

PEDAGOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON AN ENGLISH-TAUGHT COURSE IN COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO NON- PHILOLOGIST MA STUDENTS

Vlad-Georgian MEZEI¹

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ABSTRACT. *Pedagogical Reflections on an English-Taught Course in Communication Addressed to Non-philologist MA Students.* Supporting cross-border didactic and research cooperation, increasing visibility in international rankings, promoting multicultural academic environments, facilitating student exchange, attracting international students, encouraging staff mobility and improving graduate employability are some of the driving forces behind the efforts of most universities towards internationalisation. Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, as a multicultural international higher education institution, actively supports academic training and communication in international languages. According to one of the stipulations included in the language policy of the University, each master's programme must comprise at least two courses taught in an international language in compliance with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodological principles. The present paper draws on the author's experience as a tutor of such an English-taught course in techniques and methods of negotiation and communication addressed to students enrolled in a master's programme called *Management of Sports Organizations and Activities* at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The article discusses the development of a coherent pedagogical strategy for this particular course focusing mainly on

¹ **Vlad-Georgian MEZEI** works as a lecturer at the Faculty of Letters, Babeş-Bolyai University. His teaching responsibilities include an undergraduate ESAP practical course and a master's degree course in negotiation and communication. As a teacher and researcher, he is chiefly concerned with developing students' ability to use English in academic and professional contexts. He takes a particular interest in syllabus and instructional material design, specialist vocabulary acquisition, grammar teaching in ESP and technology as a pedagogical tool. Email: vlad.mezei@ubbcluj.ro.

aspects such as designing the course syllabus, selecting compulsory bibliography, preparing teaching scenarios, creating instructional materials, delivering in-class instruction, conducting assessment and collecting feedback from students.

Keywords: *English as a Medium of Instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning, higher education, MA students, pedagogical approach*

REZUMAT. Reflecții pedagogice asupra unui curs de comunicare cu predare în limba engleză adresat unor masteranzi nefilologi. Sprijinirea cooperării transfrontaliere în domeniile didactic și științific, creșterea vizibilității în clasamentele internaționale, promovarea unui mediu academic multicultural, facilitarea schimburilor de studenți, atragerea de studenți internaționali, încurajarea mobilității cadrelor didactice și îmbunătățirea șanselor pe piața muncii a absolvenților sunt câteva dintre motivele pentru care universitățile depun eforturi pentru internaționalizare. Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai din Cluj-Napoca, România în calitate de instituție de învățământ superior multiculturală și multilingvă sprijină în mod activ instruirea academică și comunicarea în limbi de circulație internațională. Conform uneia dintre stipulările politicii lingvistice a Universității, orice program masteral trebuie să conțină cel puțin două cursuri predate într-o limbă de circulație internațională în concordanță cu principiile metodologiei CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Această lucrare are ca punct de pornire experiența autorului ca titular al unui asemenea curs de tehnici și metode de negociere și comunicare adresat unor masteranzi în cadrul programului *Managementul Organizațiilor și Activităților Sportive* organizat la Facultatea de Educație Fizică și Sport a Universității Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca. Articolul prezintă dezvoltarea unei strategii pedagogice coerente pentru acest curs concentrându-se îndeosebi pe aspecte precum elaborarea fișei disciplinei, selectarea bibliografiei obligatorii, alcătuirea unor scenarii didactice, crearea materialelor didactice, predarea la clasă, asigurarea examinării și colectarea feedback-ului de la studenți.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Engleza ca mijloc de predare, Învățarea Integrată a Conținutului și a Limbii, învățământ superior, studenți masteranzi, abordare didactică*

This article considers the multifaceted process of developing a pedagogical approach to an English-taught course in communication and negotiation methodology² addressed to non-native³ English-speaking MA students specializing

² The name of the course is “Tehnici și metode de negociere și comunicare”. In this article it is referred to as “Techniques and Methods of Negotiation and Communication” (TMNC).

³ The term “non-native speaker” has been subject of controversy, its legitimacy being challenged. The dichotomy “native” versus “non-native” has been criticised for being founded on the assumption that native speakers are deemed superior while non-native speakers are presumed inferior

in the management of sports organizations and activities at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Babes-Bolyai University. The reflections presented here emerged and evolved throughout the author's experience as the tutor of this course. They are exposed in a gradual progression from the general to the particular. First, the contextual integration of the course is carried out by outlining the international status of English as a medium of instruction in higher education, sketching the terminological and methodological aspects pertaining to the use of English in tertiary education, inserting the course in the institutional framework it belongs to and presenting its major stakeholders. Then, the focus switches to more specific aspects such as pedagogical principles underpinning the approach to the course, syllabus design, bibliography selection, teaching scenario building, classroom instruction delivery, seminar session management, assessment methodology and student feedback collection.

English as a medium of instruction in tertiary education

Globalization and marketization have had an important contribution to the international spread of English. Economic, political, scientific, technological and cultural factors have favoured an increasingly wider use of English all over the world. Furthermore, the internationalization of professions and individual pursuits, mass media, multinational organizations, and enhanced communications have played an important part in this linguistic expansion (Coleman 2006, 2). The market value of English has risen due to transnational economic dependencies. As the main medium of economic transactions, English is favoured by international organizations and transnational corporations. In this context, learning English

(Dewaele 2018, 239). Furthermore, as an antonym of "native", "non-native" is disapproved of for defining speakers in terms of what they are not (Dewaele 2018, 236). Another criticism directed at the term "non-native" is that, as a place-based definition, it implies that individuals born in specific regions of the world —the native speakers— speak exemplary English, while people born elsewhere —the non-native speakers— will never become as proficient in English as the native speakers (Wicaksono 2020, 81). In this article, the phrase "non-native speaker of English" names a user of English whose native language is other than English. The author's understanding of the term excludes any pejorative connotation. On the other hand, the author acknowledges the necessity of a special pedagogical approach suited to the specific needs of students who learn English as an additional language. As a blanket term, "non-native speaker" can be utilised to refer to the ability of TMNC course attendees to use foreign languages whether they are bilingual (e.g. L1 speaker of Romanian and L2 speaker of English) or multilingual (e.g. L1 speaker of Hungarian, L2 speaker of Romanian and L3 speaker of English or L1 speaker of Romanian, L2 speaker of French/German/Italian/Spanish/Russian and L3 speaker of English). The author of the article is aware of the fact that the term "LX user" has been suggested as an alternative to "non-native speaker" (Dewaele 2018, 238). However, due to the fact that the syntagm "non-native speaker" occurs rather frequently in the specialist literature consulted, it will be used in the article for reasons of terminological coherence.

is encouraged by the assumption that a high level of linguistic proficiency is beneficial to corporations and individuals alike (Gabriëls and Wilkinson 2021, 22-23).

These factors have facilitated a huge growth in the number of second-language speakers who use English to pursue academic education worldwide (Hyland 2006, 25). Higher education —which has itself become a marketized and globalized commodity (Coleman 2006, 10)— capitalized on the hegemony of English worldwide and adopted it as the main language of instruction and research. Nowadays the global supremacy of English in tertiary education is undeniable. A good command of English is a *sine qua non* of success in academic education and research. In certain scientific areas, journal literature and the most renowned journals are published predominantly in English. Furthermore, being acquainted with the norms of English-language academic discourses is essential to understanding subject content knowledge, building careers and developing a successful learning experience (Hyland 2006, 24).

It is noteworthy that language learning in itself is not the driver behind choosing English as a language of instruction in tertiary education (Coleman 2006, 4). Thus, in countries where students are non-native speakers of English, policies supporting instruction through English are driven by top-down forces and not by the bottom-up needs and interests of teachers and students (Patel, Solly, and Copeland 2023, 193). Having commodified education and research, the present-day entrepreneurial university operates as an agent of Englishization. Higher education institutions act as competitors in a global academic market and, since internationalization is a factor that carries significant weight in rankings, universities strive to appeal to as many international students and scholars as possible by providing an increasingly wide array of English-taught programmes (Gabriëls and Wilkinson 2021, 23).

However, despite the criticism against the political and economic forces behind the Englishization of universities to the detriment of other languages, one cannot deny that the prevalence of English in higher education teaching and research has real benefits, the foremost of which being enablement of global communication. The variety of ELF (English as a *Lingua franca*) used in the academic environment does not involve conformity to all anglo communication conventions but it aims mainly at obtaining clarity and comprehensibility. This characteristic puts non-native speakers on par with native speakers in the context of academic communication (Hyland 2006, 29).

Furthermore, in addition to increased international student revenue and improved rankings, English as a medium of instruction in universities is thought to have multiple institutional and individual positive effects such as strengthening global competitiveness, boosting student and lecturer mobility,

enabling access to intercultural learning and instructional materials, increasing students' proficiency in English, enhancing employability of graduates and acquiring international competencies (Patel, Solly, and Copeland 2023, 194; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017, 4). Other benefits of instruction in a foreign language include plurilingualism, academic, research and professional networking as well as international economic and cultural collaboration (LANQUA, n.d.).

Terminological and methodological framework

There exists an abundant terminology describing various methodologies of approaching the phenomenon of English as a medium of instruction. Generally speaking, the difference between these terms lies in the status/role English is assigned within the methodological framework underlying the course or programme: on the one hand, English is treated simply as a medium for conveying content knowledge without explicit focus on language learning, on the other hand, English language teaching and acquisition are just as important as content knowledge transfer through English.

The most generic term in use is English as a medium of instruction (EMI) which designates "the use of English to teach subjects in countries where English is not the official language" (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017, 3). Another name used is EME (English-medium education) which is the variant preferred by the British Council to EMI on the grounds that the term "education" reflects a more holistic approach while the term "instruction" suggests a narrow perspective centred on the teacher, which makes it unsuitable for rendering the dynamism of the teaching-learning process (Patel, Solly, and Copeland 2023, 186).

In addition to being an umbrella term, EMI is also employed in a narrower sense to describe a pedagogical approach in which English is used as a medium of instruction and whose learning objective is primarily the acquisition of content knowledge. Language learning is considered merely as an implicit aim. Lectures, courses and seminars are taught in English by means of instructional methods specific to a particular discipline without any explicit language focus. In contrast, Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE) pays equal attention to language learning and content acquisition. In this approach, all the lessons include explicit language teaching in combination with subject content instruction (Schmidt-Unterberger 2018, 534). ICLHE is the tertiary level analogue of the much more encompassing term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Costa and Coleman 2013, 5). Initially CLIL was defined as a "pedagogical approach with a dual focus, involving the integration of (second/foreign/target) language study with the study of a subject domain instructed in that language" (LANQUA, n.d.) but subsequently it became an

“umbrella term for all those HE approaches in which some form of specific and academic language support is offered to students in order to facilitate their learning of the content through that language” (LANQUA, n.d.).

Additional terms are used to describe various degrees of focus on content or/and language. Thus, the continuum of EMI in practice includes seven diverse pedagogical approaches progressing gradually from primary focus on content to primary focus on language as follows: EME/EMI, Immersion (Immersion in Target Language Context), CLIL, CBI (Content-Based Instruction), ESP/EAP (English for Specific/Academic Purposes) and EFL/ESOL (English as a Foreign Language/ English for Speakers of Other Languages) (Patel, Solly, and Copeland 2023, 188). Furthermore, different varieties of CLIL can be identified in higher education according to the extent of importance given to language mastery and subject mastery: Partial CLIL LSP/Discipline Based LT, Partial CLIL (language – LAP focus), Partial CLIL (content – focus in L2), Adjunct CLIL and (Dual-Focus) CLIL (LANQUA, n.d.).

A last acronym worth mentioning in connection with the EMI-related terminology is EMEMUS (English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings). Conceived as an alternative to the multiple labels currently employed to describe contemporary multilingual tertiary education, EMEMUS does not refer to any specific pedagogical approach or research agenda. This feature makes EMEMUS a more encompassing term from a semantic point of view and as such more suitable to refer to diverse higher education environments (Dafouz and Smit 2016, 398-399). The framework within which EMEMUS operates is called ROAD-MAPPING (Dafouz and Smit 2016, 403). It is concerned with aspects of tertiary education such as communicative functions fulfilled by languages in higher education institutions, academic literacies, academic disciplinary culture, language policy statements, social players involved in the phenomenon of English as a medium of education, administrative, research and educational activities pertaining to EMEMUS and relationships between transnational tendencies and local and national interests (Dafouz and Smit 2020, 60).

Contextual integration of Techniques and Methods of Negotiation and Communication (TMNC)

The previous two sections were dedicated to outlining the global status of English in universities and to sketching various terminological and methodological aspects pertaining to the use of English in tertiary education. This section continues the contextual integration of the course TMNC by inserting it in the institutional framework it belongs to and by presenting its major stakeholders.

According to the stipulations of its language policy (Babeş-Bolyai University 2021), Babeş-Bolyai University, as a multicultural international institution of

higher education, has set plurilingualism and multilingualism among its chief objectives. This is reflected in the opportunities created for undergraduate and master's students to use international foreign languages in their academic activity. Students' exposure to foreign languages takes several forms and is organized according to different pedagogical principles and objectives. For example, there are entire academic programmes taught completely in a foreign international language both at bachelor's and master's levels. There are also the compulsory practical language courses all students at the university must attend for at least two semesters. These courses are aimed at enabling students to use international languages competently, at a B2 level, in their academic and professional activity. In addition, remedial practical language courses are offered to students with low levels of linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, the language policy of Babeş-Bolyai University stipulates that the curriculum plan of each master's programme must include a minimum of two courses taught in an international language according to CLIL principles. The policy defines CLIL as a pedagogical approach according to which the teaching and learning of content knowledge happens in a foreign/non-native language and it has a double objective: content acquisition and improvement of language proficiency. This is the definition of CLIL endorsed in the present article.

TMNC is one of the two courses taught in English included in the curriculum plan of the master's programme named *Management of Sports Organizations and Activities* organized by the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Babeş-Bolyai University. It was introduced in the 2017-2018 academic year as an elective course and in the 2019-2020 it was transformed into a mandatory course. The course is spread over 14 weeks and includes a 2-hour lecture and a 1-hour seminar per week.

The beneficiaries of this course are mostly former undergraduates of Babeş-Bolyai University, with the majority having graduated from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport. They are non-philologist, non-native speakers of English specialising in various aspects of managing sports organizations and activities. As an exception, during the academic year 2023-2024, in addition to the Romanian attendees, the course was attended by two Erasmus students from Université Rennes 2, France. The master's programme curriculum plan includes disciplines as diverse as Management and Marketing for Sports Organisations, Human Resources in Sports Organisations, Management of Sports Events, Accounting and Financial Management for Sports Organisations, Development and Management of Sports Facilities, Project Management and Conflict Management.

General pedagogical principles

The author of the present paper, as the tutor of this course, is responsible for designing the course syllabus, selecting compulsory bibliography, writing the course packet, establishing assessment methods, drawing up lesson plans, creating teaching materials, delivering in class instruction and conducting assessment. All these aspects have been gradually incorporated in a comprehensive pedagogical strategy aimed at allowing students to acquire theoretical knowledge and to develop practical skills necessary to communicating in managerial occupations and in the academic context.

This pedagogical approach is underpinned by three principles. One of them results naturally from the specificity of CLIL: subject knowledge delivery and focus on language use are equally important objectives. The second principle stems from a requisite of pursuing studies in higher education: constant attention is given to developing a good command of academic communication and to honing study skills.

The third principle, student centeredness, places students at the hub of the teaching-learning process. This approach relies on certain tenets of learner-centred pedagogy such as teaching meaningful and relevant content, developing 21st Century skills (creativity, critical thinking, analysis, and lifelong learning), involving students actively in learning, favouring student-teacher and student-student interaction, enabling students to become autonomous learners, valuing students' opinions as well as those of the teacher, combining formative and summative assessment and taking into consideration learners' prior knowledge, skills, experiences and their emotional needs (Bremner, Sakata, and Cameron 2022).

In accordance with the above-mentioned tenets, throughout the entire duration of TMNC (lectures, seminars and final examination) the individuality of each learner is highly valued: students are seen as individuals with unique learning profiles and histories and their attitudes towards studying a discipline in English are taken into account. As shown in the first section of the paper, the Englishization phenomenon was brought about by political and economic globalizing interests and the decisions to include English-taught courses in academic programmes are top-down initiatives driven by the efforts made by universities towards internationalization rather than by the wants of individual learners. Therefore, some of these students who are non-native, non-philologist speakers of English might feel reluctant to replace their mother tongue with a foreign language at school. Furthermore, students who have studied other foreign languages throughout their academic trajectory prior to enrolling in this master's programme might perceive English as a barrier to knowledge.

Various means of dealing with such situations are used by the teacher: showing students that they matter as individuals, creating and maintaining a

student-friendly environment during lessons, encouraging teacher-student and student-student interaction, rewarding active participation to in-class activities, promoting a sense of belonging to a supportive community even outside the classroom by maintaining communications open via Microsoft Teams (the Learning Management System of the Course), promoting teamwork, focusing feedback on achievements rather than failures and providing additional support in the form of linguistic instruction when needed.

Course Syllabus Design

The following section is dedicated to presenting the course syllabus and the reasons behind the choices that were involved in its design. Attention is paid to the learning objectives and the contents of the lectures and seminars. In designing the course syllabus, a number of learning objectives were established in accordance with the specificity of the study programme and the conventions of academic communication. They are as follows (the first one is the general objective of the course and the rest represent specific objectives):

1. Using English effectively in the academic field of study and in future professional activity.
2. Communicating effectively in English in business contexts.
3. Developing communication skills for social inclusion.
4. Managing work groups.
5. Developing teamwork and staff motivation abilities.
6. Using English to carry out managerial duties at different organizational levels.
7. Becoming able to approach and resolve issues autonomously and creatively, appraise critical situations in an objective and constructive manner and use English to describe findings.
8. Gaining theoretical and practical knowledge of communication and negotiation in order to develop leadership skills.
9. Acquiring the ability to adjust to dynamic competitive business landscapes through effective use of English in diverse cultural environments.

The contents of the lectures and seminars were established so that they enable students to achieve the above-mentioned learning objectives. Some lectures tackle matters pertaining to human communication in general while others are dedicated to communicative aspects specific to organizations, managerial functions and negotiations. The distribution of the contents between the lectures and seminars was operated based on the degree of difficulty involved in explaining/understanding certain topics. Since the teacher is responsible

for instruction delivery during the lectures, the contents of these lessons were selected based on the fact that they involve concepts and principles with a higher degree of complexity, abstraction or novelty, which might take a larger extent of teaching experience to explain. On the other hand, since the seminars are dedicated to oral presentations delivered by students, their contents, while related to the topics dealt with by the teacher during the lectures, are more accessible to students. For example, while the teacher, as a philologist, is better equipped to tackle issues pertaining to verbal messages such as “bypassing”, “connotative and denotative messages”, “the maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner” in communication, students will find it easier to approach aspects of non-verbal messages.

The lecture contents are as follows:

1. Oral presentations (roles of oral presentations in management, planning and preparation for oral presentations, structure of presentation, designing visual aids —PowerPoint/Canva slideshows—, using language effectively in oral presentations),
2. The process of communication (defining communication, models of communication, elements of communication, barriers to communication),
3. Verbal messages (principles, effective use),
4. Telephone communication (making/changing arrangements on the telephone, preparing for making telephone calls, receiving calls, taking and leaving messages, cross-cultural telephone communication, effective language use in telephone communication),
5. Conversation (stages and principles),
6. Small groups communication (characteristics of small groups, group member roles, principles of successful communication in teams, the groupthink phenomenon),
7. Meetings (types of meetings, stages of meetings, the problem-solving sequence, effective language use in meetings),
8. Negotiations (the role of communication in negotiations, preconditions for negotiations, stages of the negotiation process, effective language use in negotiations).

The seminars are focused on the following contents:

1. Oral presentations (anxiety management, analysing the audience, adapting to the audience during presentation),
2. Principles of human communication,
3. The role of communication in management,

4. The role of listening in human communication,
5. Non-verbal communication,
6. Organizational communication,
7. Norms of telephone behaviour and differences between telephone and face-to-face interaction,
8. Meetings (organizing effective meetings, the role of the chairperson),
9. Negotiations (planning and preparation, bargaining and reaching settlement, strategies, and skills).

The compulsory lecture and seminar bibliography covers completely the above-mentioned contents and it includes three books. *Human Communication: The Basic Course* (DeVito 2012) provides information on the fundamental aspects of communication in general contexts as well as on organizational communication and public speaking. *Communication Skills for Effective Management* (Hargie, Dickson and Tourish 2004) deals with issues pertaining to communication specific to managerial functions and negotiations. *English for Business Communication* (Sweeney 2015) is a rich source of practical activities aimed at improving language proficiency and communication skills in management.

Designing and delivering the lectures

Planning for the lectures involves identifying learning outcomes, creating didactic scenarios for an optimal approach to teaching language and content, selecting classroom activities, creating instructional materials, and anticipating the cognitive skills students are supposed to utilize as well as the behaviours they are expected to display.

As mentioned in the section dedicated to the general principles underpinning the pedagogical strategy developed for TMNC, the learning outcomes of each lesson are divided between content knowledge delivery and focus on language instruction. Similarly, some activities are dedicated to the presentation and discussion of theoretical aspects such as concepts, terms, elements, processes and principles while others are dedicated to reflection on language uses in general and specific contexts as well as to language practice.

The sequences of the lessons are organized based on a few simple elements of CLIL methodology: promoting teacher-student and student-student interaction in the classroom, fostering collaboration between students in the form of pair or group work, using scaffolding to allow students to learn progressively by getting acquainted with knowledge in several stages, encouraging students to use metacognitive skills and to think creatively (Harmer 2012, 226-27).

The lectures are based largely on teacher-student and student-student interaction. They alternate teacher-led theoretical sections and practical activities.

Students are expected to have an active participation in both of them. From the very first moments of the lessons, students are involved actively in the process of learning by means of inductive teaching. Usually, introductory activities start by inviting students to reflect on certain images included in the lesson's PowerPoint slideshow and to express their opinions on what they see. Then, as the discussion unfolds, various elements —text or diagrams— are added to the slide in order to guide the students' reasoning towards the desired result.

An example of such an activity is used to introduce the first lesson dedicated to negotiations. Instead of defining negotiations for the students, the teacher starts the PowerPoint slideshow of the lesson by displaying an image showing a man and a woman in a wine shop holding the same bottle of wine. Students take turns guessing what is happening between the two persons. This initial stage focuses the students' attention on the content by stirring their curiosity and giving them the opportunity to speak English. All the ideas are welcome at this point without being criticized. If necessary, the teacher directs the discussion towards the topic of negotiations but generally students infer on their own that the two persons must be negotiating for the bottle of wine. Then the picture moves from the foreground of the students' attention and vision to the background as text is gradually superimposed over the image to reveal the events as they really happened between the two persons. Basically, this story highlights the gist of successful negotiations. The protagonists start from apparently conflicting positions: they both want the same bottle of wine. After their initial attempts at bargaining fail since none of them is willing to renounce the bottle or to accept an alternative offer, they move on to exploring each other's reasons for buying the bottle of wine. Finally, they discover that while the man needs the wine for sentimental reasons, the woman does not want the wine per se, but, as a collector, she is interested only in the bottle itself. They end up sharing the price and getting what they wanted from the negotiation. The story is extracted from *Communication Skills for Effective Management* (Hargie, Dickson and Tourish 2004, 177-78).

The lessons also include successions of activities that combine content knowledge acquisition with language practice. For example, the lesson dedicated to telephone communication contains a section focused on making arrangements on the telephone. The first step is a listening comprehension activity. The students listen to a conversation between two persons who make arrangements on the telephone and solve a gap-fill based on the tapescript of the conversation. This activity has a double objective: familiarising the students with the content of the discussion and focusing their attention on language used to make arrangements: "Could we meet ...?", "How/what about ...?", "When would suit you ...?", etc. At the end of the exercise answers are checked and the students are invited to infer the function of the words/phrases in question. In the second

phase, the conversation is analysed in order to identify the following steps of making arrangements: initial general propositions/suggestions, discussing possible meeting opportunities (adjusting to each other's availability), reaching agreement and settling the final details. In addition, the teacher makes sure that the students understand the importance of some basic techniques of conducting successful telephone conversations such as using polite language, suggesting alternatives, practising active listening and repeating or checking the accuracy of information when necessary. The final stage of this succession of activities is a dialog building exercise. The students are provided with a situation and a flow chart representing the framework of a dialog and are invited to work in pairs to create a conversation aimed at making arrangements on the telephone.

Similar activities which allow students to acquire and practice communication techniques and to use language meaningfully can be constructed starting from watching short video clips followed by behaviour and language analysis. They are particularly efficient in lessons dealing with topics such as the functions of the chairperson in meetings, the roles of group members in communication, the principles of conversation, effective methods of giving feedback to subordinates as a manager and techniques of identifying and avoiding the "groupthink" phenomenon.

Microsoft PowerPoint is an instrument that performs a crucial function in the design of instructional activities and works as a framework for the entire teaching scenario. As shown by the author in a previous article (Mezei 2023), PowerPoint is a piece of presentation software that allows a multimodal approach to teaching. The teaching-learning experience can be diversified and enhanced by combining several media such as text, pictures, charts, audio tracks and videos, which ensures student engagement in the classroom activities. Furthermore, PowerPoint slideshows can be used to structure the information, which facilitates understanding and acquisition. Moreover, PowerPoint slideshows can be uploaded to Microsoft Teams to enable students to remain apprised of the content covered in class and facilitate their preparation for the final examination.

Organizing the seminars

The seminars are built around oral presentations delivered by students. These are conceived as opportunities to involve them to a greater extent in the learning process by stimulating them to engage more extensively with the content. Furthermore, public speaking is an integral part of the students' future occupation given that making oral presentations is a form of managerial communication essential to presenting reports, giving briefings, energizing staff moral and coordinating teams. What is more, this is an opportunity for students to practice and improve their academic communication and study

skills since student-delivered presentations are a genre specific to EAP (Hyland 2006, 50). Furthermore, skimming, scanning, note-making, summarising, paraphrasing, synthesising and collating information are study skills specific to academic activity (Jordan 1997, 7) which are essential to preparing for the oral presentation. Finally, taking part in seminar discussions is another skill that all the participants can exercise during the Q and A sessions following the presentations.

Given the complexity of the task and the considerable amount of effort required to complete it, the seminar oral presentation is considered as a significant component of the assessment representing 40% of the students' final grade. The remaining 60% is distributed as follows: the written exam counts as 50% and class participation as 10%.

The regulations concerning the presentation are explained in a tutorial delivered by the teacher during the first course of the semester. Students are told to form teams of two persons and choose a topic from a list to work on. Each presentation is scheduled for a specific date. Students are also informed which section of the bibliography they are expected to process and present.

Two components are assessed in the presentation: the relevance of the content knowledge selected from the bibliography and the presentation itself. The evaluation of the presentation focuses on two aspects: the quality of the PowerPoint/Canva slideshow and the performance of the students during the delivery of the presentation. The assessment grid comprises the following elements: structure of presentation (introduction, main body and conclusion, bibliographical list of the sources consulted), delivery (clarity, pronunciation, sentence construction, pace of delivery, verbal fluency, relationship with the audience), visual aids (quantity of information per slides, visibility, quality and relevance of pictures, charts, graphs and videos inserted in the presentation, use of visuals during the presentation) and language (grammar, vocabulary and signposting). Special emphasis is placed on the relationship with the audience. In addition to the Q and A sessions that follow the delivery, students are instructed to include activities specially designed to involve the participants actively in presentations such as quizzes or other kind of exercises that can be included in the slides or created on Internet platforms such as Wordwall, Mentimeter or Kahoot!.

The PowerPoint/Canva slideshows must be sent via email 24 hours prior to the presentations to the teacher who analyses them and gives the students constructive feedback in order to allow them to improve their work. Thus, the variant presented during the seminar is superior to the first draft. Furthermore, knowing in advance the teacher's opinion on the PowerPoint slideshow increases the presenters' confidence and helps them overcome anxiety. The oral presentation

is delivered in the classroom by both students and at the end of the Q and A session the teacher provides descriptive feedback and scores the presenters on a 1-4 scale.

Students' feedback

During the academic year 2023-2024, the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategy described above was evaluated by means of a survey aimed at measuring students' level of satisfaction with their learning experience throughout the course of TMNC. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire distributed in February 2024 at the end of the evaluation period and after the final grades were communicated to students. 14 (70%) of the 20 course attendees completed this anonymous survey.

The questionnaire included thirteen Likert scale statements and two opened-ended questions. The function of the Likert scale statements was to measure the degree of attainment of the main objectives underpinning the pedagogical approach developed for this course. Each value of the scale was correlated to a degree of agreement with a statement as follows: 1 designated strong disagreement, 2 meant disagreement, 3 indicated a neutral position, 4 signified agreement, and 5 represented strong agreement.

The results obtained are presented in Table 1. The columns 2-5 show the number of respondents who chose one of the five scores to describe the extent of agreement or disagreement with each of the thirteen statements. Column 6 contains the average rating of the statement. Row 15 shows the overall count of each score given.

Tabel 1. Responses to the statements

STATEMENTS	SCORES					Average rating
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The course allowed me to acquire knowledge on organizational/managerial communication and negotiations.				3	11	4.79
2. The course allowed me to understand how English language can be used effectively in organizational/managerial communication and negotiations.				2	12	4.86
3. The explanations provided by the teacher during the lessons facilitated the understanding of the content knowledge conveyed.				3	11	4.79
4. The PowerPoint slideshows used by the teacher during the lessons facilitated the understanding of the content knowledge conveyed.				6	8	4.57

STATEMENTS	SCORES					Average rating
	1	2	3	4	5	
5. The classroom activities facilitated the understanding of content knowledge.				1	13	4.93
6. The practical language-focused activities included in the lessons exposed me to authentic use of English language in organizational/managerial communication and negotiation.				4	10	4.71
7. The PowerPoint slideshows uploaded to Microsoft Teams enabled me to remain apprised of the content covered in class and facilitated my preparation for the final examination.			2	2	10	4.57
8. Preparing for the oral presentation I delivered during the seminar was an opportunity to use academic study skills.			1	4	9	4.57
9. Preparing for the oral presentation I delivered during the seminar was an opportunity to improve my PowerPoint/Canva presentation designing skills.			2	3	9	4.5
10. Preparing for the oral presentation I delivered during the seminar helped me to better understand the course content knowledge.			1	4	9	4.57
11. Preparing for the oral presentation and delivering it in the classroom was an opportunity to exercise my spoken English and my public speaking skills.				3	11	4.79
12. The feedback provided by the teacher after I sent him the first version of my PowerPoint/Canva presentation was useful for improving the final version of the presentation.			1	2	11	4.71
13. The assessment methods including the seminar oral presentation, the written examination and class participation were adequate for the course.				2	12	4.86
Overall count of each score given			7	39	136	

What immediately stands out is the high degree of agreement with the statements. This is indicated by the average ratings that range between 4.5 and 4.93, which positions them at the upper end of the satisfaction scale. What is more, the fact that the highest score (5) was assigned overall 136 times out of a total of 182 possible times is a further indicator of students' approval of the instructional and assessment methodology utilized. Moreover, the lowest score (3) students opted for was assigned only 7 times. Judging by the overall count of each score given, it can be concluded that on the whole, the students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements were significantly more numerous

than those who reported being neutral, which shows a high level of satisfaction with the learning experience.

Item 14 (“What did you like most about the course?”) was an opportunity for the respondents to confirm and explain some of the ratings assigned in the previous section of the questionnaire but also to point out information that had not been covered by the Likert scale statements. One of the most frequently mentioned likes was the fact that the explanations offered by the teacher facilitated the understanding of the content knowledge. Another reason for satisfaction was the relevance of the topics approached to fulfilling managerial functions as well as to participating in human communication in general. Furthermore, being able to express themselves freely in the classroom and to communicate in English were two additional strengths mentioned by the students. Other strong points reported included: improvement of English speaking skills, personal development, boost of self-esteem, engaging classroom activities, benign interaction with the colleagues and the teacher, positive classroom environment, useful feedback offered by the teacher and appropriate assessment methods.

Item 15 (“What did you like least about the course?”) was conceived as a means of identifying weaknesses and aspects to improve. However, it yielded little information since the majority of students declared not having any objection worth mentioning. The only weak point reported was the excessive duration of certain lessons, which caused boredom and exhaustion.

Conclusions

The pedagogical reflections included in this paper revealed the multitude of factors to be considered by the tutor of an English-taught course addressed to non-philologist, non-native speakers in higher education. The main point to take into account is the ambivalent implications of the prevalence of English in higher education worldwide. On the one hand, one must be aware of the fact that the ever-increasing use of English as a language of instruction in tertiary education has significantly been favoured by political and economic globalizing drivers. This implies that courses taught in English are often included in academic programmes as part of internationalization efforts generated by top-down decisions rather than by the wants of individual learners who might feel reluctant to conduct their studies in a foreign language. On the other hand, one must bear in mind that the use of English as a *Lingua franca* in tertiary education teaching and research is essential to the communication in the academic environment across the globe. Therefore, acquainting students with the norms of English-language academic discourses must be included among the teaching objectives.

Furthermore, designing a pedagogical strategy should take into account several additional factors such as current methodological approaches to teaching English in tertiary education, the language policy of the university offering the course, the status of the course in the curriculum plan of the academic programme and the specific professional and academic communication needs of the students involved. Paying close attention to all these aspects is essential to designing the course syllabus, choosing the lecture and seminar contents, devising teaching scenarios, preparing classroom activities, delivering in class instruction and selecting appropriate assessment methods.

Finally, collecting feedback from students is crucial to gauging the effectiveness of a teaching and assessment system. What is more, the questionnaire may become much more than a data collection instrument; the activity of conceiving the questionnaire itself is an exercise in pedagogical reflection on various methodological aspects. The data collected in the academic year 2023-2024 was useful in that it generally confirmed the tutor's expectations in terms of learning outcomes, lecture and seminar content selection, instructional material design as well as teaching and assessment methodology. However, the high degree of satisfaction expressed by the majority of students yielded little information in terms of possible areas of improvement. Therefore, repeating the survey several years in succession is essential to fine tuning a pedagogical strategy and keeping it up to date.

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