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Multilingual and multicultural task-based learning scenarios: A pilot study from the MAGGIC project

Abstract: In this article we report on the results of a pilot study on the use of task-based multilingual and multicultural professional scenarios for higher education teachers and learners at BA and MA level. The scenarios reflect new learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the presently under-conceptualised domain of communication in multilingual and multicultural settings (as opposed to monolingual regimes). The study was conducted as part of the work of the MAGICC project (Modularising Multilingual and Multicultural Academic Communication Competence for BA and MA level), which focused on the design of a conceptual framework based on existing practices, initiatives, tools, projects and elements from the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001), and in relation to multilingual and multicultural academic communicative competence, an area much less developed. We start by examining the meanings of multilingualism and plurilingualism in the context of formal education and review some of the practical pedagogical approaches that have been put forward for the introduction of a more flexible approach to language use in the classroom. We discuss in particular the pertinence of task-based learning for encouraging multilingualism. The testing of the MAGICC task-based multilingual scenarios revealed positive experiences among the users and highlighted the innovative contribution of the tasks for both students' and teachers' awareness of the possibilities of multilingual communication and the significant impact that a appropriate plurilingual practice can have on their self-awareness.

Keywords: multilingualism, plurilingualism, higher education, task-based learning, CEFR

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1 Introduction

Discourses around the concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism are increasingly relevant in the current global work force, the internationalisation of higher education and the communication facilitated by the digital revolution online. Universities have been particularly attentive to the benefits and challenges of an international staff and student mobility as well as global virtual access to local education. Language and culture have been identified as specific barriers to international exchange, in particular to the internationalisation of the curriculum due to the tendency to "standardisation and homogenisation of learning materials development and delivery" (Schapper & Mayson 2004: 201). In fact, it has been argued that university language programmes can play a central role in the successful internationalisation of learning and teaching because they typically consist of multilingual and multicultural groups (Dlaska 2013).

The work of the MAGICC project[1] focused precisely on the challenge of creating multilingual and multicultural resources that open up possibilities for enhancing individuals' backgrounds but also of developing academic communication competence for teachers and learners at Bachelor and Masters (BA and MA) level. The MAGICC project was a partnership between nine European universities[2] and was funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme from 2011 to 2014. The project aimed at integrating multilingual and multicultural academic communication competence as graduate learning outcomes in order to promote the employability of graduates. Thus, the formulation of relationships between three key elements – a multilingual and multicultural competence, academic and professional communicative competence, and life-long learning skills – constituted the basis of this project.

One of the outcomes of the project was the formulation of a conceptual framework that could help with the design of learning outcomes and assessment criteria for academic, professional and intercultural skills in multiple languages. Thus, the project aspired to articulate theories and practices of multilingualism in education. The multilingual and multicultural stance of the project should be understood within the dynamic interrelationships of an individual's multilingual and multicultural repertoire. Accordingly, based on systematic research on the

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[1] Project website: http://www.unil.ch/magicc/home.html

[2] MAGICC Partners were Université de Lausanne, Switzerland; Jyväskylän yliopisto, Finland; The Open University, United Kingdom; Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Netherlands; Universidade do Algarve, Portugal; Politechnika Poznanska, Poland; Université de Fribourg, Switzerland; Universität Bremen, Germany; Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

academic literature, the framework defines multilingual and multicultural academic communication competence as

> an individual's communicative and interactive repertoire, made up of several languages and language varieties including first language(s) at different levels of proficiency, and various types of competence, which are all interrelated. The repertoire in its entirety represents a resource enabling action in diverse use situations. It evolves across time and experience throughout life, and includes growth in intercultural awareness and ability to cope with, and participate in, multicultural contexts of academic study and working life. (MAGGIC 2013: 2.1)

This description recognises the evolving nature of the elements that constitute such a competence, and makes explicit the intimate links between the use of multiple languages by an individual and the impact of the cultural context in the exchanges. In this way, the MAGICC project connects the functioning of multilingualism with the educational and work spheres. It is precisely from the understanding of these relationships that the project was committed to design learning modules containing scenarios for the BA and MA cycles.

In this article we start by examining the meanings of multilingualism and plurilingualism in the context of formal education. This is followed by a review of some of the practical pedagogical approaches that have been put forward for the introduction of a more flexible approach to language use in the classroom. Then we discuss, in particular, the pertinence of task-based language learning pedagogy for encouraging multilingualism and describe the practical contribution of the MAGICC project. This is followed by an analysis of the findings of a pilot study, within the frame of this project, which aimed at evaluating the potential of the task-based multilingual scenarios. We conclude by highlighting the challenges and impact of such an ambitious goal.

2 Understandings of multilingualism and plurilingualism

Multilingualism is generally understood as the co-existence of different languages in a given society. At the level of the individual it has been broadly defined as their "ability to communicate in two or more languages" (Hambye & Richards 2012: 165). However, the actual complexities of multilingualism and multilingual exchanges have initiated a discourse that has started to refer to the concept of pluriligualism, which explicitly includes the mother tongue. Plurilingualism understands that the languages an individual is able to use (at

any level) are not separated from each other but are rather in a sophisticated interrelationship. Others have referred to this phenomenon as polylanguaging (Jørgensen et al. 2011).

In fact, it should be noted that in the literature these terms have frequently been used interchangeably. Hanks's (1996) use of the notion of "communicative practice" already implied a recognition of the fact that individuals blend their multilingual repertoires in communicative encounters, and that that practice is affected by their personal ideological assessments. Indeed, many scholars using the concept of multilingualism are not simply assuming the individual's ability to use more than one language. They also reflect an understanding that a person's multilingual repertoire is not an addition of several languages (Jessner 2008), but a complex blend that shows nonlinearity and interdependence (Herdina & Jessner 2002). A review of the literature on multilingualism soon reveals that there is a multiplicity of existing understandings of this concept, depending on whether the perspective is society, communication, identity, cognition or agency and participation. While the older conceptualisations understand multilingualism as "multiplied" monolingualism, recent conceptualisations have approached multilingualism as a dynamic repertoire that an individual may use without being consciously aware that it is made up of separate languages or linguistic varieties (Lähtteenmäki et al, 2011).

Taking this into account, we would prefer to use the concept of plurilingualism in this article. However, when referring to the MAGICC project, we will use multilingualism to reflect the project's terminological preference while understanding it in a similar sense to plurilingualism, that is, that multilingual practices involve interrelationships between linguistic repertoires.

2.1 A plurilingual approach in education

Currently language teachers in Europe would be more familiar with the concept of plurilingualism as defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe 2001). The CEFR explains that plurilingualism is:

> the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (Council of Europe 2001: 168)

Thus plurilingualism is conceived as a dynamic and complex competence always used and constructed by and within social interaction. In addition, a few studies have made a connection between people's ideologies and identities and their perceptions of the languages they speak (Aiestaran et al. 2010; Chesnut et al. 2013; Trumper-Hect 2010). The acceptance of this complex reality makes traditional language education uncomfortable because it acknowledges practices that blur boundaries and accepts linguistic behaviours and identities that are unexpected and mixed.

Formal language education has traditionally displayed a "monolingual bias" which privileges the view of "one speaker – one language" (Pavlenko 2005). Classroom practices have promoted exclusive use of the target language disregarding the importance of learners' linguistic background, creating a separation between each language, a kind of a "parallel monoliguism" (Heller 1999; Cenoz and Gorter 2011) have referred to this phenomenon as building "hard boundaries" between the languages of the learners but also constructing a situation where one teacher becomes associated with one language (Figure 1). Although actual practice is quite varied in both traditional and multilingual teaching, this illustration is simply to emphasise that the overlapping is actually intended and more remarkable in the latter than in the former teaching approach. Jørgensen et al. (2011: 27) have noted that this position is problematic because it is "based on linguistic normativity, or ideology, rather than real-life language use". This highlights that it is not enough to argue for multilingualism in the context of education, in the sense of simply diversifying the languages offered in an educational institution, as this could simply replicate monolingual practices.

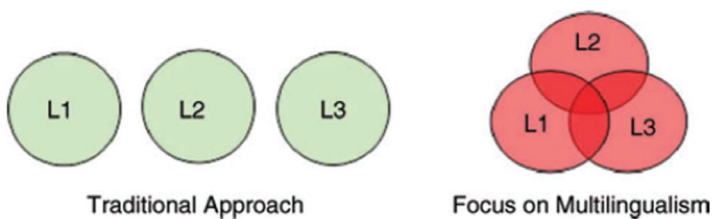**Figure 1:** Teaching differences between traditional and multilingual approaches in education (Cenoz and Gorter [2011: 360]).

There has been a plea to move away from that monolingual focus towards a multilingual one. This pedagogical position takes into account the links between languages in the learning process, abandons the view of a homogeneous level in only one language, breaks down artificial borders between languages, and

fosters the construction of a learner's plurilingual profile. Lenz and Berthele (2010: 5-6) have argued that what we need in the classroom is a focus on plurilingual education which is "the ability to mobilise the language repertoire as a whole, to use existing competences transversally, i.e. to recombine existing knowledge and skills in any language(s) in order to respond flexibly to needs that arise in a multilingual environment". For them, the challenge is to transform educational ideas currently held by learners, teachers and assessors and foster "the integral use of the plurilingual repertoire most people actually have" (Lenz & Berthele 2010:17).

2.2 New pedagogies and practices for plurilingualism

Lenz and Berthele (2010) propose four ways in which learners could actually use their plurilingual repertoire: mediation activities, polyglot dialogue, intercomprehension, and intercultural communicative activities.

Mediation activities are described as those carried out by a learner to make communication possible between persons who are unable to communicate with each other directly. In mediation cases, the language user is not concerned with expressing his or her own meaning but with acting as intermediary between interlocutors, normally speakers of different languages (Council of Europe 2001). This type of activity is in fact wider as it encompasses a strong cultural dimension. Mediation is also about negotiating appropriate communication and interaction modes between diverse speakers considering their different cultural perspectives (Byram 1997).

Polyglot dialogue includes three elements: interaction, comprehension and production. It is "[a]n interactional regime that allows for the use of two or more different languages or distant varieties in interpersonal interaction. Most often participants use one of their best-mastered languages productively and are capable of understanding the languages used by their interlocutors" (Lenz & Berthele 2010: 21). Polyglot dialogue presents a number of advantages compared to monolingual regimes or *lingua franca* regimes: it allows speakers to express themselves in a language they feel most comfortable with, without excluding the use of other languages, it represents an opportunity to develop their plurilingual repertoire, and it illustrates the potential of resorting to unequal language skills in communication, e.g. good receptive but much weaker productive skills (Lenz & Berthele 2010:22).

Intercomprehension involves "[u]sing available knowledge of all kinds of previous language learning in order to understand texts in genetically related languages" (Lenz & Berthele 2010: 6). It is intended to facilitate learners' access

to written texts in languages they have not expressly learned but which are related to languages present in their plurilingual repertoires. Intercomprehension has mainly focused on reading skills. In this context the work carried out within the EuroComRom project has to be mentioned for its comprehensive account of inter-comprehension in romance languages (McCann et al. 2003).

To this list of plurilingual practices Cenoz and Gorter (2011) add two more: codemixing and translanguaging, in order to enhance learners' metalinguistic awareness. Their idea is that by being allowed to fluctuate between languages and to examine common features and links between their linguistic systems, learners will be able to behave in the classroom in a more natural way. In a similar vein, a recent study on multilingual policies in higher education high-lights that there needs to be more flexibility in the use of the target language, acceptance of the use of multiple codes, and of translanguaging practices in the classroom (Doiz et al. 2014). Translanguaging is presented here as "a strategy to build bridges for classroom participants between the social, cultural, community and linguistic domains" (Doiz et al. 2014: 356). This study argues, in fact, that students seem to be more concerned with the introduction of those policies than are teachers and administrators, although important attitudinal changes would be needed on the part of all stakeholders. The term "translanguaging" was coined by the Welsh educator Cen Williams (1996), and developed by García (2009) and many others, including Hornberger and Link (2012). According to Velasco and García (2014: 7), "translanguaging does not consider the languages of bilinguals as separate linguistic systems. The term stresses the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately." Translanguaging is more than code switching, which considers that the two languages are separate systems (or codes) and are "switched" for communicative purposes.

Finally, the intercultural communicative activities that Lenz and Berthele (2010) suggested are closely linked to the mediation and translanguaging activi-ties mentioned above. A few authors have highlighted the close relationship between communication and cultural sensitivity. For instance, it has been suggested that learners need to develop a strategic rhetorical skill identified as *transcultural repositioning*. This has been understood as the ability to "move back and forth with ease and comfort between and among different languages and dialects, different social classes, and different cultural and artistic forms" (Guerra 2004: 8). Byram (1997: 71) not only acknowledged that people's "knowl-edge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately" but also discussed a range of skills or *savoirs* that would be necessary for communicative encounters across cultures. Although his framework for discussing intercultural communicative competence

has been a reference for the language teaching community since the late 1990s, he did not explicitly address the potential of plurilingualism in transcultural encounters.

All these ideas have led to proposals about the design of languages curricula with a much stronger integration of language diversity than has traditionally been the case. In fact, in the past few years, scholars have argued for the use of *linguistic landscape research pedagogy* in language teaching (Cenoz & Gorter 2008; Chesnut et al. 2013; Rowland 2012; Sayer 2010). This approach invites learners to investigate and reflect on local uses of languages and to develop intercultural communicative skills, that is, skills that support dialogue across cultures.

In addition to the pedagogical arguments, the importance of developing plurilingual skills has been emphasised in the literature from other domains. For instance, within the context of global mobility of the workforce, educational institutions have been alerted to the need "to gear individuals with the necessary skills to enter the labour market and to respond to the demand of a rapidly changing economy" (Hambye and Richards 2012: 172). But also, as previously mentioned, the internationalisation of higher education and the communication facilitated by the digital revolution have assigned a key role not only to plurilingualism but also to the intercultural skills that plurilingual encounters demand.

3 Task-based language pedagogy

The idea that task-based learning is a particularly effective approach for language education has been around for some time now. In fact, there has been an increasing interest in task-based language pedagogy in the last two decades and more empirical research has been taking place at all levels of education in order to understand the benefits and challenges of such practice (Eckerth & Siekmann 2008; Ellis 2003; Leaver &Willis 2004; Littlewood 2004; Pica 2005; Skehan 2003; Zhao 2011).

In task-based learning the design of the task is only one part of the underlying pedagogical idea. Essential to the task-based approach are also syllabus design, classroom methodology and assessment. Task-based teaching and learning take into account the main issues in current discussions of language pedagogy, such as the focus on communication, "the role of meaning-focused activities, the need for more learner-centred curricula, and the need for some focus-on-form" (Zhao 2011: 45). The main purpose of a task-based approach is to create real-world-relevant opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative knowledge building (Ellis 2003; Pica 2005). In

fact, interaction is seen as a means to focus learners on meaning and form with specific academic, professional or vocational tasks, and thus promote language acquisition through communicative skills based on situations that are relevant and interesting to them (Long 2014), that have a "real world relevance" (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol 2007: 119). By using these tasks, the language learner becomes an "active, reflective, and intentional subject" (Eckerth 2008: 19) but also more independent (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol 2007).

Another characteristic of task-based learning is that the assessment of task performance does not focus on grammar items but on whether learners have the ability to perform the actual task (Long & Crookes 1992).

3.1 Scenario tasks for the activation of multilingual repertoires in the MAGICC project

The MAGICC project attempted to address some of the challenges of task-based multilingual teaching and learning in the context of higher education. From its theoretical framework, the project produced transversal modules that aimed at incorporating innovative and effective types of scenario activities within situations of academic and professional use. The purpose of these scenarios is to provide learners with opportunities to practise academic and professional situations in multilingual and multicultural settings where they might have to act. Hence, each of the ten scenarios developed consists of a series of tasks related to the elements of multilingual and multicultural communication competence. The pedagogical approach to the design and creation of multilingual scenarios was task-based language learning. In this context "tasks" mean "real-world activities" as defined by Long (2014:6). That means that the focus is on authentic multilingual communicative situations in the real world of study or work. The multilingual scenarios needed to be based on authentic communicative situations, motivating, learner-centred, based on meaningful use of language, and with clear outcomes.

An important aspect of these scenarios is that they have an exemplary and illustrative character, that is, they serve as models because they show how the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the theoretical framework can be practically implemented in learning situations at BA and MA level. The two main contexts of the scenarios are study situations and work-related skills. The scenarios designed to develop academic competences and skills for study purposes focus on subject-specific content for different programmes of study and specify the communicative requirements to complete the tasks from the point of

view of language skills, academic and intercultural competences. An example of a scenario for study purposes is: "Participating in a lecture in a multilingual and multicultural context". The scenarios designed to develop professional as well as language and communication skills aim at developing the employability of students and improving their professional subject skills. They also focus on fostering students' mobility during their studies and their professional life (Figure 2).

SCENARIO INFORMATION	
Institution	University: The Open University, Faculty: Open University Business School OUBS
Title of scenario	**Presenting a proposal in a business context**
Topic in keywords	Multilingual business study, comparing European cities, negotiating, presenting a proposal,
Student	Name: ID:
Deadline	Date: Received:
Form(s) of assessment	☒ Teacher ☐ Peer ☐ Self-assessment
Setting	You work for an industrial component supplier in Detroit. Your company has decided to set up a new factory and is considering two different cities in Europe. In this context, you have to do some research on the potential of each city, and propose one of them for the location of the new factory to a group of colleagues around the world
	Task 1 (4 hours): Gathering information and writing notes You will be provided with reports on the economy, social life, and business history of the two cities in English, in the language of the country in question, but also in one or two other languages where there have been similar studies by companies. For this you will need to: 1.1. Read all the information provided and find other relevant information on the internet about the two cities in various languages. 1.2. Take notes on the information you gather in different languages as appropriate. 1.3. Evaluate the information and write a list in two languages of the main advantages and disadvantages in relation to each city.

Figure 2: Sample multilingual scenario information for work related skills, only showing task 1 (MAGICC,   http://magicc-eportfolio.eu/pdf/2_Presenting%20a%20proposal%20in%20a%20business%20context.pdf).

The pedagogical scenarios are action-oriented and consist of authentic situations where students have to solve problems or complete tasks. They provide guidance which facilitates learning and reflection. The scenarios also include a possible multilingual profile where students can see at a glance what specific languages, skills and strategies they will need in order to complete the tasks. The choice of languages, however, could be modified to reflect learners' needs in a particular educational context (Figure 3).

Multilingual student profile required for scenario outputs		Reading	Listening	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
	French	B2	B2	B1	B2	B2
	Spanish	B2	B2	B1	B2	B2
	German	B2	B2	B1	B2	B2
	English	B2	B2	B1	B2	B2
	Intercultural skills and competences	–	–	–	–	–
	Strategies (including multilingual multicultural strategies)	x	–	x	–	–
	Independent learning skills and competences (including examination skills and competences)	–				

Figure 3: Student multilingual profile for the "Presenting a proposal in a business context" scenario (MAGICC, http://magicc-eportfolio.eu/pdf/2_Presenting%20a%20proposal%20in%20a%20business%20context.pdf).

The scenarios consist of a number of tasks and subtasks in which the expected learning outcomes, the learning tasks and activities, and assessment are closely interconnected. This constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang 2007) refers to the principle of matching the intended learning outcomes (the threshold level of what the learner is expected to demonstrate) with the learning activities and tasks that will contribute to achieving these, as well as with an assessment of how well the learners performed in their demonstration (Figure 4).

Assessment scheme				
Level of mastery	Inadequate	Basic	Satisfactory	Full
Percentage %	0 – 49.9 %	50 – 59.9 %	60 – 79.9 %	80 – 100 %

Figure 4: MAGGIC Assessment scheme (MAGICC, http://magicc-eportfolio.eu/pdf/2_Presenting%20a%20proposal%20in%20a%20business%20context.pdf).

After the overview of the tasks (Figure 2) and the multilingual profile (Figure 3) the scenario template offers a comprehensive account of how the expected outputs for each task, the descriptors of the core competences and the assessment criteria, and task specifications are fundamentally integrated (Figure 5).

As can be seen in the figures above, the use of different languages is not only specified in the multilingual profile of the student, but also in each of the sub-tasks and in the assessment criteria. The idea behind this is that the fluidity of students' multilingualism has to be consistently demonstrated through the different skills and strategies.

Task 1

✎ **(3 hours): Gathering information and writing notes**

Expected output: A written bilingual list about two cities on the basis of written documentation

1.1	**Core competence: Can access, evaluate and manage multilingual and multicultural information and knowledge sources** **Skills / strategies**: Academic and professional reading strategies and information management **Learning outcomes:** Use a variety of strategies to manage the coexistence of several languages in reading situation and employ one's own multilingual profile to strengthen, enrich and diversify access to information, processing, retaining and classifying new information	**Level of mastery / Percentage**	**Comment**
Assessment criteria and task specification	Planning: - Prior knowledge - Prediction	**Sub-task 1.1.1** What do you already know about these two cities? Please note at least 4 elements that you consider might be important.		
	Effectiveness in execution I: - Overview - Decoding - Reference tools reading (range, appropriateness flexibility)	**Sub-task 1.1.2** • Name two examples where you draw upon your knowledge of different languages, including your L1(s) and other compensation strategies to retrieve information and meaning, e.g. inter-comprehension strategies (comparing and contrasting text types, words or grammar structures, translation, inferring from context), or to cover gaps when writing (or preparing to write) a summary in another language within your repertoire. • What kind of on-line or off-line resources did you use for the task and for what purpose? Give two examples of use.		
	Effectiveness in execution II: - Checking - Highlighting - Information management	**Sub-task 1.1.3** • Use visual techniques during reading to optimize orientation and understanding (mark main points, underline, mark unclear passages, find headings/titles, key words, personal comments, etc.). Give two examples which show what techniques you used and how you used them and explain why they are appropriate for the purpose. • Choose one of the cities and organize main points in a poster (mind-map), put all the main notions in two/three languages (such as the language of the reading material, and the language of the list) .		
1.2	**Core competence: Can access, evaluate and manage multilingual and multicultural information and knowledge sources** **Skills / strategies**: Academic and professional reading skills in at least three languages ((including L1) **Learning outcome:** - Understand and critically analyse a wide range of texts and text types including abstract, structurally complex and lengthy writings in different languages - Understand and interpret complex graphic and visual information in written texts in various languages - Manage information in one's own field by relating input to other material and making connections within a given area and beyond it	**Level of mastery / Percentage**	**Comment**
Assessment criteria and task specification	Understanding of discourse development	**Sub-task 1.2.1** • What are the strong arguments for this city? Write in at least two languages 4 main points.		
	Micro-comprehension	**Sub-task 1.2.2** • Identify and note down in at least two languages 3 sub-elements of each argument, sufficiently clearly so that they can be used as support for the discussion in relation to each city.		
1.3	**Core competence: Can conceptualise and communicate information, knowledge and expertise in a multilingual and multicultural context** **Skills / strategies**: Academic and professional writing skills in at least three languages (including L1) **Learning outcome:** - Write clear, well-structured and detailed texts on a variety of complex topics in different languages - Organize, synthesize and evaluate relevant research information for various formats of academic writing, including non-specialist audiences in different languages	**Level of mastery / Percentage**	**Comment**
Assessment criteria and task specification	Topic content: Content - Information points covered - Relevance	**Sub-task 1.3.1** • Write and briefly explain at least four advantages of the chosen city		
	Thematic development	**Sub-task 1.3.2** • Write a clearly organized list of bullet points in at least two languages, that is coherent and uses suitable linking devices		
	Micro-readibility I (Grammatical accuracy)	**Sub-task 1.3.3** • Use an adequate range of grammatical structures (see assessment grid)		
	Micro-readibility II (Vocabulary control and range)	**Sub-task 1.3.4** • Use with ease an adequate range of both general and specialized vocabulary (see assessment grid)		

Figure 5: MAGGIC assessment criteria and task specification for Task 1 of the "Presenting a proposal in a business context" scenario. (MAGICC, http://magicc-eportfolio.eu/pdf/2_Presenting%20a%20proposal%20in%20a%20business%20context.pdf).

4 Pilot study: Trialling scenario tasks

The scenarios designed by the MAGICC project were piloted in order to test various pedagogical aspects of the tasks set. In particular, we were interested in testing the clarity of the instructional elements, the usefulness of the scenarios in raising awareness of students' plurilingual skills, and the assessment criteria. Due to the complex mix of elements involved in the scenarios, it was also important for us to understand the learning and teaching experience of working with the scenario template.

4.1 Participants

The test was conducted in various partner universities in the autumn of 2013. The sample consisted of 50 volunteer students (36 females, 14 males) and 14 teachers (9 females, 5 males). Participating students were asked to use some of the draft scenario tasks and teachers assessed them using the specifically designed criteria.

4.2 Data collection instruments and analysis

Once the tasks had been carried out and assessed, all participants were asked to respond to an online survey (Appendix 1). The survey had 10 questions and was divided into five parts. There was an initial section for entering some personal information followed by three other parts focusing on the scenario tasks, the presentation of the tasks, and the possibility of obtaining accreditation. The final part allowed participants to enter additional comments about their experience using the scenario. There was a final section for further comments on the participants' experience using the scenarios. Most of the questions were multiple choice but with the possibility of entering additional comments. Only two questions (8 and 10) were open-ended, allowing students to enter their own responses. In addition to the survey, five volunteer students (three females, two males) participated in online in-depth open-ended interviews via Skype (the questions are given in Appendix 2).

Responses to the multiple-choice questions in the online survey were analysed quantitatively (a feature conveniently provided by the Survey Monkey tool) and the open responses and the transcripts of the interviews were analysed qualitatively. Responses from the survey were categorised according to the specific item addressed by the question (e.g. task usefulness or difficulty), while responses to the interview questions were grouped into three main categories: cognitive, affective and plurilingual.

The purpose of the interviews was to find out how working with the multilingual scenarios had affected the language awareness and self-perception of

the participants. Although the questions sought a rich and detailed account of the participants' experience, they also aimed to explore the five domains of language awareness proposed by James & Garret (1991): affective, social, "power", cognitive, and performance. When the interviews had been transcribed, three main recurrent topics were identified: cognitive, affective and plurilingual. The cognitive and affective categories were among those proposed by James & Garret (1991), whereas "plurilingual" was a new category that emerged during the interviews. It had to do with the power relationships perceived in multilingual compared with monolingual situations.

Due to the participants' diverse linguistic profiles, English was the language used for data collection: the research instruments were in English as were the participants' responses.

4.3 Findings

The results of the online survey and interviews were overall quite positive for students and teachers in terms of the perceived usefulness of the scenarios for the development of students' academic communicative competence, the innovative aspects of the tasks, the increase in language awareness, and the fostering of self-confidence in plurilingual and multicultural contexts. However, it was also suggested that some aspects of the scenarios needed improvement.

4.3.1 The online survey

The responses from the survey revealed that participants were positive about the following aspects:
– The task overview (this was emphasised as the most useful feature of the template, Figure 2)
– The opportunity to work with more than one language.
– The possibility of being awarded credits for completing the tasks.
– The chance to increase language awareness and academic competence.

The students' comments described their experience as interesting, fun, enjoyable, and different from the usual activities in their current university programmes. Students also requested a bank of scenarios in their self-access-centres, which indicates that they saw some value in using the tasks independently. One student said that working through the scenario had raised his awareness of his level of competence: "I have realised how I could use the language now but also what was difficult for me."

The experience was also very useful for teachers. They reported that working with the scenarios made students think in a structured way not only about the task at hand, but also about past experiences in other countries or other plurilingual settings. As previously indicated, in formal education languages are normally taught separately. Working with the scenarios allowed the teachers to see students' use of various languages in combination, which made them reflect on the way students use and learn languages.

Participants also identified aspects of the scenarios that could usefully be revised in order to improve the experience of working with them. These mostly had to do with the clarity of the concepts and tasks and the amount of work and number of hours that working with the scenarios required of teachers and students. In addition, students made the following suggestions:

–   Simplify instructions for tasks.
–   Revise the complexity of the template, particularly the assessment grid.
–   Reduce jargon and metalanguage.
–   Translate scenarios into different languages.
–   Revise the assessment scheme.

The teachers' main concern was with the amount of time they needed to familiarise themselves with the theoretical framework and the assessment criteria. Figure 5 above illustrates the complexity of the multiple elements involved in the assessment process for each individual task.

The scenario tasks were very detailed and each sub-task was assessed. Although at the time of writing we have not analysed students' performance for each competence, we know that overall students scored on average between 70% and 90% for the whole task.

4.3.2 The in-depth interviews

While the survey focused more on task-design and assessment, the interviews looked into students' language awareness and self-perception as multilingual and multicultural individuals (Perez-Cavana 2014). The interviews were phenomenologically orientated in order to elicit a rich and detailed account of students' views arising from their use of the scenarios. As mentioned above, the interview questions were structured around five broad domains of language awareness, but the analysis of the transcriptions showed three main areas in which the experience of working with the multilingual scenarios had an impact: the cognitive, affective, and plurilingual domains.

In relation to the cognitive domain, working with the scenarios clearly increased the students' awareness of their own and other languages, as well as their

metalinguistic awareness, especially as regards the use of strategies. One student said: "I was using strategies, but I was not aware of it. I was not aware of the term 'strategy', MAGICC taught me how to use them. I know now how to name what I do."

As regards the affective domain, we found that working with the scenarios and reflecting on the tasks made students aware of the multiple and complex plurilingual and multicultural identities they possess and how their different languages were linked to different aspects of their life. It also made them aware of their sense of belonging to one or more cultures. In particular in relation to critical incidents or encounters with other cultures in the past, they were able to re-visit their reaction and to deepen their understanding and their empathy in relation to other cultures.

As for the plurilingual domain, working with the scenarios made students aware of the different dynamics at play in a multilingual setting. They became aware of the fact that power relationships are much more balanced when multilinguals communicate with each other, whereas in communicative situations involving one monolingual and one multilingual person those relationships tend to be much more hierarchical. Another aspect students mentioned is that tolerance is much more prominent in multilingual situations, in terms of accepting or understanding language forms or sounds that are not the standard ones. There was also a perception that in a multilingual exchange there is a clear focus on communication as opposed to accuracy. One participant, a French native speaker, said:

> I think if I am talking English to an English person who does not speak French, you are very aware of the way you are speaking, whether you are making mistakes or if you pronounce it incorrectly, because they would pick up on it and they will tell you, this is not the way you pronounce it, so you are feeling more timid or you think twice before saying something. [...] If I was speaking to an English person but who also speaks French and you know that at some point he is going to talk in French to you, you know he will be a lot more nice to you because they are going to be in your shoes in a minute. I think when you have to expose yourself, when you are talking in another language and you know that for the other person is going to be the same, it is in your interest to be as open and flexible and understanding as possible [...] so it is more open.

Also in the context of comparing communication with monolingual to communication with multilingual people, another participant said that monolinguals "have less understanding for why people speak in different ways or why people use different words. [...] Using a foreign language makes people more tolerant and relaxed about how people speak."

Finally, all the students interviewed expressed a sense of liberation working with the multilingual scenarios. They felt for the first time that they were "allowed" to use and express their multilingual repertoire without the normal monolingual restrictions, which gave them a sense of empowering.

Taking into account the feedback from students and teachers who participated in the MAGICC pilot, final improved versions of the scenarios were created. The different parts of the scenarios were more clearly defined and presented, the layout was enhanced, and consistency in the use of terms and concepts improved. Ten scenarios are currently available on the MAGICC website together with an empty template to develop more multilingual scenarios for different learning contexts in higher education. By using the scenarios in the years to come, it will be possible to test further their usability and the extent to which the academic community is interested in incorporating these types of tasks in their programmes of study.

5 Conclusions

Scholars are still trying to figure out the shape of an effective plurilingual pedagogy in formal education. Discourses have been mainly theoretical with very little evidence on how those new approaches could work in practice. For instance, the recent recommendations of the *Language Rich Europe* project on multilingual education (British Council 2012) express an aspiration to develop multilingualism in and outside schools but do not offer insights on how that could be realised.

Plurilingual practices in the classroom are not going to be easily implemented. It will take some time before the critical perspectives in favour of plurilingual approaches become visible in our institutions because changes in attitudes, policies and classroom dynamics will be necessary. We need a substantial body of educators implementing and experimenting with a range of pedagogical ideas and practical activities supporting and encouraging plurilingual behaviours in formal education.

The MAGICC project was an attempt to capture an appropriate framework for current educational practices. It was also a practical proposal about how to apply task-based approaches to professional multilingual and multicultural settings in higher education. The findings of the MAGICC pilot, in particular from the in-depth interviews, showed the deep impact that working with the task-based scenarios had on students and how it affected their language awareness, their sense of identity and belonging, and their self-concept.

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Appendix 1: The online survey

MAGICC Project: Scenario pilot (Student feedback)

Introduction

The MAGICC project is really grateful that you took part in testing one of the multilingual and multicultural academic scenarios designed for Higher Education Institutions.

We would like to hear about your experience of completing the set tasks. Obtaining feedback is vital to the review process of these professional scenarios.

This survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

[Next]

Your information

1. Please specify your gender.

○ Female

○ Male

2. Please state your university.

○ Freie Universität Berlin

○ The Open University, UK

○ The University of The Algarve

○ Université de Lausanne

○ University of Bremen

○ University of Fribourg

○ University of Jyväskylä

Please specify the name of the scenario you used.

[   ]

[Prev]   [Next]

Scenario tasks

Please tell us about the extent to which the scenario tasks have helped your multilingual and multicultural academic communication competence.

3. Have the scenario tasks helped you to become aware of your skills in different languages?

- ☐ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am not sure

Please specify...

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

4. Have the scenario tasks helped you to become aware of your multilingual profile?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am not sure

Please specify...

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

5. Have the scenario tasks helped you to develop your academic communicative competence?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am not sure

Please specify...

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

[Prev]   [Next]

Scenario format

Please tell us about the extent to which the scenario is useful.

6. Which part(s) of the scenario information did you find more useful? (Please enter a number 1-6, 1 most useful-6 less useful)

▼	Tasks overview
▼	Resources
▼	Multilingual student profile
▼	Expected output
▼	Assessment scheme
▼	Assessment grid

7. Did you have difficulties understanding any part of the scenario tasks? (Please tick the parts you found difficult to use)

☐ Tasks overview
☐ Resources
☐ Multilingual student profile
☐ Expected output
☐ Assessment scheme
☐ Assessment grid

Please specify what type of difficulties you experienced

[text box]

8. What would you change of the way the scenario is presented?

[text box]

[Prev]   [Next]

Accreditation

9. Would you consider gaining credits by completing multilingual modules at your university?

◯ Yes   ◯ No   ◯ I am not sure

Please specify...

[text box]

[Prev] [Next]

Any other comments

10. Please enter here any other comments you might want to add about your experience using the scenario.

[text box]

[Prev] [Next]

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

[Prev] [Done]

Appendix 2: Questions for the in-depth open-ended interviews

1. How did you find working with the scenarios, working with this multilingual setting?
2. How did you experience yourself in this situation as a multilingual person?
3. What was difficult/what was easy about working with different languages?
4. How did you feel working with the scenarios?
5. How did it affect your sense of identity?

6. What was different in a multilingual as opposed to a monolingual communicative situation?
7. How was the multilingual situation in terms of power relationships?

Bionotes

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