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Teaching into context by video sketching recording: Academic English with students of architecture

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Abstract

This paper describes an activity developed during one academic term with students of Architecture that study English (ESL) and Spanish (ELE) as a second language. Taking advantage of architecture students learning styles (Úbeda & Escribano 2002), the creation of some video sketching recording activity was developed as a course task in order to improve their language skills. The practicum took place with two groups of students; a group of International students (Erasmus) using Spanish as a second language (ELE) and a group of Spanish students with English as a second language (ESL). At the end of the course, a questionnaire was completed to gather students' feedback of this practice. The results obtained from them show a very fruitful and innovative material creation for teaching in specific contexts. This activity was handled under the research group of Innovative Education (APLAI) from the Technical University of Madrid.

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Keywords: Students of architecture; ELE; ESL; video; languages teaching.

1. Introduction

There comes a time, in Higher Education where our students seem to be unmotivated in their language classes, which implies changes are required in language teaching approaches. Sharing the idea of current publications Johnson, K. E. Golombek, Paula R. (2016) sustain the complex process of learning to teach is dependent on the practice in which we are engaged. The group of students involved in these media activities needed of a socialcultural context in an academic environment to provide the best of all of them.

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(The School of Architecture of Madrid, at the Technical University Madrid, is without a doubt the school with the higher number of students taking this degree in Spain. The sample of this practicum can provide new ways of understanding foreign language learning in the field of academic languages for specific purposes. Also, students of architecture show to have a predominant kinesthetic and visual learning style (Úbeda & Escribano 2002). Under this umbrella, it was thought to prepare, create, learn and design a media material able to cover not only the grammar issues at this stage of education, and specific vocabulary compulsory within their course, but also to create a learning tool where the students could be motivated whilst at the same time making sure their long-learning strategies would be involved.

2. Methodology

The students enrolled in both subjects (ESL and ESL for architects) and selected the six major aspects in which they are involved during their degree in architecture. These situations were able to have a language theme of study within a specific context. The language knowledge of both groups was at B2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The daily situations were classified in each field of study under the same topics as is shown in table 1 above.

Table 1. Academic topic students selected.

| EE | ESL |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. En la Oficina Internacional | 1. In the Erasmus Office I |
| 2. En el Taller de Maquetas | 2. In the Workshop |
| 3. En el Laboratorio de Materiales | 3. In the Laboratory |
| 4. En la Sala de Ordenadores | 4. In the Computer Lab |
| 5. En la Clase de Proyectos | 5. In the Studio |
| 6. Otra vez en la Oficina Internacional | 6. In the Erasmus Office II |

Taking these topics into account, we asked the students to create, in groups of five, a standard dialogue for each one. The dialogues created by the students in class compile the descriptors from the ACEPIL Portfolio (2009) under a B2 level. The grammar, specific vocabulary and authentic academic situations were developed and written by the students in a motivating teaching/learning interaction. These dialogues were then used later as the basic scripts for each video sketch recording that the students carried out. The texts that they created were representative scripts. In picture one before the film shoot, the students revised the dialogue to be represented. Picture two shows an example video sketches activities recorded, in the workshop practice.



Fig.1. Students revise the script.



Fig.2. Students in action.

The advantage of working with Spanish students learning English, as well as foreign students learning and doing the same task, provided us with a wide range of learning material in terms of language teaching.

The final sketches recorded were part of the teaching material created by the APLAI research group of Innovative Education (<http://aplai2.aq.upm.es/>). The information gathered on this website serves as a tool to improve communication and intercultural skills from a realistic, academic and professional approach. Although they are the basis, the use of a fluent and natural language during the recordings provided more richness and spontaneity.

Concerning the specific vocabulary the students learnt during the class preparation for writing the video sketches has also compiled by the APLAI group and can be seen at <http://aplai2.aq.upm.es/>.

Although we used ordinary standard video camera for the sketches presented in this paper, our students proposed other tools closer to them, such as i-movie. Currently some additional academic situations are being used by the students in class with this i-movie tool.

3. Students questionnaire results

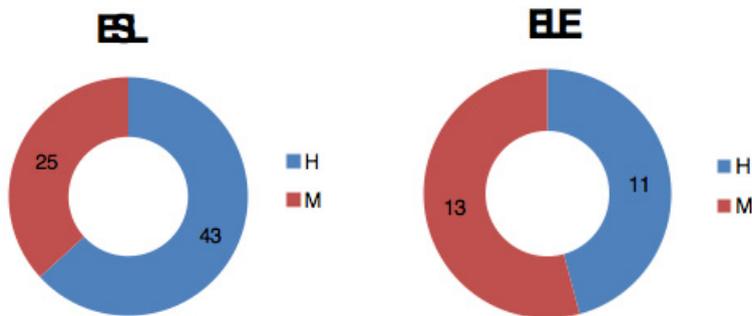


Fig.3. Students' sample.

The overall sample was 92 students of which 68 belonged to a group of Spanish students studying English as a second Language EFL ESL (43 men, 25 women) and 24 international students studying Spanish as a foreign Language ELE (11 men, 13 women).

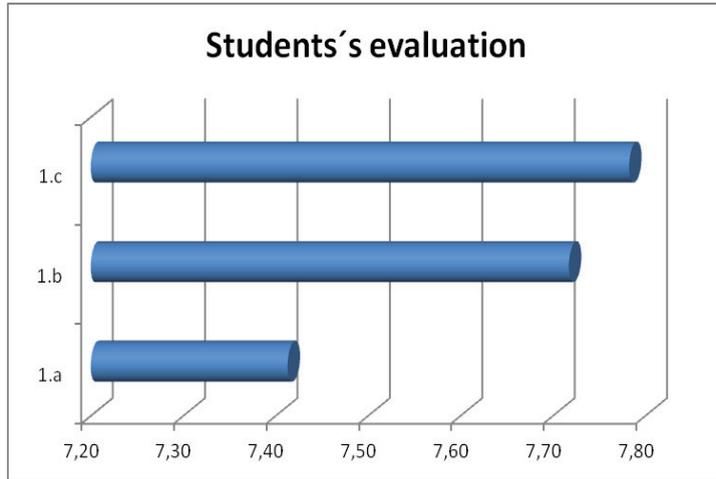


Fig.4. Students' Evaluation.

- 1 .a. The process of creating a dialogue in a common context of academic and professional communication.
- 1 .b. Representing what has been learnt orally in a way close to the near future use.
- 1 .c. The recording process.

The recording consisted of public speaking and the use of a foreign language in a specific context. This graph shows that the more traditional methods, such as creating a specific text type at a level with a learnt vocabulary was favoured less considerably than representing the dialogue in front of a camera.

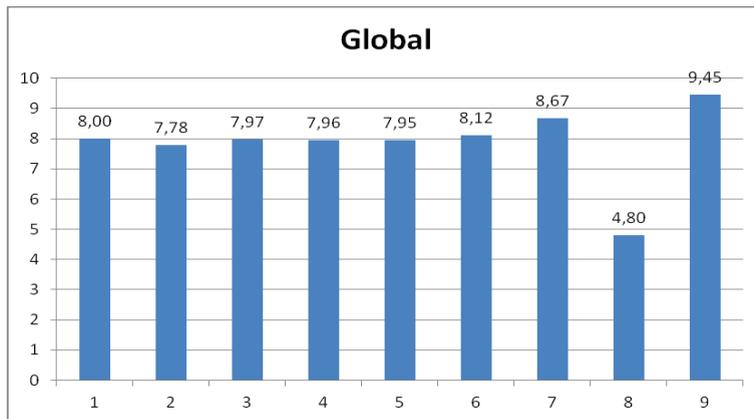


Fig.5.Global questionnaire answers.

The assessment of the responses is very positive as indicated by the chart above; it includes questions 7 and 9, which have a higher rating than what we can see in assessment 8. This suggests that this approach may not be effective for them in other subjects, when shown in contrast to the higher scores (e.g. question 9) to use teaching of foreign languages. This makes sense as the subject of architectural study is based on an important, technical part. However, this type of methodology would be feasible in natural and creative subjects in the study of foreign languages, and this is reflected by the high value from question 7.

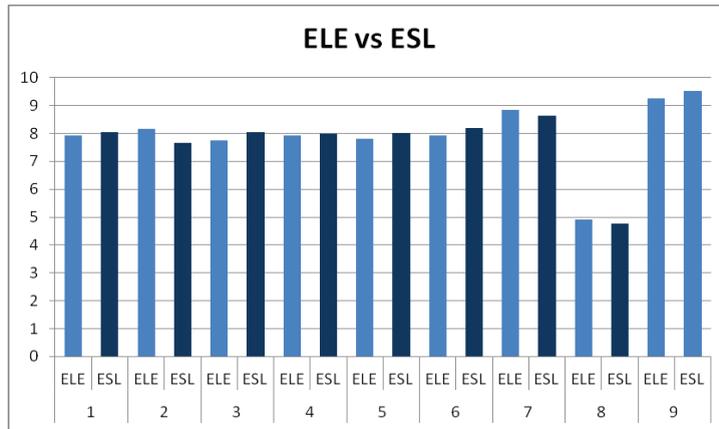


Fig.6. Answers by Languages.

By segmenting the type of language taught, no significant differences can be observed, which validates the usefulness of the tool regardless of the language. This is understood with the high values of question 9 ("I think this kind of experience is very useful in the use of foreign languages".)

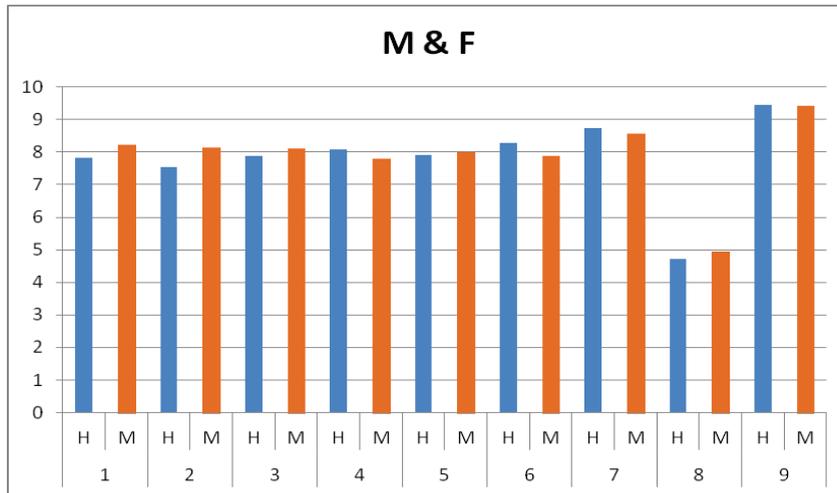


Fig.7. Answers by gender

By segmenting by gender does not appear relevant information; perhaps women are slightly more likely to recognize learning as reflected in question 1 and 2. However, they are slightly more critical in assessing how much have fixed grammatical structures, as seen in Question 3.

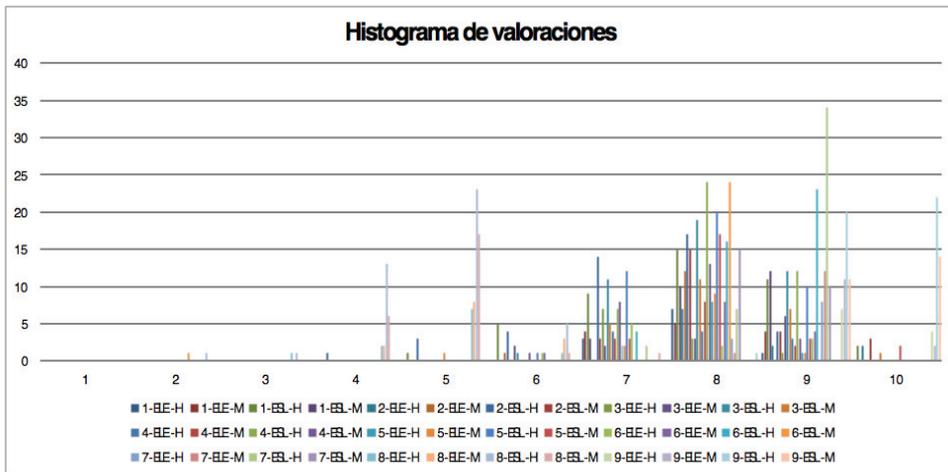


Fig.8. Histogram of students' evaluation.

In figure 6, the distribution of values of each subgroup of students to every one of the questions shown. (For example, the corresponding bars 1-ELE-H indicate how many male students chose ELE-each of the values from 1-10 to question 1. Of the 11 students, 3 assigned a value of 7, 7 a value of 8 and 1 a value of 9. The three arrows indicate the corresponding bars.

4. Conclusions

The final work of ELE & ESL video sketching recording by architecture students improved not only grammar and vocabulary positively, but also language fluency. This type of media practicum experience supports learning as Wan Ng (2015) claims “there has been a fast pace of change in the evolution of digital technologies that are potentially useful for education. If we also add students are skillful with the technologies tools, it also increases students' self-confidence in term of foreign language communication. By using these media gadgets, communication is developed in a natural environment that enhances classroom learning in a positive and engaging way.

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Appendix A. The Students Questionnaire

| ELE/ESL CUESTIONARIO JUNIO 2015 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------|---|---|-------|---|---|-----|--|
| Hombre: | | | Mujer: | | | Edad: | | | | |
| 1. Me ha gustado la experiencia de trabajar el uso de una lengua extranjera creando unos guiones situacionales que se fueran a grabar en video. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| Valora cada uno de los siguientes aspectos en función de cuánto crees que te han aportado en el aprendizaje. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.a. El proceso de crear un dialogo en un contexto habitual de comunicación académica y profesional. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 1.b. El representar lo aprendido de forma oral de una forma cercana a un futuro próximo de uso. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 1.c. El proceso de grabación. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 2. Considero que he aprendido de una forma más natural que como lo he hecho hasta ahora. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 3. Estoy muy satisfecho con relación al aprendizaje que he adquirido con esta experiencia. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 4. He fijado las estructuras gramaticales de la lengua de una forma más natural. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 5. He aprendido el vocabulario en un contexto más útil y lo recuerdo más fácilmente. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 6. He adquirido mucha seguridad en el uso de la lengua extranjera aprendida con esta experiencia. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 7. Me gustaría repetir otra experiencia similar en un futuro. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 8. Recomiendo estas prácticas docentes en otras asignaturas de mi carrera. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |
| 9. Creo que este tipo de experiencias es muy útil en el uso de lenguas extranjeras. | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | |

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