduction
2. brainstorming/questionnaire
3. Presentation/discussion of information gathered in the questionnaire linked with current literature and my L&T experience
4. Conclusion & future plans

Parallel Sessions 3

New methods in language learning (2)

Using learners' background and experiences in ab-initio Japanese class: cultivating a reassuring learning environment whilst learning Kana syllables.

Megumi Bailey - University of York

This presentation focuses on one approach to developing a sense of student ownership of their learning at HE together with the confidence this inspires. Instead of indulging a passive approach that leads to conventional learning ("listen and repeat"), students are placed at the centre of the classroom being stimulated to "think and discover." For successful implementation, it is vital to develop a supportive learning environment where the learners feel accepted and that their contributions are always valued. Welcoming students through a non-threatening atmosphere in the learning community enhances self-expression (student voice). An innovative approach to introducing the above from the very start of ab-initio classes has been adopted in the LFA Japanese course. In order to introduce 92 basic characters, the teacher does not utter a "model" pronunciation but encourages learners to apply the knowledge they have and probe the unknown. This approach inspires learners to apply what they know to narrow the gap between the unknown and the known. This was found to boost their confidence and develop a strong sense of satisfaction and achievement. Furthermore, providing a degree of latitude for learners to create the content of classroom dialogue is another key to igniting their interest and motivation. Helping learners to articulate ideas relevant to them personally carries a deeper sense of reward and progress. This steps away from the prototypes presented in the textbooks as these automatically require learners to step into another character's shoes or to mould themselves into a virtual scene. Instead, through encouraging personal expression in a real context, learners find greater meaning in their communication and are stimulated to investigate further. A few practical examples and tips are presented for development, together with an overview of the teacher's experiences so far.

Inductive approach of learning forms and content in beginner-intermediate French language courses.

Miao Li - University of Calgary

Last September, the University of Calgary introduced changes in their French beginner-intermediate language courses, which affected not only what to be taught in these courses but also how they were to be taught. Compared to previous introductory French textbooks in which chapters were organized around grammatical content and practice activities were mostly mechanical in nature, the new textbooks are characterized by their authentic texts, relevant topics to college students, inductive approach for grammar and vocabulary learning, and task-based activities allowing students to apply language skills in real context. Using the new learning material, instructors actively related grammatical and lexical instruction with reading comprehension and a combination of instructional activities that focus on both implicit and explicit learning: pre-class reading activities to prepare learners to interact with textual content; detailed text comprehension and interpretation in class that extends to the historical, social and cultural dimensions of the language, and a focus on the content and form of the text with a significant participation of students as they work to link form and meaning; various post-class creative production tasks to assist student on the acquisition of targeted vocabulary and grammatical forms. These changes marked a shift from setting different instructional goals and techniques between beginner-intermediate language courses and advanced literature and culture courses in order to provide a more coherent pedagogical framework. Our goal was to focus simultaneously on language forms and culturally authentic textual content, in which students take more responsibility in their learning, activate their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, foster the self-reflection and critical

evaluation of one's own and others' values required for genuine cross-cultural understanding. In our presentation, we will examine the effectiveness of the changes introduced in these courses based on feedback from instructors and students and suggest improved strategies to be considered in the future.

Online teaching and learning (2)

Transitions in assessment: opportunities and challenges for 2020 and beyond.

Elena Polisca, Sascha Stollhans, Romain Bardot, Cyrille Rollet - Lancaster University

Since March 2020, HE institutions have had to take a number of drastic measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent move to online teaching and assessment. The new measures have affected the 'conventional delivery' of spring and summer assessments, and, as online testing and asynchronous take-home papers have been introduced across the sector, such changes have also given rise to specific challenges towards our common practices in the field. Although these challenges are not entirely new (Rovai 2000), the enforced introduction of alternative language assessment modes has accelerated the move to a new 'online normal'. In the 'post-Covid world', what will language assessment practices look like? Has the pandemic set the wheels in motion for a revolution in the field of examination and coursework assessments? We have carried out a small-scale online study surveying language practitioners in the field with the objective of gathering an initial, cross-institutional picture on how the recent changes have impacted the testing of the different language skills. Initial findings suggest that there are perceived challenges particularly regarding oral assessments as well as concerns related to plagiarism and academic malpractice on the part of the students. Drawing on our experience and on the results of our survey, we will offer an overview of how the sector has addressed the delivery of language assessment introduced during lockdown. We shall also ask the question whether the time has come for a sector-wide common approach to testing, and what such an approach could look like in the future. Finally, we will consider how the new practices might inform how we assess language skills in the post-pandemic world.

Outreach in the times of Covid-19: reaching out to wider audiences? Discussion

Elena Polisca, Sascha Stollhans, Romain Bardot, Cyrille Rollet - Lancaster University

In this discussion, we would like to reflect on how languages departments can continue to engage with schools and deliver outreach activities during the current pandemic. What are the challenges and advantages of an online outreach programme? How could it be set up? Might the new mode of delivery even enable us to reach new audiences and support Widening Participation initiatives? We will reflect on our experience at Lancaster University and invite colleagues to ask questions and share their experiences.

Learning from real experience (1)

Language education as public engagement: designing authentic projects on German speaking film.

Thomas Jochum-Crichley - University of York

This presentation aims to outline and explore an approach to language and culture teaching which seeks to develop language education through an engagement with real audiences and organisations outside Higher Education. This approach, which I have provisionally called "Impact Teaching" is informed by notions of *engaged teaching*, *students as producers* and *authentic assessment* and promotes the creation of a learning

environment which not only enables the individual learner to develop language related knowledge and skills, but also has an impact on society in at least two ways: Students as producers and communicators of knowledge make a positive contribution to the cultural and social life outside the university and thus also promote language learning and its benefits to the wider community. Engaging in such a way with the community outside the educational settings, allows for the development of awareness, skills and expertise that facilitates the transition from education to the professional world or from being a student to being a citizen. As a template for such an approach, I will present the rationale, key principles and outcomes of new language and culture module called: “Contemporary German speaking film” which was first introduced in 2018/19. The module design aims to engage students not only in developing traditional academic knowledge and skills, such as insight into German speaking film, film analysis and textual and writing skills in German, but also to communicate and interact with an audience beyond the classroom. As part of the summative assessment, students organise, prepare and deliver a film-evening event including a film introduction and a post-screening Q&A in German. Data on student perception will complement my own reflection and evaluation on the value and effectiveness of this approach.

Translating for real, learning through experience

Angela Uribe de Kellett, Newcastle University

With an increased number of graduates in the job market, students are particularly keen to develop professional skills and gain unique experiences that make them stand out from other candidates when applying for jobs. Furthermore, employers look for such qualities in candidates and many recruiters seek evidence of problem-solving and teamwork skills as well as motivation and initiative. Over the last 10 years, the Real Translation Project, an extra-curricular initiative at Newcastle University, has been offering opportunities to develop such professional skills in the fields of Translation and Interpreting, engaging over 500 students. The paper examines how this project facilitates the transition of students to post-graduation life - equipping them with job skills, and increasing their awareness of the specific skills required in translation. Drawing on empirical data from participants, the paper analyses the motivational factors, structure of the project, collaborative translation approach and immediate and long-term outcomes. The paper also examines the broader educational objectives intrinsic to the project, the overall enhancement of the student experience, the project's sustainability and the institutional challenges.

Parallel Sessions 4

Redefining language teaching and learning in HE

Linguistic, academic and sociocultural transition: a triple challenge

Anne Morel-Lab - Université Lumière Lyon 2

The DU (Diplôme Universitaire) Passerelle is a degree in French as a Foreign Language intended for newly arrived refugees who resume, start or start again their studies. Its pedagogical framework acknowledges the fact that these students are in transition from their previous life in their “home country” to a new, yet unsettled life in their “host country”. The experience of their hazardous migration and the various impacts it has on their life path cannot be left aside. Some of them, already highly qualified in their dedicated subject, have to reconsider their career while others need to heel and rebound from what they had to go through before being able to design a new life-plan. Thereby, their will and motivation to enter the DU Passerelle has to be contextualized and examined on a case-by-case basis as this type of transition goes far beyond the core need to listen, speak, read and write the language. Their settlement does not only rely on a B2 qualification in French as a Foreign Language, gate keeping to their university entrance. New perspectives have to be experienced and overcome both individually and collectively inside the class group. Our presentation will aim to introduce the concepts of *linguistic welfare* and *enterculture* (A. Dinvaux) and their pedagogical implementations to facilitate this transition to language learning, including re-engagement with language learning. It will be based on a case study (A. Morel-lab) and the assessment and feedback about the first cohort. Besides enrolling into a new diploma, both teachers and students had to cope with distant-learning technologies linked to the pandemic.

Transitioning to an Egalitarian Language Teaching Course

Gyabam Mahajan – University of California, Los Angeles

Not only language courses but Humanities courses in general have seen a steady decline in enrolments. Those especially affected are the so-called Less Commonly Taught Languages in the American University system. Now faced with declining University enrolments due to the pandemic, issues have now come to a head. A year of reckoning is ahead of us. This paper strongly suggests being aggressive about the times and seizing the moment to make Humanities courses and especially language courses more relevant by adopting an egalitarian approach to language teaching and learning. We argue that in order not to just survive, but to thrive, we need to transition rather quickly to language courses that make sense and those that go well beyond just teaching the target language. This paper proposes three practical modules: meeting Humanities goals in a language course; building transparency based on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in language courses and Centering the Periphery in Language courses. Given lower and lower Humanities enrolments, it is imperative on language programs to provide the necessary intersection with Humanities goals for those who are Science majors or Business majors etc., but enrol in a language course to meet other perceived needs, this then becomes the responsibility of the language course to teach argumentation skills and critical thinking skills to the learner. EDI incorporation will then guarantee that the learner is trained in far more than just the target language and culture. The needs of a current learner is to be multilingual and multicultural. A language learner needs so much more than learning the “target” language. Finally, centering the periphery will ensure that the learner is exposed to multi cultures, multi languages, multi subjects and topics and is interculturally competent and a world citizen. It should not be taken for granted that the elite standard is what a learner needs and hence a language class should provide far more than a skills based learning to encompass knowledge based learning, beyond "standard" language and memorized task based learning.

Year Abroad preparation

Using videos to support students' transition to the year abroad.

Aziza Zaher, Durham University

The year abroad is one of the most exciting and yet challenging aspect of studying modern languages. Year abroad preparation is a very important aspect of this experience, and having relevant and innovative resources can help students' transition to the year abroad more smoothly. In this presentation, I would like to talk about video resources that students and staff at Durham University have created to support the transition to the year abroad in the Arab world. In addition to the challenges that all students face transitioning to the year abroad, students of Arabic face an additional challenge of Arabic diglossia, as they learn Modern Standard Arabic at university, and when they start their year abroad, they find out that people communicate using colloquial dialects, which are considerably different from the variety they have learned already. Consequently, at the start of the year abroad, most students find communication difficult, and some even suffer shock, frustration and sometimes ridicule. To help bridge this gap, we received funding from Durham University Enhancing Student Learning Experience (ELSE) award to create videos to help students prepare for the year abroad by learning the basics of communication in colloquial dialects and gaining useful insights about the target culture before they embark on the year abroad. This presentation aims to outline the objectives for the project, the steps taken to complete it, its outcome and expected impact. After the completion of the Arabic videos project, a team of colleagues from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures aim to produce videos for year abroad preparation in all language.

Impact of task-based projects for transition from University to placements abroad: the case of students of Spanish as a Foreign Language.

Nazaret Perez Nieto – Cardiff University
Ares Llop Naya – University of Cambridge

The importance of the task-based learning (TBL) approach features prominently in the recent literature about Foreign Language Teaching (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). According to this perspective, learners are language users who achieve communicative goals related to real world activities after a sequence involving cognitive and communicative processes (Long, 1985; Ellis, 2003). In this paper we show how TBL is used at Higher Education to equip Year-2 Spanish students at Cardiff University for their university or work placement experience during their Year Abroad. We present a set of task-based projects embedded in the course which do not only include grammar, phonetic, pragmatic and text contents, but are also designed to enhance employability and mediation skills. This paper showcases how these specific task-based projects address both (i) the competences students have to acquire throughout their degree, and (ii) the skills to overcome the challenges involved in greatest tasks of similar nature when studying and/or working abroad (Coleman, 2011; British Academy & UCML, 2012). These activities involve the use of translation, debates, essay writing and the production of a vlog so that students can put all the knowledge acquired throughout into practice in real life situations. We will also present how the activities have been adapted to the new academic context, following a blended learning approach through the completion of both face-to-face and online staged activities, based on the use of distant learning technologies. The impact of these tasks on both the engagement and learning process and the students' perceptions on the transition to placements abroad has been assessed through a survey. The sequences designed, the results and feedback collected, as well as student testimonials, are presented as evidence in favour of monitored task-based learning as a suitable approach to qualify Higher Education students as proficient users of the target language.

Learning from real experience (2)

Student Language Ambassadors: from learners to facilitators

Eira Jepson – Cardiff University

Student Language Ambassadors (SLAs) are increasingly being used as part of language promotion and HE outreach activity around the UK. In Wales, SLAs have become a fixed and popular feature of the *Routes into Languages Cymru* initiative for several years, visiting schools and hosting numerous language activities for pupils every year. But how does this distinct role aim to facilitate transition not only for pupils, but also for the SLAs themselves, as each group continues along their language learning journey?

This presentation will share the preliminary findings of my PhD research, collected through interactive focus groups with SLAs across Wales. All language journeys are by nature individual, and all learners experience successes and obstacles along the way, which can influence their linguistic, educational and personal progression. Nonetheless, ambassadorial programmes have the potential to motivate and facilitate transition by:

- a) using peer influence to encourage and break down the barriers to continued language study for school pupils,
- b) using reflective practice to support SLAs' own development beyond being solely a learner.

This presentation will outline how the *Routes Cymru* SLA programme, when appropriately targeted to the wider learning context, can help create a learning environment and learning experiences which enable pupils and ambassadors alike to progress on their language journeys. Set in the bilingual context of the Welsh education system, it will also suggest that an understanding of the transition and interaction between languages, as well as between stages of learning, is important to developing multilingual approaches to language education and promotion. Finally, this presentation will demonstrate how using creative research methods with language learners can encourage reflection on the often intricate and rich experience of a language journey.

Using remote communication tools to facilitate student engagement, language learning and cross-disciplinary professional development before, during and after the pandemic: The Newcastle Calls project 2020 as a case study.

Barbara Guidarelli and Cristina Peligra - Newcastle University

Inspired by the need to better prepare students for post-graduation life, the *Newcastle Calls* project aimed at fostering student engagement using remote communication tools to restructure the teaching experience.

In January 2020, Italian language students at intermediate level at the School of Modern Languages crossed space barriers and took part in an interactive Skype interview with Italian researchers at the Antarctic base Mario Zucchelli, discussing topics such as climate change and life in Antarctica. In March 2020, at the beginning of the University's transition to online teaching, students then interviewed an Italian actor, learning about life in the arts sector in Italy and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This initial exercise aimed at providing students a chance to confront themselves with authentic, co-shaped teaching material, boost their linguistic confidence and self-assess their skills. At a second stage, one of the above-mentioned interviews was made into a documentary to be made available to a wider audience thanks to interdisciplinary collaboration: one MA Film student and MA Italian<->English Translation students were given the chance to enhance their CVs by working on the final video and its English subtitles, respectively. We would like to present this case study to show how UG and MA students benefitted from such an activity and to evaluate, on the basis of the project's leaders' and students' feedback, the project's potential to facilitate students' progression further and ease their transition from HE to their working life. In addition, we would like to share our experience in implementing the use of remote communication tools before, during and after the COVID-19 outbreak and draw initial conclusions and recommendations for improvement and to reflect on the benefits as well as challenges of the use of technology in language learning and how this practice has and is inevitably changing.