A Pedagogical Lingua Franca Approach: Emancipating the Foreign Language Learner

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Abstract

Research on English as a lingua franca (ELF) has inspired hopes and expectations for a reform of English language teaching (ELT). Current ideas focus on teachers' ELF awareness and their readiness to acknowledge and deploy authentic ELF communication as a source of inspiration for pedagogical change. In this article, I take a different, yet complementary view by shifting attention to speaker-learners as emancipated agents of learning and communication. Emphasizing the ordinary social constructivist creativity of human perception, communication, and language learning, I argue for the need to encourage speaker-learners to develop their own voice in the foreign language guided by their personal requirements of communicative and communal success. The pedagogical approach by which this objective can be achieved in the ELT classroom involves enabling learners of English of different linguacultural backgrounds to meet up with each other as speakers of English in intercultural virtual exchanges and to use their common English target language as a pedagogical lingua franca (PLF). Ways of implementing a PLF approach are elaborated and exemplified with reference to telecollaboration tools and tasks available from the European Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (www.tecola.eu). Insights from case studies provide evidence of the emancipatory potential of PLF.

Keywords: English language teaching, English as a pedagogical lingua franca, intercultural virtual exchange and telecollaboration, MY English, non-native speaker emancipation, ordinary creativity

Introduction

In this article, I use the term 'foreign language learning' to emphasize that my focus is on how languages are learned in formal school settings rather than in informal settings. Other than in Krashen's (1982) terminology, my usage of the term carries no further implications regarding his distinction between explicit rule 'learning' and implicit or intuitive rule 'acquisition'. Depending on the teaching approach, both types of processes may have their pedagogical place in the foreign language classroom. 'Foreign language' in this article is thus closer to Kachru's (1985) distinction between second and foreign language in connection with using English in the outer and expanding circles, respectively. My immediate context of reference is foreign language learning and teaching in secondary and vocational schools in Germany and other European countries. The emancipatory qualities of the pedagogical lingua franca approach described below may, however, also apply to other educational contexts including informal learning.

Foreign language learning in school is generally oriented towards three interacting target areas:

> (a) knowledge of the language taught as a repertoire of linguistic means of expression with a focus on form and meaning,

(b) communicative competence including communicative functions, strategies of interaction, and intercultural attitudinal skills such as tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility of behaviour, openness, and empathy (Byram, 1997),
(c) knowledge of cultural or subject-related content, commonly in relation to the target language community and country.

Against this backdrop, I will focus on a few complementary issues, which in my mind are important for English language teachers, and foreign language teachers in general, to be aware of and to consider when choosing, adapting and implementing their teaching practices.

The article is structured in three parts. In the first part, I will talk about the creative quality of perception, communication, and language learning. In this connection, my concern is with 'ordinary' creativity as resulting from our innate capability of making the external environment available for understanding and interaction by constructing, actually creating, our own internal version of it. In the second part, I will address issues of speaker-learner emancipation. I will discuss the role of standard native speaker English (SNSE) in ELT and will argue that non-native speaker emancipation is not in conflict with SNSE as the language taught. The true challenge of emancipation is rather to liberate speaker-learners by enabling them to explore and exploit their innate ordinary creativity and by supporting them as agents of their own communicative and learning success. In the third part, I will describe a pedagogical lingua franca approach with its pedagogical potential for enhancing the emancipatory quality of foreign language learning, and how it can be implemented through intercultural virtual exchange and telecollaboration.

Ordinary Creativity

Perception of Reality

In connection with his studies on semantics and cognition, Jackendoff (1983, chap. 2) argues that the real world can only be perceived as an “experienced” (or “projected”) world in our minds resulting from the inextricable mediation of incoming sensory data by conceptual structures already available from previous cognition. To illustrate his point, he discusses observations from Gestalt psychology. When looking at the familiar drawing in Figure 1, for instance, viewers generally perceive either two black faces against a white background or a white vase against a dark background. In physical reality, however, there is no background or foreground, and there are no faces or vases.

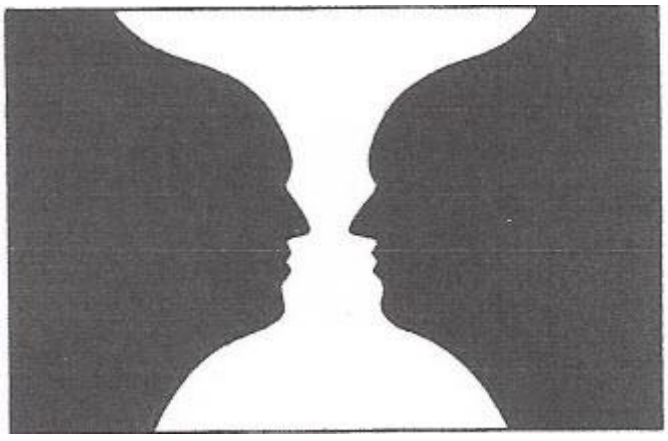

Figure 1: Faces or a vase? (From Jackendoff, 1983, p. 24)

What we perceive as being 'out there' is a projection of our minds. It is a complex process, which feeds on 'bottom up' data and is shaped in a 'top down' fashion by what we know and feel about faces and vases from previous experience, by what is most likely to be expected in our current state of cognitive, emotional, and social processing, and by our situation-specific and task sensitive requirements of successful performance. Simple instructions like "Look for something human" or "What else do you see" may easily shift the viewer's attention and make an alternative perceptual option more salient. Our perception of reality thus appears as a creative process of individual and social construction strategically oriented and monitored to ensure successful completion of a given task. The creativity involved is 'ordinary' in the sense that it is not a matter of intentional choice but rather an essential quality of human cognition. It can be further developed and refined through awareness and practice, but it cannot be deactivated. And what is more, when producing artefacts of reality for others to perceive, we anticipate and rely on our addressees' ordinary creative construction capabilities enabling them to process and grasp more than merely the sensory data.

Communication through Utterances

Our ordinary creativity is also at work in communication when we try to convey meanings by exchanging utterances. Quite contrary to folk-theoretical beliefs, communicated meanings are not wrapped up in utterances like the contents of parcels; they are rather creatively constructed in the minds of reader-listeners. Communicating meanings involves an intimate interaction between bottom up processing of linguistic means of expression available as 'road signs' and top down creation of meaning expectations based on existing knowledge and beliefs, interests and preferences (Brown & Yule, 1983). This creative quality of communication is also captured in Widdowson's (2004) account of text as an inert verbal entity that is only brought to life as reader-listeners engage their extralinguistic reality in pragmatic discourse processes of meaning negotiation (chap. 1). The essentially inferential nature of understanding utterances and texts can be further clarified with reference to Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory. The following conversational exchange analysed and discussed by Blakemore (1992) helps to illustrate some of the key points:

A: *Did you enjoy your holiday?*
B: *The beaches were crowded and the hotel was full of bugs.*

B's reply merely provides what Blakemore calls a propositional skeleton. In their endeavour to understand the reply, reader-listeners use this skeleton as a basis for creating inferences they deem relevant in relation to their perception of the context. Explicatures are inferences that involve fleshing out the propositional skeleton. In the example, obvious options include "the beaches I visited", "crowded with other tourists", "and in addition to this", "the hotel where I stayed", and "infested with vermin". Implicatures are inferences that go beyond the fleshed-out proposition by concluding, for instance, that B did not enjoy her holiday, might sue the travel agent, and will never go there again. Depending on what is known about B's holiday preferences, her reply could, however, be easily interpreted as implying that she very much enjoyed her holiday. All this is evidence that understanding utterances crucially relies on social constructivist processes of ordinary creation, of which speakers are intuitively aware when aiming to formulate their utterances so as to enable their interlocutors to draw the intended explicating and implicating inferences.

Understanding and producing utterances is strategic in the sense that the speakers involved try their best to meet their personal requirements of successful performance relative

to the respective communicative situation. Whether the holiday conversation above occurs in, e.g., small talk, insurance, or exam contexts is reflected in the speakers' requirements and in the attention and effort they invest. As regards strategic production processing, the distinction between meaning and form is particularly noteworthy. If a speaker's requirements of success are limited to communicating the key message as, for instance, in pidgin or foreigner talk, an utterance like "Beach crowd and hotel bug" would be perfectly sufficient and successful. If, on the other hand, the speaker wishes to comply with conventions of accuracy and appropriateness in a certain speech community, form-related requirements of success would make the original utterance "The beaches were crowded and the hotel was full of bugs" a more preferred option.

With their relevance-theoretical account of the inferential nature of communication, Sperber and Wilson (1995) criticize and reject Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. They argue that the assumption of relevance is sufficient to explain the speakers' explicating and implicating performance. From everyday experience, however, it should be obvious that without being cooperative and, more importantly, without assuming that one's communication partners are cooperatively trying to understand or make themselves understood, it is hardly possible to draw or convey the intended inferences - and communication is bound to fail. Cooperativity is indeed a fundamental quality of communication, which needs to be further extended and substantiated to incorporate, in particular, tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, openness, and flexibility of behaviour. Byram (1997) emphasizes and discusses these attitudes and attitudinal skills in connection with intercultural communicative competence development. It is important to note, however, that their roots reach deep into everyday communication and provide the very ground for our ordinary social constructivist creativity to unfold.

Learning the Language Taught

More than 50 years ago, in the cradle years of language learning research, Corder (1967) introduced the distinction between 'input' and 'intake': whatever the effort invested, learners' intake is both less and more than what they have been exposed to; intake is always creatively different from the input provided. But there is a catch: Corder argues in a theoretical and pedagogical framework according to which the ultimate goal is to move the learner's interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) gradually closer towards the native-speaker target language. This might explain why in the ELT classroom, the unavoidable creative difference between input and intake was - and often still is - only accepted with a grain of suspicion.

When learners set out to learn the language taught in class, they are commonly exposed to a heterogeneous array of input manifestations of linguistic means of expression. Pedagogically relevant carriers include, for instance, teaching material, teacher utterances, or utterances by other (native or non-native) speakers the learners communicate with. From a social constructivist perspective, learners process all these input manifestations by applying their ordinary creativity to develop their own version of the target language - in their minds, hearts, and behaviour. Not as an option but as a condition of their human nature. They learn and acquire English by creating 'MY English' (Kohn, 2018a); it is in this social constructivist sense of ordinary creation that they become owners of English. Also see Widdowson's (2019) discussion of "the creativity of common talk" (p. 6) as distinguished from literary creativity.

Developing My English is not idiosyncratic. Rather, it is influenced by a number of individual and social shaping forces including, in particular, available and perceived input manifestations of the language taught, learner attitudes, motivation and effort, other languages, teaching approach, and the community learners' want to be part of. Most importantly, however, My English is not just about developing a certain repertoire of linguistic means of expression for conveying meaning. It is also about developing one's personal communicative and communal requirements of successful performance. Relevant

requirements may include, for instance, expressing what one wants to say, understanding what has been meant, meeting conventions of accuracy and appropriateness, taking on a certain participant role, showing empathy and rapport, or expressing group participation. Preferably guided by an attitude of emancipated autonomy, learners rely on their personal requirements of success when monitoring their communicative and communal performance, and they use them as beacons for their learning. It is with reference to their requirements that learners assume agency for their own learning.

From the perception of reality to utterance communication to the emergence of MY English -- we are witnessing here the workings of the ordinary social constructivist creativity of ordinary people in ordinary communication. When engaging in communication and learning activities, we succeed if we manage to exercise this creativity while taking responsibility for ourselves and being cooperatively attentive to others. Our ordinary social constructivist creativity is a necessary condition of successful communication and learning. It is not, however, a sufficient condition. Things can go wrong. More often than not, we fail in our communication and learning endeavours because we are not aware of our ordinary creativity, are not ready yet to embrace and use it, or are simply not allowed our own space for exercising it to the best of our capabilities.

Emancipation in Foreign Language Learning

Since the overall goal of school education is to prepare students for life, learner emancipation is an old promise, continuous hope, and ultimate challenge. With regard to language learning, Larsen-Freeman (2012) argues in favour of a complexity theory perspective on emancipation: Drawing on innovative native-speaker errors, translanguaging practices, and ELF speakers' inventive creations, she describes language as an adaptive system "in which complexity is emergent, one in which language grows and organizes itself from the bottom up in an organic way" (p. 301). Learners "set their own goals, and pursue them, charting their own paths" (p. 304). "They actively transform their linguistic world; they do not merely conform to it" (p. 306). Aside from these general attributions, however, little is said about how learners actually fulfil their role as emancipated agents. What is their engine and compass of emancipation? It is difficult to see how insights into the complexities of the emerging language could possibly help answer this question.

In pedagogical discussions drawing on ELF research, the line of reasoning seems clear. Issues of emancipation are generally discussed in terms of liberating speaker-learners from standard native speaker English (SNSE) as the language taught in the classroom. When criticizing the dominance of SNSE in ELT, ELF researchers (Dewey, 2012; Sifakis, 2019) and ELF-aware ELT professionals (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2019) emphasize that ELF communication tends to be creatively rich and successful despite frequent deviations from SNSE norms. If speaker-learners manage to communicate successfully in ELF encounters without obeying SNSE norms, why should they be bothered with these norms in the classroom? And would a preference for these norms not be evidence of a native-speakerist attitude?

On closer inspection, the ELF communication argument (Kohn, 2015) turns out to be misleading for two reasons. First, is the assumption of ELF communication being successful generally valid? More often than not, pertinent evidence draws on intelligibility judgments based on the somewhat impressionistic satisfaction of an external ELF researcher. What about the ELF speakers themselves and their satisfaction? Is it not a common experience that one's interlocutors might say "It's okay, I understand you", and you yourself know perfectly well that you did not manage to convey your intended meaning? Or that someone praises you for your English while you yourself are not satisfied at all because you know that you failed to meet your own personal requirements? In keeping with a social constructivist

understanding, an assessment of communicative success should build on speaker-learner satisfaction. Second, since the ELF communication argument implicitly criticizes teachers' SNSE preference, it seems to suggest that they should change their SNSE target orientation altogether. But in what direction? Some teachers may even feel being pushed to teach incorrect English. From an ELF perspective, Seidlhofer (2011) clearly dismisses the relevance of ELF data for deciding on the language taught in ELT:

> "I am not advocating that descriptions of ELF should directly and uniquely determine what language is taught in the language classroom. [...] What really matters is that the language should engage the learners' reality and activate the learning process. Any kind of language that is taught in order to achieve this effect is appropriate, and this will always be a local decision." (p. 198)

In this connection, it is helpful to remember the two complementary faces of 'language taught': the language presented as pedagogical input and the language learners acquire as intake. Because of the creative social constructivist nature of learning, the two are intimately related to each other, but they can never be the same. In my interpretation, Seidlhofer argues that we should not so much focus on the particular nature of the input language, be it SNSE or some other locally more acceptable variety, but rather enable learners to creatively appropriate the input they are exposed to as MY ENGLISH. In the ELT classroom, the principal problem and challenge is not the pedagogical input language as such, but rather the learning orientation speaker-learners are allowed and supported to adopt. Is it a strict quasi behaviourist copying/cloning orientation? Or is it an open social constructivist orientation with room for an emancipatory MY English development guided and monitored by the speaker-learners' socially mediated requirements of communicative and communal success?

A social constructivist understanding of foreign language teaching and learning resolves apparent discrepancies between learner-external SNSE input varieties, internally acquired knowledge, and situational variations of use. It also explains how in the long run SNSE input varieties blend into locally motivated new manifestations and identities of English.

From ELF Awareness to English as a Pedagogical Lingua Franca

I now turn to the role of ELF as a source of pedagogical inspiration for the further development of ELT (for a comprehensive overview see Vettorel, 2017). Current activities in pedagogical ELF research strongly focus on issues of ELF awareness in teacher education (Sifakis et al., 2018). Enabling teachers to increase their awareness of the nature and conditions of authentic ELF communication is considered of key importance for their pedagogical conceptualizations and practices:

> "[F]indings from the extensive studies of what ELF users know and how they interact should inform lesson plans, teacher training curricula, textbooks, policies, and assessment procedures in ways that will render the ELT experience richer and deeper, and closer to a realistic experience of what has come to be global communication via English." (Sifakis, 2019, p. 293)

The pedagogical ELF awareness approach thus suggests searching solutions for an ELT reform by observing and learning from genuine communicative ELF performance as for instance collected in ELF corpora. But can there be a shortcut from the surface of observed ELF performance to the ELT classroom? All the purported richness and creativity of ELF communication is not ELF-specific. Rather, it is the result of a mishmash of complementary and interacting processes of communicative and communal meaning-making, strategically deploying the social constructivist creativity characteristic of our human ways of perception,

communication, and language learning. And, not to forget, things can go wrong. More often than not, the pedagogical gems in ELF communication are buried in a haystack of weak performance, near-failures, and complete breakdowns.

No doubt, observing ELF performance data can be made pedagogically relevant, provided it is accompanied by pedagogical mentoring (O'Dowd, Sauro & Spector-Cohen, 2020). Key mentoring objectives should include enabling speaker-learners to

1. raise their AWARENESS of the vast heterogeneity of ELF both with regard to linguistic-communicative manifestations and conditions of communicative success and speaker satisfaction,
2. practice ELF-related COMPREHENSION skills with special attention to unfamiliar pronunciation and sentence structures, unclear utterance meanings, or weak discourse coherence,
3. identify and analyse COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION problems and critically evaluate the attempted solutions.

However, as regards enabling speaker-learners to develop their 'MY English' PRODUCTION repertoire of means of expression, mere exposure to externally available ELF performance data can only be of little and somewhat dubious relevance. First, attention to manifestations of ELF communication generates a vast array of decontextualized and thus potentially confusing input 'models', which makes it difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. Second, and even more importantly, the focus is on processing input data, which is in sharp contrast with the crucial relevance of output processing for speaker-learners who want to improve their production competence (Swain, 2005). Instead of observing 'textual' surface reflections of other speakers' discourses (Widdowson, 2004, chap. 4), they need to be involved in their own ELF interactions.

This is where the pedagogical lingua franca (PLF) approach has its place. It also focuses on lingua franca communication - but based on a social constructivist emancipatory understanding of foreign language learning and with an important shift in pedagogical perspective from teachers' ELF awareness to speaker-learners' own involvement in pedagogically mentored communicative ELF encounters. Instead of drawing pedagogical conclusions from observing lingua franca communication out there, the PLF approach requires and enables speaker-learners of different linguacultural backgrounds to meet and use their common target language as a pedagogical lingua franca. Under PLF conditions, measures of pedagogical mentoring need to be implemented that encourage speaker-learners to

- learn from their own communicative ELF experience through reflective practice,
- revise their requirements of communicative and communal success in relation to the current communication and learning context,
- improve their ELF-related comprehension, production and interaction skills,
- unleash their ordinary creativity as emancipated agents in the ELT classroom.

The PLF approach is not in conflict with ELT but actually provides for a much-needed pedagogical reconciliation between ELF and ELT (Kohn, 2018b) based on a social constructivist understanding of learning English as a process of creative appropriation (also see Grazzi, 2013, 2018). Using English as a pedagogical lingua franca requires rich and diverse opportunities for authentic communication, which are hard to come by in face-to-face foreign language teaching. Online communication provides an effective means for taking pedagogical communication outside and beyond the classroom. Facilitated by online

activities that are pedagogically embedded in blended learning or flipped classroom scenarios (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2015), the PLF approach forms part of a 21st-century revision of communicative language teaching (CLT) and contributes to enhancing successful international communication (Chong, 2018).

The time for adopting a PLF approach seems about right. As Musthafa, Hamied, and Zein (2019) emphasize:

> It is "important to empower students to become independent, strategic learners", "to encourage every individual learner to take ownership of their own learning", and "to create opportunities for students to use English for communicative purposes in lingua franca situations, such as when they talk with peers from Vietnam or Malaysia" (p. 180).

And what is more, a PLF approach is applicable beyond English to other foreign target languages as well.

Implementing a Pedagogical Lingua Franca Approach

Designing a pedagogical environment in which intercultural pedagogical lingua franca encounters can be initiated and implemented is a crucial issue and challenge. In the European Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (www.tecola.eu), the implementation of PLF activities is achieved with the help of virtual exchange and telecollaboration (O'Dowd, 2018). The tools and environments used in TeCoLa include in particular learning stations and learning paths in the TeCoLa Virtual World, video chats in BigBlueButton or Skype, multimedia posts on digital walls like Padlet, and online documents in Google Docs or Slides.

The pedagogical focus in TeCoLa is on enriching communicative and intercultural foreign language learning in secondary and vocational schools by providing online spaces for spoken and written target language communication between student peers from different countries. For both teachers and students, these virtual exchanges are generally first-time experiences. It is thus considered of utmost importance to place an initial emphasis on pedagogical normalization. This concerns developing pedagogical familiarity with the technologies involved. Teachers need to understand and exploit their potential for opening up new ways of communicative and collaborative learning outside regular classroom activities. Students, although they might have grown up with the new technologies, need to discover and embrace them as educational tools for better learning. Normalization also concerns the new opportunities online technologies create for communication and collaboration. Students need to learn and practice to communicate and interact more autonomously, more extensively, and more interculturally than in classroom contexts. And their teachers should be ready to prepare and accompany them.

Normalization is reflected in TeCoLa task development, particularly in the choice of topics and in the activities envisaged. The topics addressed are taken from areas like “Getting to know each other”, “Habits and customs”, “Communication”, “School”, “Fashion”, “Sports”, or “Environment”. They all mainly concern everyday life issues with a soft intercultural or subject-related orientation so as to enable the students to draw on their available knowledge, experiences, and beliefs. Generally, content learning is not in the foreground but rather serves the purpose of facilitating online intercultural communication and the acquisition of the competences and attitudinal skills required for success. It is suggested that more demanding or interculturally ‘problematic’ topics are delayed until the students feel sufficiently comfortable and proficient interacting virtually. In keeping with the overall objective to foster and strengthen communication and communicative competence development, TeCoLa task activities emphasize communicative collaboration in pairs or in small groups.

Figure 2: Synchronous exchange in the TeCoLa Virtual World

A collection of task descriptions for English, French, German and Spanish is available in the "Teacher Resources" section on the TeCoLa project website (www.tecola.eu). The tasks make use of different telecollaboration tools and they cover a wide range of topics. The following example shows a synchronous learning station interaction in the TeCoLa Virtual World about having breakfast (Figure 2). The students are present as avatars, which enable them to move around and talk to each other through their headsets. A text chat box can be used for accompanying written messages. In the "Breakfast" task, the student teams meet at a learning station with two multimedia boards on which all information relevant for carrying out the task is displayed.

The teams are instructed to talk about typical breakfast dishes in their respective countries and about their own preferences. Then they are asked to brainstorm and discuss ideas for a "best of" breakfast. To ensure deeper processing, the students might be required to take notes and later present the breakfast ideas of their international group as a follow-up activity in class. They could also use some of these ideas for preparing a breakfast buffet in the classroom. Other examples of learning station tasks concern topics such as "Fashion" or "Use your time wisely". For more complex task sequences, learning stations can be assembled to form a learning path. Two examples from the TeCoLa task descriptions are "What happens to the things we throw away?" or "An interesting sport". Since learning station boards can be edited, teachers can easily add new topics and adapt the task content to the practice and learning needs of their students.

All these topics and contents can also be used in video chat tasks in, for instance, BigBlueButton or Adobe Connect, where the learning station content is uploaded and displayed in a separate presentation box. An important difference, however, concerns the speakers' face-to-face visibility in the video contact. While some would welcome the possibility of non-verbal communication signals, others might appreciate a more anonymous avatar presence. In the case of both virtual world and video exchanges, time constraints may

make it necessary to organize the synchronous intercultural meetings outside regular class hours. But there is more. Accessing the online environment from the students' homes or from a school location other than a crowded computer room provides the communicative privacy required in particular for spoken communication.

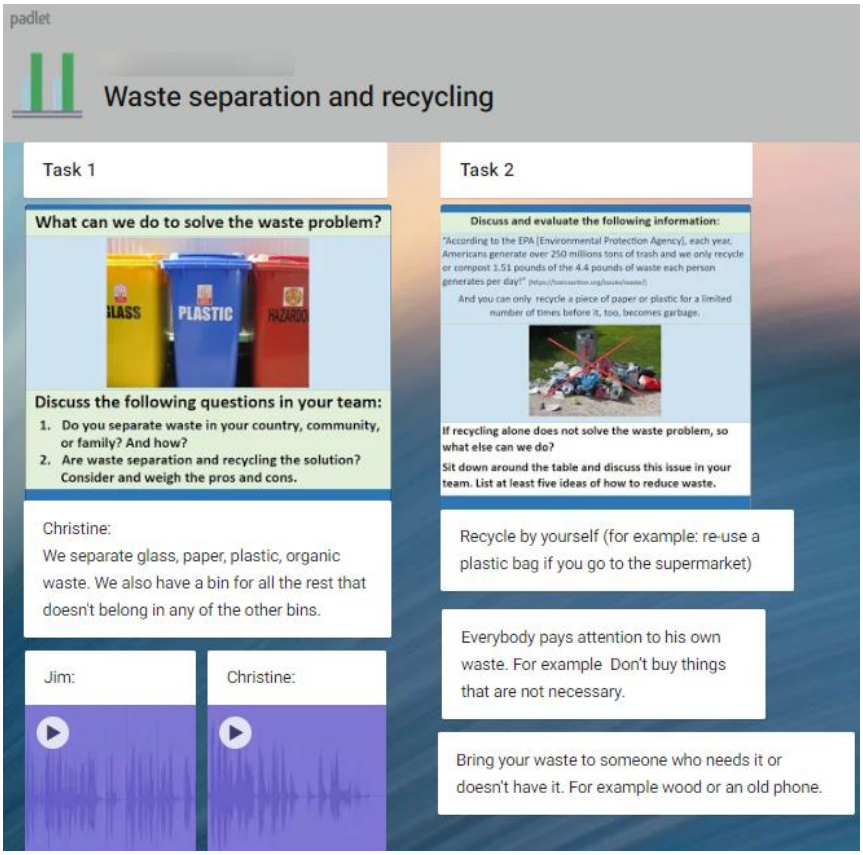

Figure 3: Asynchronous exchange on a Padlet wall

Asynchronous exchanges have the advantage that the interacting students can work at their own local times and at their own pace. On a digital Padlet wall, for instance, students can post written messages combined with pictures and sound and video recordings; and they can respond to and comment on each other's posts. Examples from the TeCoLa task pool include "Information about myself", "Early childhood education - Outdoor play areas" or "Waste separation and recycling" (Figure 3). While all this could also be done synchronously, the asynchronous mode has the advantage that the students can revise their texts and recordings before posting them until they are satisfied with the result. Padlet can be used equally well with larger or smaller groups of students; and it can be used both within class hours with teacher support and scaffolding as required or outside class hours with opportunities for more autonomous practice.

The intercultural virtual exchange tasks collected in the TeCoLa Teacher Resources can be used as they are. More often than not, however, teachers and students may want to change and adapt them in collaboration with their partners to make them better fit their own pedagogical needs and preferences. It is also crucial to carefully consider how to pedagogically integrate the international activities in blended learning arrangements with preparatory and follow-up activities in the local teams in class. The fact that the same topic can be addressed in different tool environments, e.g. a TeCoLa Virtual World scenario, a BigBlueButton video chat, or a Padlet wall, can be used for differentiation purposes. Students

could, for instance, be enabled to participate with their available infrastructures, use tools they feel most comfortable with, or choose a type of skill (e.g. writing in Padlet over speaking in BigBlueButton) that matches their immediate learning objectives and scaffolding needs.

Whatever the focus of pedagogical communicative practice, its smooth operation and success should never be taken for granted. Virtual exchanges offer new and pedagogically highly desirable possibilities for more authentic communicative interaction and non-native speaker identity building outside the face-to-face classroom (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2017). But they also lead to new challenges for speaker-learners, in particular with regard to monitoring their interaction for communicative success and trying to improve their intercultural communicative competence, in general and in the respective target language. Communication monitoring goes beyond comprehension and production; it also, and most significantly, concerns speaker-learners' attitudinal skills of openness, empathy and behavioural flexibility - skills that are equally needed for intercultural and ordinary communication. Insights from case studies (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2019) show the pedagogical potential of communication monitoring for helping speaker-learners develop an emancipated awareness of their own requirements of communicative success and of ways in which to address arising challenges. At the same time, however, it appears that speaker-learners' use of explicit monitoring is somewhat cautious and restrained, remaining far below what is pedagogically desirable. This is arguably partly due to a school effect of task completion over extensive communication, partly due to the influence of everyday communication with a certain preference for 'wait and see' and 'let it pass' strategies. Continuous pedagogical mentoring is indeed needed to help speaker-learners become aware of the learning value of more extensive and collaborative monitoring for communicative success and to encourage them to step out of well-trodden paths.

From a social constructivist perspective, successful implementation of a pedagogical lingua franca approach aims to enable speaker-learners to make responsible and judicious use of their creative capabilities of communication and language learning when developing their own version of the input language taught. This inevitably brings up the thorny question of assessment. The task descriptions in the TeCoLa Teacher Resources integrate suggestions for self-, peer, and teacher assessment with an emphasis on 'assessment for learning' as complementary to 'assessment for grading'. The objective is to guide students to raise their learning awareness, reflect on their task understanding and requirements of success, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The crucial role of assessment is also emphasized by Kirkpatrick (2019), who wisely comments that "developing [assessment] tasks that are loyal to the principles behind the ELF approach to language teaching is not an easy task" (p. 199). No matter how we turn things around, at the end of the day, it is the nature of assessment that decides on the emancipation of the foreign language speaker-learner.

Conclusions

Perception, communication and language learning competences were shown to be based on people's ordinary creative capabilities. In this connection, reference to the social constructivist nature of the processes involved emphasized the essential interdependence between individual construction and social negotiation. As a consequence, the emancipatory goal in language learning was shifted from rejecting SNSE to liberating speaker-learners to be allowed to create their own 'MY English' version guided by their own requirements of communicative and communal success. Against this backdrop, the ELF focus in ELT changed from teachers' awareness of externally available ELF communication to speaker-learners' active involvement in their own pedagogically mentored ELF encounters in virtual exchanges. As regards establishing a pedagogical lingua franca approach in ELT and in

foreign language teaching in general, serious challenges remain to be tackled. These include in particular the following:

- launching a reform of initial and continuing teacher education that acknowledges and embraces speaker-learners' ordinary creativity on the grounds of a social constructivist understanding of communication and language learning,
- helping teachers provide their students with opportunities for virtual exchanges in which they can engage in pedagogical lingua franca communication,
- guiding students to collaboratively monitor their performance with regard to their own requirements of success,
- encouraging teachers and students to make speaker-learner satisfaction part of their assessment criteria.

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