The language learner in a new world: Travel, technology and popular culture

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The language learner in a new world

• The new world – travel, technology, popular culture

• Two revolutions: learner-centredness and person-centredness

• ‘Reconceptualizing’ motivation, learning strategies and autonomy.

• Questions?
Travel and mobility: Tourism, migration and study abroad

• 1.18 billion international arrivals in 2015 (58% increase since 2000)
• 244 million international migrants in 2015 (41% increase since 2000)
• 5 million international students (100% increase since 2000)
Internet and mobile technologies

- 3.4 billion Internet users in 2016 (50% increase since 2011)
- 46.1% of world population (31.8% in 2011)
- Rapid growth in Asia, Africa, Central and South America – due to mobile technologies
- Mexico: 45% of population has Internet access (2.7% in 2000; 19.2% in 2006)
Popular culture

- Internet growth driven by globalization of social media and popular culture
- Facebook (1.17 billion daily users), YouTube (1+ billion monthly) – both 80+% non-US
- Localization: FB (92 languages), YT (76)
- Globalization of popular music, movies, TV drama, video games, etc.
Popular culture

• Most popular YouTube videos – mostly English, but...
  – #1 Gangnam Style (Psy) – Korean
  – #9 Bailando (Enrique Iglesias) – Spanish
  – #11 Masha and the Bear – Russia

• Language learning as global popular culture
  – Duolingo – 120 million users

• Online spaces for multilingual interaction: forums, comments...
Masters students’ projects

The following slides are a selection of topics chosen by MA Applied Linguistics students for projects on language learning beyond the classroom.
An English teacher, lifelong learning of (1) French in Canadian bilingual school, (2) Esperanto by distance, (3) Irish by Duolingo
A female Brazilian in Sydney who has just finished a language school course and is now learning English without instruction
Linguaholic: An online discussion forum on language learning
A prison inmate: learning Spanish from his cellmate; teaching his cellmate English
Comments on English teaching videos on YouTube

INTRODUCTION

English is an International language and is understood all over the world. In fact, in today's world speaking English has become necessity. Moreover with the globalization of trade,
Meetup: A Korean-English language exchange group
The language learner in a new world

- Multilingual cities and online spaces
- Languages everywhere
- Opportunities for informal learning
- Integration of language learning and language use
- Diverse contexts and purposes
- Languages as necessities and luxury items
Globalization and FL teaching

“[T]here has never been a greater tension between what is taught in the classroom and what the students will need in the real world once they have left the classroom. In the last decades, that world has changed to such an extent that language teachers are no longer sure of what they are supposed to teach nor what real world situations they are supposed to prepare for.”

Kramsch (2014: 296)
Learner-centredness – 1970-80s

• Shift from focus on how languages should be taught
• Focus on ‘the learner’ and ‘the learning process’
• Language proficiency / communicative competence
• Language learning as cognitive process (Psycholinguistics)
• Influence of context on learning processes (Sociolinguistics)
Person-centredness 2000-10s

- Shift from focus on learner and the learning process
- Focus on learner as ‘person’
- Multilingual competences
- Language learning as a social process
- Learning in context: Language learners as agents who shape the contexts of their learning
Learner-centred Learning Process

Language acquisition

Individual Differences

Context

L2 Proficiency

Motivation / Autonomy
Person-centred Participation Language Use

Situated Learning

Multilingual Competencies

Biography/Identity

The Self / Agency

Context
Reconceptualizing motivation

• Formerly = willingness to learn + effort prepared to put into learning; now...
• How language learning fits into a person’s life
• How individual purposes are matched to social purposes
• The roles of imagined selves and change of identities
• ‘Motivating the person’ (Ushioda, 2011)
Reconceptualizing strategies

• Formerly = actions learners take to enhance learning; now...
• How people understand and act upon purposes for language learning
• How they interact with affordances for learning in their environments
• How learning leads to desired identities
• ‘Strategic language learning’ (Gao, 2010)
Reconceptualizing autonomy

• Formerly = control over language learning processes; now...
• How people create and initiate opportunities for language learning and language use
• How they manage formal and informal learning opportunities
• How they manage identity change
• ‘Agency in learning environments’ (Palfreyman, 2014)
Questions for teaching?

• Where does the ‘classroom’ fit into the ‘new world’ of informal language learning?
• How do we approach students interests in travel, technology, and popular culture?
• How do we view students’ capacities for informal learning?
• How do we reconcile ‘supporting language learning’ with ‘teaching languages’?
References


