

WCLTA 2013

## Developing Oral Skills Through Skype: A Language Project Analysis

Lidia Taillefer<sup>a</sup>, Rosa Munoz-Luna<sup>b</sup> \*

<sup>a</sup> Dept. English Philology, University of Málaga. Faculty of Humanities, Campus Teatinos s/n 29071, Spain.

<sup>b</sup> Dept. English Philology, University of Málaga. Faculty of Humanities, Campus Teatinos s/n 29071, Spain.

---

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse L2 usage in the oral interaction between university students from Hong Kong and Spain. With that research focus on mind, we carried out a *Skype-mate Language Project*, which purpose was to enhance oral communication skills and cultural awareness of students learning English and Spanish as L2. The qualitative methodology used in this analysis was the observation of a series of conversations between Hong-Kong and Spanish undergraduates through Skype, using English and Spanish as their means of communication. Both Skype mates had the same list of topics and questions in both languages, what were their conversation scripts. Interactions had a minimum length of 30 minutes, at least 15 minutes speaking in each language. Video recording of conversations on campus was the technique used to keep evidence of these oral interactions. Once the conversations took place, a quantitative stage would come: all students were required to submit an online questionnaire on their difficulties in understanding. Therefore, this study follows a mixed methodology, where quantitative and qualitative methods are employed. Results show that non-verbal communication was key for mutual understanding when L2 level was low; more proficient speakers explained cultural issues and commented on them. Within such communicative complexity, discursive and cultural issues seem crucial and should be considered in the L2 teaching curriculum.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCLTA 2013.

*Keywords:* L2 speaking, Skype, interaction, mixed-method research;

---

### 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze L2 development in the oral interaction between university students from Hong Kong and Spain. With that research focus on mind, we carried out a Skype-mate Language Project, which purpose

---

\* Corresponding Author: Rosa Munoz-Luna. Tel.: +34-952-13-34-92  
E-mail address: [rmluna@uma.es](mailto:rmluna@uma.es)

was to enhance oral communication skills and cultural awareness of students learning English and Spanish as L2. Technology tools can develop language learning. Moreover, technology motivates students as it provides them with authentic activities, that is, language used in real practice. Therefore, technology tools should be employed especially to develop the difficult oral language skills —speaking and listening (Levy, 2009) — and the six communicative competences —linguistic, discursive, strategic, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and affective competences (Ifantidou, 2011; Yu, 2011).

In fact, this project focuses on a specific technology tool that addresses deficiencies present in foreign language classrooms (Blake, 2008): few opportunities to practice oral skills, and even fewer opportunities to benefit from practice with peers from other countries. These common handicaps can be easily solved by the implementation of socio-constructivist activities using Skype, which provides excellent opportunities for development of L2 listening and speaking. This methodological implementation is supported by socio-constructivist learning theories; these theories are especially appropriate to apply technology in Foreign Language Learning (FLL). Constructivism (Miño-Garcés, 2009, pp. 81-89) places the student at the centre of the learning process, making him or her responsible for developing knowledge instead of waiting for the teacher's input:

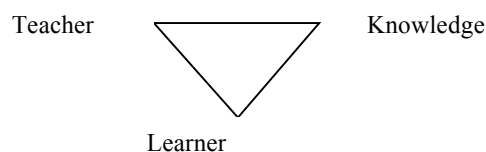


Fig. 1. Learning process.

The focus is on active analysis of data and on applying the new information into previous one. In this case, language students interact and share their language knowledge, working as language users and evaluators at the same time.

## 2. Skype mate language project

Skype-mate language project aims to foster intercultural communication and to improve L2 use by online interaction between 20 Spanish and Chinese students of English and Spanish, respectively. Our research hypothesis is that listening and speaking skills are improved through the use of online Skype calls as result of a successful plan for Technology Implementation in Language Teaching (TILT). Actually, we will be able to check the educational, linguistic and cultural advantages associated with implementing this resource in the foreign language curriculum.

In this Language Project, Skype-mates were given in advance similar lists of topics and questions in English and in Spanish to practise with their language partners; these questions were their conversation scripts so that they could practice before the real online call took place. Interactions had a minimum length of 30 minutes, at least 15 minutes speaking in each language. Both student groups had an intermediate level in their L2. Nevertheless, although their L2 fluency levels were good, results revealed that strong accents were a clear barrier for mutual understanding in some cases. Questions for the English conversations were the following ones (they were meant to serve as speaking guidelines for Skype-mates):

- Why do you study English?
- What aspects of English do you study?
- How is your university life?
- Are you living in a hall of residence?
- Which city in Spain are you from? What is it like?
- Do people in Spain usually have big families?
- How do you usually spend your holiday?
- Do you like travelling?
- If we went to Spain, which places should we visit?
- Do you have any recommendations for recent Spanish movies?
- Are you graduating soon?
- What will you do when you finish university?

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1113240>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1113240>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)