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# Conceptions and Use of “Language Resources” in Language Programs at the Tertiary Level: From CDs and Websites to Telecollaborative Exchanges

Joseph V. Dias

## Introduction

Research in applied linguistics and language learning has considered learners in comparative isolation from their context (Newman & Dickinson, 2017). The bias has been toward studying language learning in the classroom and in formal educational settings while neglecting lifelong language learning for personal enrichment or non-traditional ways of developing language skills together with intercultural competence that comes part and parcel with informal language exchanges or class-based telecollaborative exchanges. As a consequence of that bias, what have been conceived of as “language learning resources” have often been seen narrowly as the items that fit into a paradigm that views learning as largely isolated and involving individual goals that can be met by the provision of equipment and materials, along with some guidance about how they can be best utilized.

The research results reported here are part of a study looking at the coordination and use of language resources at a university language facility serving the University of Oxford’s 39 colleges, the Oxford University Language Centre. These heretofore unpublished results originated from a year-long sabbatical research investigation in the 2009/10 academic year into how language learning resources are conceptualized, utilized, and evaluated in selected tertiary-level language programmes in the UK, US, and India. The first stage of the study focused on the Oxford University Language Centre (OULC), investigating—through interviews and surveys—how teachers, students, and support staff (particularly the librarian and associated IT support personnel) conceive of



“language resources,” use them, and help bring them to each other’s awareness. A version of the report was submitted to the director of the OULC, Dr. Robert Vanderplank as the study was part of an action research project meant to suggest areas for possible reflection and improvement.

The term “language resources” will be applied in its vernacular, pedagogic sense, rather than in its specialized usage in the field of natural language processing. That is, it is not defined narrowly as “a set of speech or language data and descriptions in machine readable form” (European Language Resources Association, 2021). In fact, the vast majority of responses to the question “When you hear the expression ‘language resources’ what comes to mind?” in the study showed that the term was understood from the perspective of what learners require to facilitate their language acquisition. Only the few respondents who were specialists in linguistics had alternate interpretations.

### **Looking back puts the present into sharper focus:**

#### **A pivotal moment**

Looking back at this historical data now is important since we can see that the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a pivotal period for the reassessment of what constitutes learning resources—including language resources—as the iPhone debuted just two years before and mobile learning was changing the landscape of teaching by introducing exciting new possibilities, particularly in the social realm and in expanding the location and time when learning could take place. Combining the personal computer (PC) and the phone in one convenient package started the trend toward gradually displacing personal computers’ primacy as the digital productivity and communication device of choice, leading smartphone sales to overtake those of PCs by 2011. Suddenly, learning was taken out of the four walls of the classroom like never before. There was less of a need for institutions to provide what had been traditionally seen as language learning resources, equipment such as DVD players and PCs tied down to a particular location, and more of a need to harness the capabilities of mobile devices through innovations in how tasks were conceived, opening up opportunities for collaboration and more global-minded curricula.

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Regrettably, teachers, for the most part, remained grounded to their own classrooms. Virtual exchanges, for example, although technically not difficult to carry out thanks to the advancements in technological affordances, were still few and far between.

### **COVID-19 pandemic and the further normalization of CALL: Another pivotal moment**

As the COVID-19 pandemic goes into its second year, we find ourselves at another pivotal period. CALL had been gradually making inroads into all levels of education, from elementary to tertiary (Livingstone, 2015). Before the pandemic, educators had the luxury to ignore the innovations that digital technologies, mobile learning, and learner management systems (LMSs) brought to the learning environment—or tepidly dip into them. The pandemic brought in an imperative to embrace the technology or leave the profession. Online learning became the only option in many jurisdictions throughout the world. Now that educators have broadened their skill sets to include, first, emergency remote teaching (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020) and then, as the pandemic lengthened, more mature and stable implementations of online instruction, it is unlikely that there will be a wholesale return to pre-pandemic modes of teaching.

Blended learning will likely play an increasingly major role in education at all levels and subject areas, and administrators may permanently call on teachers to use a HyFlex (Northern Illinois University, 2021) arrangement to accommodate students with disabilities or to expand programs that include non-traditional students. These changes have consequences for how language learning resources are conceived, how they should be made available to teachers and students, whether placing them in a physical facility makes sense, and how they are connected to curricular innovations.

Some educators may see this only as an unwelcome, extra burden, while others will recognize the possibilities for revitalizing education by using their newly-acquired skill sets to link their students—either in real-time through synchronous communication tools such as Zoom and WebEx (Stefanile, 2020), or



through Moodle and other LMS-based platforms for interaction—to engaging exchanges and telecollaborations. Local resources like those traditionally found in language labs or language resource centers are likely to play an increasingly minor role in the lives of teachers and learners as human resources come to be seen as the primary resources. The latter part of this paper will explore some of those possibilities by describing task-based virtual exchanges that had linguistic and cultural components. But, first, we will look back to the findings of the Oxford University Language Centre study as they illustrate the nexus of past conceptions of language resources and their reconceptualization in the mobile and (eventually) post-pandemic era.

### **Beginnings of the investigation into language resources at the Oxford University Language Centre (OULC)**

#### ***First contact***

The present author sought, and received, permission from the OULC director and assistant director, Robert Vanderplank and Deborah Mason, respectively, to carry out a research project involving participant observation, interviews, and the administration of a set of surveys focusing on conceptions and uses of language resources. The Centre was selected as a locus of investigation since it was, on the one hand, typical of language research centers at the time—with its inclusion of pedagogical, technological, and research support for the learning of languages—but atypical in that it served the needs of faculty and students at one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world, where it was believed that resources in analog form might still hold sway, making it an ideal location to observe a facility at the cusp of change.

The participant observation part of the study included enrollment in an elementary Mandarin course offered by the center and many hours of use of the Centre's facilities for study and the inspection of resources. A set of surveys—separate ones directed at the students, faculty, and centre's support staff—were administered online through SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey, 2021) during a two-week period in the last week of January through the first week of February 2010. The results of those surveys are reported here and put into perspective by

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reference to what was revealed through the interviews and participant observation, as well as how developments in language teaching and learning over the past decade color the interpretation of the findings.

### *Oxford University Language Centre (OULC) described*

The Oxford University Language Centre serves the language study needs of the students and faculty at the 45 colleges that make up the University of Oxford. It is a physical facility located in Oxford on Woodstock Road directly opposite Somerville College and Oxford Oratory Church of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, in a building that was formerly used as a lodge that displayed big game trophies. Now, the only "trophies" are proficiency in Mandarin, Arabic, Portuguese, or the other 8 modern languages currently being taught there. The Centre, at the time of the study, brought together a computer lab, simulating the appearance of traditional cubicle-filled language labs, a library of books and CD-ROMs for the study of approximately 400 languages, a quiet open space enclosed by the shelves for the perusal of those materials, private suites distributed around the edges of the library equipped with VCRs, DVD players and older devices making it possible to access items in legacy formats, and small classrooms where languages were taught.

Upon entering the OULC, one could see a welcoming reception area with tables and comfortable chairs that invited relaxed socializing, and a wall decorated with scenes of social events that the Centre hosted. Around a corner from the lounge-like area was a bank of computer-equipped cubicles that surrounded a counter where learners could borrow language learning software which, at the time, was, for the most part, on CD ROMs. Near the stairwell leading to the second floor was a bulletin board that learners could use to post requests for language exchange partners. After climbing up a stairway to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the first thing that met one's eyes as they entered the library was a large table with recent editions of newspapers and magazines written in the 11 languages taught in the facility. The high-ceilinged open area for self-study was behind the table. The most prominent and visible members of the staff were a reference librarian and IT support personnel on the first floor.



The physical division in the facility between an upstairs that housed more traditional analog materials and a downstairs equipped with internet-connected PCs, that were primarily used at the time as delivery devices for language courses on CD-ROM, provided a snapshot of this juncture in time between when language resources were primarily seen as static and employed in isolation and the budding mobile era when they came to be viewed as dynamic and social in nature. As was mentioned earlier, Apple's iPhone launched just two years before and, in the year of the investigation, the first iPad with Wi-Fi debuted (Finn, 2021). Luminaries in the field of CALL (computer assisted language learning) began to speculate about how mobile learning might change the field of language learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009) and how resource access and use might change. The dwindling numbers of OULC patrons (reported by the director and reference librarian, and observed by the author) in the 2009/10 academic year portended the changes that were to come over the next decade as learners moved online with mostly mobile devices.

### **Putting language resource centers and language labs into historical perspective**

#### ***Language resource centers vs. language laboratories***

Language resource center (LRC) is a term used to refer to the majority of centers today which aim to assist in the efforts of foreign language education as curricular, technological, pedagogical, and research support centers. Currently, there seems to be a good deal of variability among these institutions, which are often distinguished from what are called "language laboratories" (LL), facilities that emerged in the early 20th century primarily as technology support centers for the teaching and learning of languages. Some language resource centers house somewhat modernized versions of language laboratories, and that was the case with the Oxford Language Resource Centre at the time of this study.

Historically, language laboratories have provided access to specialized technologies in a single location. Their name alone, language laboratory, summons up an image of words and phrases bubbling out of beakers, whilst a student on a slab awaits a jolt to the language centers of the brain. Not surpris-



ingly they have their roots in the Audiolingual Method, which considered proficiency as arising from repetitive drills and corresponding stimulus-based output (Shrum & Glisan, 2015).

### *Ties between these facilities and language learning methods*

At their very beginning, language laboratories made use of machines (initially Thomas Edison's so-called "talking machine," a phonograph that allowed sounds to be recorded and replayed after sonic vibrations were etched into a wax cylinder). Forty years later Charles C. Clarke, writing in the *Modern Language Journal*, observed that although "many experiments [involving the "talking machine"] have been made...in schools and colleges...the silent verdict brought in by its general abandonment is that it is not worth the trouble it involves." However, he also notes that the war that had just ended warranted its reassessment since there was a renewed need for "practical methods of instruction" (Clarke, 1918, p. 116).

By the time the next world war had come around, the affordances that recording and playback technology offered fit perfectly with the then-dominant learning theory, behaviorism. So, during the 2nd World War the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was created to provide officers with foreign language competence (Platte, 2015). Due to the influence of the Skinnerian behaviorist model that posited that languages were acquired just as other habits were (by positive reinforcement, and negative feedback when necessary), language labs were set up so that military personnel could listen to audio discs repeatedly, regurgitating what they heard, and recording their own output for evaluation. This so-called "Army Method" (Bayuk & Bayuk, 1983) was repackaged as audio-lingualism for the civilian market. Audio-lingualism got a great boost after the Soviets launched the Sputnik satellite in 1957, leading then-president Eisenhower to introduce a law (National Defense Education Act), which led universities to install specialized language laboratories. At the time, the typical language lab set up for drills—mostly involving successive substitutions of grammatical and lexical structures—featured the now familiar rows of cubicles equipped with tape recorders and headsets.

***Facilities resistant to change despite waves of evolving approaches and methods***

Despite the theoretical underpinnings of audio-lingualism being eroded in the early 1960s by the critiques of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* (1957) by Chomsky (1980), Wilga Rivers (Castagnaro, 2006), and others, the language labs of the time served as a model for the conception and design of language labs well into the future, and continued to influence how languages would be taught and what constituted "language resources."

This transpired through the period of successive methods and approaches to language learning (Celce-Murcia, 1991) that included the situational approach, the cognitive approach, the affective-humanist approach, the comprehension-based approach, and the communicative approach—which can be argued as holding primacy today. Although there are key distinctions among these methods, all of them are—to varying degrees—reactions against a mechanistic view of language acquisition that arose from Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* and the practice of audio-lingualism.

Yet, facilities referred to as language labs or language resource centers well into the 21st century continued to follow a model in which language resources were still seen as static, often mediated by devices (e.g., CD, LD, DVD players), and that allowed for a minimum of interaction with the content. Even when computers were introduced into the mix, the design of language learning facilities reflected the former paradigm in which learners would largely study in isolation, with little or no interactions with the wider community or world. As late as 2008, the US army was exporting hundreds of language labs to teach English to foreign government and military personnel so they could train or study in the United States (Boucher, 2008). These facilities were made up of the same sorts of cubicles used nearly 50 years earlier, with the addition of PCs and equipment that even at the time were rapidly becoming obsolete: CD, video, and audio cassette players, and digital videodisc. It is with this backdrop that the findings of the study are presented.



### The OULC Survey

Three versions of a survey focusing on conceptions of language resources and their use were administered to 1) users of the OULC facilities (mostly Oxford University students concurrently enrolled in courses offered at the Centre); 2) teachers of the courses that were then being taught there; and 3) the two main staff members supporting the Centre, a reference librarian and an IT specialist. Of the OULC users who responded, 15 failed to fill out the survey entirely, but, as 14 of them had completed at least half of the items, they were processed along with the others. So, the results of the student survey reflect 354 responses. A small number of learners in the language classes (fewer than 10) were faculty members of Oxford University colleges, part of the university administration, or visiting scholars. As an incentive for participation, an offer of book tokens—awarded to respondents selected at random—was made when the invitation to participate was sent out. There was a response rate of approximately 80% among the student users of the Centre, while only about half of the teachers responded, 11. Both of the principal support staff members submitted responses. The modest gift incentive was offered only to the student users of the Centre. Only the results of the OULC user survey will be reported here due to space constraints.

#### *Results of OULC user survey: Basic demographics*

Sixty-two percent of the users were female. They spoke, at least, 35 different native languages. Forty-one respondents skipped the item about their native language, possibly because they were part of such tiny language minorities that their anonymity would have been compromised. The following seven languages were the most common:

English	67.5%
German	8.2%
Chinese/ Spanish	4.8% each
French/ Italian	3.5% each
Russian	3.2%

28 additional languages were spoken by 2% or less of the respondents.

Although learners were concentrated in the 20-30 age range (64.6%) and 10% were under 20, another 10% were over 40, with 2% of those students over 65. Therefore, the average age of the users skewed higher than the usual university undergraduate population frequently sampled in educational research at the tertiary level. This was mainly due to the presence of graduate students and faculty members who were studying languages that played a role in their research or simply because they had an interest in learning languages. There was a fairly even balance of OULC users in the areas of STEM (93), humanities (102), and social sciences (106).

When asked about the language(s) students felt competence in other than their native language, 52.33% (N=175, out of the 299 who answered the question) felt confident in at least one other language--i.e., other than the one they were currently studying—at the intermediate level or higher, by their own reckoning.

French was the most popular language studied at OULC, with approximately a quarter of the students enrolled in various levels of French, followed by German (16.7%), Spanish (15%), English (13.3%), Italian (10%), Chinese (8%), Russian (4.6%), and fewer than 2% each in Welsh, Arabic, Japanese, Modern Greek, Portuguese, Georgian, and Hebrew. Nearly half of the students, 42.4%, were at the lower levels, variously labeled Elementary/ Threshold/ Near Beginners/ Beginners/ False beginners. 34.4% of the students were at the intermediate level (from lower to upper intermediate). 22.6% were at higher levels (variously labeled higher, advanced, proficiency).

### *Reasons given for studying the language*

While more than three quarters of the students said they were learning English because they had a genuine interest in it, about 35% stated that it was because they needed it for their academic studies, and a quarter because they believed it would be necessary for their present or future job. Respondents were able to select as many of the options as they felt applicable. Six percent of them were studying the language because it was their heritage language; ten students because it was the native language of their partner; six because they wished to



(64.6%) and students over usual university research at the centers and facilities for their research was a fairly small number (102), and

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learning that it was because they were of them students wished to

travel or live in the country where the language is spoken; and three because they have friends who speak that language (see Fig. 1).

I need to do so for my academic studies.	35.6%	(124)
I have an interest in this language and its culture.	76.7%	(267)
It is necessary for my present (or future) job.	26.1%	(91)
I am doing it because it is my heritage language. (i.e., language spoken by parents or other relatives.)	6.0%	(21)
70% of the students had never taken courses at OULC in previous years.		

Fig. 1: Reasons for studying (a) language(s) at OULC.

### *Self-attributions of progress made*

To the question, "Which of the following do you think has been the MOST important factor in helping you to make progress in the language you are now studying (i.e., in the period you have been associated with OULC)?", 65% of the students selected "attendance in class," followed distantly by "self-initiated independent study" at 12.6%, and "homework given by teacher" at 6.9%, and "use of language in the work environment" at 4.3%. None of the other individual options accounted for more than 4% of the responses. Interestingly, nearly twice as many respondents selected "self-initiated independent study" as those who chose "homework given by teacher."

It was much more difficult for respondents to agree on what the LEAST important factor was in helping them make progress as there was a more even spread throughout all the options. Although the largest segment of them chose "independent study guided by librarians at OULC," it no doubt could be attributed to the fact that such a small percentage of students were availing themselves of the OULC library and IT services.

### *Usage of the OULC resources outside of the classroom*

Considering the fact that the resource library is located in the same building as the classrooms where all the language classes are held, a surprising percentage of the students—42.3%—had never visited it, while a quarter of them had visited it only once, and 16% only on one or two occasions. Fewer

than 5% of the students (N=16) had been visiting the library on a regular basis.

The low rates of regular usage of the library resources, including CD ROMs and other IT resources, cannot be attributed primarily to students being unaware of the materials available for the language they were studying, as 60.5% of them reported that their teacher had "told [them] what resources were available." It seems odd that nearly 20% of students were unsure whether their teacher had informed them of the available resources—nearly the same percentage as those who believed that their teacher had *not* told them about the available resources. It should be noted that some teachers may have done this later in the semester, after the administration of the survey.

As the subsequent results show, learners taking courses at OULC may not have been availing themselves of the copious resources in the OULC library's collection of print, analog AV, and digital holdings, but they were able to identify other language resources that they had been taking advantage of, some of which included online and human resources that the Centre did little to formally encourage.

### *Resources identified by students as potentially useful*

A rather large minority of students (27%) were aware of resources they deemed to be useful, but which they believed were not held by the OULC Library. These included:

**Podcasts** (mentioned by 3 students, with one evangelically proclaiming in uppercase letters "FREELY AVAILABLE PODCASTS - A TERRIFIC RESOURCE THAT SHOULD BE PUBLICISED MORE.")

**Dictionaries** (mentioned by 14 students, with 10 of them specifically referring to online dictionaries)

- nciku (for Chinese study): <http://www.nciku.com/>
- tranlit.ru and wiktionary
- LEO Website: [dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org) (for German)
- picture dictionaries

**Materials available on Internet**--including the online dictionaries noted above (mentioned by 30 students). Some students were very specific:



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- French Zone on BBC website
- Site recommended by teacher: [ulaits.texas.edu](http://ulaits.texas.edu)
- [learnitalian.com](http://learnitalian.com)
- a (paying) Chinese learning website ([Chinesepod.com](http://Chinesepod.com))
- songs and lessons online
- an online dictionary with the facility to store vocabulary lists: <http://www.dict.cc/>
- YouTube

One student wrote: "I wish the language center can update its resources (esp. online library) to integrate more multimedia material (drills, practices, tests.etc) and other reading material."

#### Online (streaming) radio (2)

- spoken-word radio at [listenlive.eu](http://listenlive.eu)

#### Audio materials (10) (off-line)

- Michel Thomas (mentioned by 3)
- Pimsleur
- Linguaphone courses
- CDs that accompany course text (which were not required but student decided to purchase anyway)
- Language tapes uploaded to iPod
- BBC Italian course on CD
- Tapes & Audio books

#### Software (9)

- Rosetta Stone (mentioned by 5)
- "In Action" software
- Hebrew CD-ROM
- "Before You Know It" (BYKI language courses)
- Flashcard software for learning vocabulary

#### Television

- Sky TV
- Popular TV series
- Occasional programme on telly late at night (I record them)

#### Books (21)

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| -- Teach Yourself Spanish | -- Textbooks and exercise books |
| -- Children's storybooks  | -- Thesaurus                    |

- Parallel translation short stories    -- Themen 2 Aktuell Workbook
- Grammar books (2)    -- IELTS books
- Academic writing books    -- GRE material
- Fiction books    -- Study guides
- Living English Structure    -- イギリス日常英会話 Total Book

**Movies** (6) (either in the cinema or through DVDs)

- cartoons with closed captions

**Magazines** (3)

**Newspapers** (2)

**Other libraries** (3)

- Somerville College library (one of Oxford's colleges directly across from OULC)
- DVDs from the County Library
- Spanish DVDs from Taylor Institute

Also...

**Literature and media** (picked up in the country where the language being studied is spoken)

**Everyday life**

**Writing**

The fact that more than a quarter of the students were making use of materials not available in the OULC library does not suggest any failing of the library. Rather, it is indicative of the resourcefulness of students and their skill at locating a wide variety of the diverse resources that could more easily come to their attention through the Internet and social networking (Facebook had just begun operations 6 years before and Twitter a mere four years).

Some of those resources were located on external websites or available for download as podcasts. It was suggested to the Centre director that OULC might do more to 1) provide links to the more helpful of these sites and lists of podcasts deemed by students and teachers to be the most useful, possibly after vetting submissions made to a "suggestion box" on the OULC's website, 2) select some of the more popular and valuable audiovisual materials and textbooks for inclusion in the library's collection, 3) survey the holdings of libraries in the University of Oxford system and the Oxfordshire County system for



complementary resources, which students could be informed of through the website, and 4) inform students of events—such as screenings of foreign language films and language exchange nights—that may be of interest to students.

It must be noted that the librarian was making excellent use of social networking tools such as Delicious (a now-defunct social bookmarking service) and Facebook to point students to useful sites and inform them of activities at the Language Centre and about new acquisitions.

### ***Resources recommended for inclusion in the OULC resource library***

Nearly 70% of students were unaware that the OULC could make purchases of new resources based on their recommendations. Having that knowledge might boost motivation, especially if their recommendations are acted upon while they are still studying at the OULC. Some respondents offered suggestions for specific resources, services, and facilities. While many of them overlapped with items on the list appearing in the previous section, the following categories, or particular items under a previously listed category, were novel. Many of the requests—such as "Sesame Street in German," materials for learning Uyghur or Quechua, or "juvenile" literature suitable for use in extensive reading—would have been difficult for librarians and OULC administrators to anticipate. Among the suggested materials were:

#### **Online materials for which a subscription is necessary**

- Busuu.com - possible site license

#### **Books**

- Ones people are likely to have read in English, making reading in the target language easier, e.g., *The Little Prince*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Harry Potter*.
- Academic writing books aimed at teaching writing to foreigners (an essay, proposal, etc.)
- Bilingual books - e.g., novels with Italian on one page and English on the facing page
- A few copies of the currently used textbooks [would help students who cannot afford them]

**Materials to meet the needs of advanced language learners**

- More advanced listening and software materials
- First Certificate and Advance resources

**Materials specific to particular languages**

- Materials for learning Uyghur
- Quechua / Spanish learning materials
- Sesame Street in German
- More Arabic learning material
- Basic and intermediate level Albanian books (workbooks or 'teach-yourself' guides)
- Additional resources for Modern Greek (including newspapers)
- Interesting Italian magazines and newspapers

***Reasons given for low levels of library usage***

Not surprisingly, the primary reason students gave for not using the library was a lack of time (56.4%), and nearly 10% were simply not aware of it. Almost 20% were discouraged by the fact that the materials could not be used at home, although few students felt that the atmosphere of the library was not inviting.

The library was in the process of changing its loan policy and would soon be allowing home use of some of its holdings. Some de facto "borrowing" has been going on as the librarian had noticed books and other materials disappearing from the shelves at the beginning of the term and mysteriously returning at the end of it. This was an example of students taking "ownership" of their learning in a very literal sense.

***Language exchange partners as "resources"***

Fewer than 14% of teachers had recommended that their students arrange a language exchange partner. It is possible that they did not feel it to be necessary because, on the first floor of the OULC, there is a prominently displayed bulletin board which shows how to go about finding an exchange partner. In fact, 58.6% of students were aware that the bulletin board was intended to facilitate language exchange partnerships. That means, a large minority (41.4%) were not getting the message. Even so, 12.2% of the students, overall, had set



up a face-to-face language exchange, a substantial number considering the busy schedules of the learners and the fact that few of them were majoring in the language they were studying.

Predictably, among those who were aware of the opportunity, the main reason cited for not arranging a language exchange was a lack of time (63.6%), followed by "inability of finding a partner" (14.2%), and "insecurity or shyness" (10.7%). Some students thought that their classroom experience was sufficient (3), that an exchange would not be productive at their low level of competence (6), or that it was not relevant to their needs, which was in reading or translation rather than in conversational skills (3). Others had partners or friends with whom they could practice (8), had put "finding a language exchange partner on their 'to do' list" (2), or had left notes on the bulletin board but received no response (2). A few did not seem to understand the concept of having a language exchange as they commented that they were "worried it [would] cost too much." One respondent felt that he was too old for an exchange.

#### *Use of OULC's facilities for language exchange*

Although the OULC library allows students to use its private audiovisual rooms for language exchange sessions, three-quarters of the students were unaware of it. The librarian mentions that this is allowed during the library tour, but, as many students had not been using the library, they had not learned of this resource. Of those who did know about it, fewer than 2% were actually using the audiovisual rooms for that purpose. As almost 30% of the total number of students who had not known about it wished to use the facilities for language exchange now that they had been informed, it would be useful for teachers to reinforce the librarian's message by telling students in class about it.

#### *Online language exchange*

When students were asked if they had been involved in any sort of online language exchange, it emerged that fewer than 10% of them had done so, with only one participating at the recommendation of her advisor or as part of a class

requirement. All of the others (N=29) engaged in an online exchange through their own initiative.

Considering the fact that more than half of the students (53.2%) were not doing an online exchange but reported that they wished to engage in one, and considering the obstacles cited by students in arranging face to face exchanges (including insecurities about their language ability and worries about personal safety by a few), it seems reasonable that such exchanges be actively encouraged, perhaps even incorporating them as integral parts of courses. Of course, it remains to be seen, if, when presented with the opportunity for participating in an online language exchange, the students who expressed interest through the survey would follow through.

### *Perceived obstacles to carrying out language exchanges*

Some students felt that either a face to face or online exchange would be much less useful at the elementary level. Previous research (Pemberton & Kasten, 1996) has pointed out how important it is that language partners be well matched and for ground rules to be established, but it is not clear if a threshold level of vocabulary and competence in the partner's language is necessary for success. Pemberton & Kasten (1996) interviewed ten partnerships that they considered to be "successful" as the participants had been meeting for two years for a minimum of 50 hours each. The interviewees agreed on the points summarized in Fig. 2.

It may be desirable to hold focus groups among language learners who have formed what have been deemed to be "successful" language exchange partnerships in order to construct a set of guidelines that are appropriate for the uniqueness of a particular setting, such as OULC, since those listed by Pemberton & Kasten (1996), although sensible, came from a study of science and technology students in Hong Kong about a quarter of a century ago.

In terms of perceived obstacles to participation specifically in *online* exchanges, age was cited by a few respondents, as the following comment illustrates:



- **language use:** one language should be used at a time; i.e., code switching should be avoided.
- **choosing a partner:** partners should be at a similar language level, age, education level, major or profession
- **group size:** pair or 3 people at most
- **organization:** meetings should be held regularly
- **decide on aim of meetings:** aims should be negotiated
- **select topics of discussion:** find out what others want to discuss and specify topics beforehand
- **style of meetings:** whether they are formal and highly structured or casual will depend on the personality and tastes of the participants
- **materials:** partners may choose to centre their activities around materials or avoid materials if they pose a distraction

Fig. 2: Keys to "successful" language exchange partnerships (from Pemberton & Kasten (1996).

"As an 'oldie' I am not interested because I am not a regular user of online facilities and find the whole process rather intimidating. It's simply a factor of age. Youngsters know their way round these things and I don't."

Another respondent had very specific expectations and desires for online exchanges, which he had the resourcefulness to fulfill.

"I'm only interested in discussing grammatical issues on, say, WordReference [forums at <http://www.wordreference.com/>]."

Perhaps a limited amount of class time can be set aside for teachers and the more resourceful students to mentor the ones who lack confidence or simply do not know how to go about setting up an online language exchange or a robust face-to-face one. Alternatively, virtual exchanges can be part of task-based in-class activities integrated with the respective curricular goals on both sides of the exchange. It is sometimes the case that informal language exchanges follow from structured in-class exchanges when students find their exchange intrinsically motivating and enjoyable.

*The use of mobile devices for language study*

The majority of students (57.5%) used some sort of mobile media player and a third of all the respondents have used that device for language learning purposes. Most of the content mentioned was specifically for language learning purposes rather than material originally intended for native speakers of the language. Some said that they found it useful for extra practice in conjunction with what they were learning in their classes.

When asked what sort of device they were using, the iPod was the most common (used by 30 students), followed by MP3/4 players (16), smartphones other than the iPhone (8), iPhones (4), and laptops (1). Remember that this study was conducted just a few years after the introduction of the first iPhone, so these devices, and smartphones in general, would have been seen as an expensive luxury by many students at the time. However, the Wi-fi enabled Apple iPod Touch made its appearance two years before and students were already seeing its utility for accessing online language resources such as the following:

- Podcasts (41) [some mentioned using scripts that accompany podcasts]
- Content transferred from audiobooks or CDs that accompany language courses or textbooks (23—but only 4 of those mentioned audiobooks directly)
- Dictionary reference (4)
- Listening to the radio on their mobile (probably for the students studying English—but possibly as podcasts of recorded foreign language radio broadcasts as well) (6)
- Reading downloadable e-books

The most popular content accessed through mobile devices included a wide variety of podcasts, mobile-friendly versions of commercial language courses, vocabulary-learning apps, and streaming foreign language radio. A sampling of those resources are shown in Fig. 3

Only one respondent brought up a limitation of mobile learning that she found frustrating: "I was given a French-learning CD that was specifically for



- lectures from iTunes University [Access to the app and all its content will continue until the end of 2021]
- German radio podcasts (Deutsche Welle Radio)
- MP3s of spoken word "flashcards"
- Michel Thomas Course and informal podcasts.
- I transferred my BBC Italian course onto my iPod so that I could listen to it while cycling to work. iFlipr flashcards app
- Oxford multi-language pack pro app (contains searchable Concise Oxford dictionaries in German (Duden), French (Hachette), Spanish, and Italian)
- Just purchased a phrasebook suitable for the iPod. I'm hoping it will be useful for learning on the go so I can take advantage of the time I have on the bus commuting to work and during my walks into town at lunch.
- I enjoy listening to music in the languages I am studying.

Fig. 3: Resources accessed by students through their mobile devices—mostly through iPods or the WiFi-enabled iPod Touch.

an iPod but I find if I'm not physically in an environment where I can repeat what I hear, it's not useful."

### *How OULC users defined "language resources"*

310 (out of a total of 354) respondents offered their definitions of "language resources." As was mentioned in the first part of this report, the term "language resources" was used in its pedagogical and practical sense. Most responses showed that the term was understood simply as what learners require to facilitate their language acquisition, although a few linguists among the respondents had more complicated understandings of the term.

Interestingly, only 18 respondents listed "teaching (4)," "teachers (7)," "tutors (6)," "experts/professionals that have knowledge of a language," or "professors" as language resources. One such student considered a language resource to be "access to tutors for help between lessons, particularly regarding pronunciation and understanding." Some respondents gave definitions of language resources, some listed examples, and others gave a definition with examples.

A small minority of respondents considered language resources to be

restricted to online materials, while most listed online material as resources along with a host of more traditional ones. An even smaller minority expressed the belief that language resources were materials used for self-study (perhaps while simultaneously taking a language class) or independent study (when studying a language without a teacher's supervision outside of class). It is possible that other students held these views implicitly. In future surveys it would be interesting to add an item that asks directly whether respondents think that language resources are materials limited to those used for self or independent study. This belief may influence the likelihood that students will pursue language exchanges or engage in cooperative or collaborative informal learning, since their participation would depend on whether they view people and target language culture as resources to draw from. Here are their definitions categorized:

***Extremely narrow understandings of language resources***

- Anything I could borrow from the library in order to learn the language
- Things that can be used for self-study or materials for independent study
- Information and facilities to aid the study of a language
- Facilities with good equipment and trained personnel

***Definition confined to media***

- Media in the language of study that might enhance or illuminate the understanding of that language

***Extremely broad and all-inclusive understandings of language resources***

- Anything in the target language would be a language resource, including people you can practice with, books, films, audio recordings, webcasts and podcasts (audio or video), music, periodicals, websites, flashcards, games, computer games, dictionaries and grammars, word-a-day software... there's a massive amount of stuff out there.
- different ways of accessing the language. So...its use in all forms written, spoken, aural and oral. [According to this definition, the resources are keys that allow students to gain access to the language.]

Fig. 4: Definitions of "language resources" by OULC users, from the narrowest understandings to the most broad.



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Clearly, what one identifies as "language resources" is influenced by previous language learning experiences and the present learning context. However, the historical moment also plays a major role in these conceptualizations. In this case, that "moment" was characterized by advances in mobile technology making access to content and connectivity to people easier than ever before. As with most historic junctures in which disruptive technologies or events hasten changes that may already be in the wind, there will be some early adopters (through intrepidity, privilege, or a combination of the two) and others who steadfastly retain older ways of thinking.

It is apparent from the list in Fig. 5 that the majority of what the respondents considered to be "language resources," were items typically found in libraries, language labs, or language resource centers (and the facilities themselves). Less than 10% of the respondents considered people to be potential resources or culture itself, but their inclusion was notable.

Although the results of the survey administered to the 11 teachers will not be presented in detail, it should be mentioned that the examples that they gave of "language resources" were remarkably similar in nature and in the frequency of their mention (Fig. 6).

The following chart more succinctly represents the differences between the OULC teacher and student examples of "language resources" (Fig. 7).

Students mentioned periodicals more often than "online sites or materials," but that category is absent from the chart since none of the teachers mentioned periodicals of any kind. Only one teacher brought up "people from other cultures," but it was not clear if this was a reference to their appearance in textbooks or audiovisual materials, or it meant actually making contact with them, as the students had used the expression to mean (so that item was not compared in the chart either).

- **books** (200)  
[Only 46 students out of the 200 who mentioned books specifically used the words "coursebook" or "textbook," suggesting that print materials--but not necessarily textbooks--are still seen as important resources.]
- **listening material** (154)  
[Included recordings on various media used for listening: tapes/ CDs/ podcasts/ audiobooks/ radio, which can be live or recorded]
- **video** (110)  
[References to videos included films. One respondent felt that shorts were especially useful. Others mentioned documentaries, DVDs (particularly those with subtitles or closed captions), and instructional videos (e.g., "Video courses which help you see the situation and real life usage of the language.")]
- **library** (77)  
[Often mentioned in conjunction with other physical facilities, such as media centers, recording/listening rooms, language laboratory, computer facilities, and audio facilities.]
- **periodicals** (74)
- **online sites or materials** (67)  
[Responses ranged from online dictionaries and translators to websites (e.g., BBC's website, Ma France, WordReference, Kuaile Hanyu for Mandarin, etc.) and interactive computer programmes.  
However, only one learner mentioned an online site for networking with other learners or with native speakers of the target language (mailing lists such as "Yahoo! Groups" to connect students in a particular classes)]
- **dictionaries** (52)  
[Of the 52 who mentioned them, only five referred specifically to online or electronic dictionaries.]
- **people** (26)  
[The majority of those who mentioned 'people' as resources thought of them as part of language. exchanges (6) and in terms of "contact with native speakers" (5), and some mentioned the opportunistic use of individuals in one's living environment. Easyjet was listed by one respondent as low cost air travel makes it easier to connect directly with native speakers of the target language.]
- **computer-based language learning tools**--which are not necessarily online (16)
- **literature/ novels/ non-fiction** (15)
- **TV/ satellite TV** (10)
- **culture** (5)  
[Five respondents mentioned culture; one included the people representing that culture but the others referred to materials (video, audio, books) that conveyed knowledge about the culture.]

Fig. 5: Examples of "language resources" conceived by OULC users.



- **books** (7) / 63.64% [including one reference each to coursebooks and textbooks]
- **video** (6) / 54.55% [ DVDs, videos, and films and one reference to audiovisual material--specifically "things less widely available than books and films"]
- **listening material** (5) / 45.45% [CDs, tapes, cassettes, recorded material, podcasts]
- **online sites or materials** (5) / 45.45% [Including Weblearn—Oxford's LMS]
- **library** (1) / 9.09%
- **people from other cultures** (1) / 9.09%
- **Idiosyncratic items** that did not fit in any of the categories:
  - photocopy machine
  - board to write on and something to write on it with
  - one's interlanguage

Fig. 6: Examples of "language resources" conceived by OULC teachers.

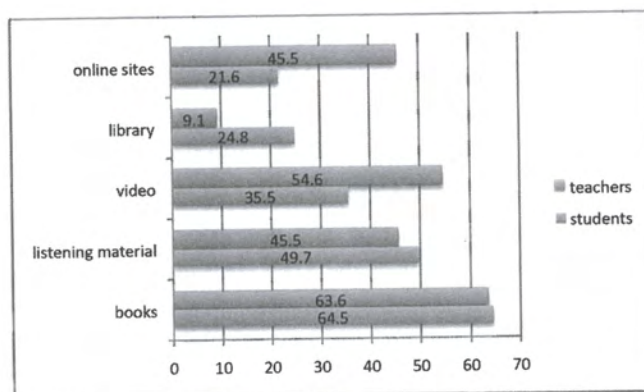


Fig. 7: Categories of language resources most frequently identified by students (N=310) and teachers (N=11) [in percentages of the two groups who identified items within these categories].

### Discussion and implications of the findings of the OULC investigation

In the year that the study at the OULC began (2009), an influential scholar published an article entitled "Will mobile learning change language learning?" (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). She believed that mobility could bring with it new practices and perspectives and allow learners "who are not dependent on access

to fixed computers [to] engage in activities that relate more closely to their current surroundings, sometimes crossing the border between formal and informal learning" (p. 157). These research findings clearly show signs that, thanks to the affordances of the new mobile technologies such as more highly developed smartphones, Apple's iPod, and WiFi-enabled tablet computers, language learning has been undergoing a transformation. Learners have more control over the resources they access online than they have over the materials housed in a physical facility, such as a language resource center where they were not even allowed to borrow the materials for home use. Also, the connectivity makes them more aware of how they can take advantage of human resources that may have previously been seen as too difficult to access.

The role that mobile technology plays in learning today is far greater than it was a decade ago, at the time of the study. It has brought us from "resource-based learning," which Benson (2001: 111) sees as referring to a learners' "independent interaction with learning materials," to a more ecological view of learning in which the learner has agency and can independently access, curate, and use resources that are defined broadly enough to include social connections and the potential for rich cultural exchange. In his study of resource use among female students at a university in the UAE, Palfreyman (2006) noted that although the students all had laptops and well-equipped language resource centers, one might think that the conservative cultural mores there would mitigate against copious opportunities to learn language through interaction outside the home. But he believes that to get a total snapshot of their use of resources at hand it is necessary to observe the wider web of communications that frame their learning. For example, how often do they speak with "guest" workers in English as a lingua franca or use Internet messaging to interact with peers or friends studying abroad? Paraphrasing Murdock et al. (1992), Palfreyman (2006: 4) writes that "resources are now more often seen as offering potential, or 'affordances', which are taken up and deployed in different ways by people within a social context" rather than being seen narrowly as material resources (i.e., teaching materials or equipment).



### Returning to the present: Lessons learned from emergency remote teaching

The forced change to a nearly universal online pedagogy that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated, led teachers throughout the world to expand their digital tool kits to the point that now millions of them, across all levels of education, teach in ways that were foreign to them two short years ago. For example, web conferencing apps such as Zoom, WebEx, and Google Meet (Singh & Awasthi, 2020) have made the teaching of synchronous remote classes almost second nature to us. Those who had never touched an LMS (learner management system) have had to learn the intricacies of Moodle, Edmodo, Schoology, Google Classroom, Canvas, or other systems (Krouska, Troussas & Virvou, 2017). Some adjunct faculty at universities in Japan have had to master 3 or 4 LMSs to fulfil their online teaching responsibilities at their multiple places of employment. The adrenaline-filled first year of the pandemic and the emergency remote teaching that accompanied it have vastly expanded the teaching repertoire of educators who are now aware of, and adept at, a range of online teaching modalities—from full distance learning mode to hybrid and hyflex. This expertise was often built by teachers who shared their knowledge and resources, through such forums as the Facebook Group "Online Teaching Japan" (OTJ, 2021), founded in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as a mutual support forum linking teachers at all levels of IT mastery and teaching experience.

Another notable project was that reported by Teo, Tan & Chan (2021) which connected teachers within and across schools so they could help each other cope with the COVID-19 disruptions. Through case studies, the authors described a virtual environment that shifted the initially uncoordinated interactions among participants to "a networked community of people, ideas, and resources, and teachers continually advancing their knowledge-building practice..." (Teo et al., 2021: 1). Both of these initiatives modeled effective pedagogic practices for teachers by linking individuals with complementary competencies.

Just as the dawn of enhanced mobile communications—that got a jump-

start around the time of the OULC study—ushered in changes to how the learning enterprise, and (language) learning resources, were conceived, so too will the pandemic-forced mass acquisition of advanced digital competencies lead to the opening of opportunities. Virtual collaborations among faculty and students might have been imagined previously, for example, but were thought to be too technically complicated. Now the applications of our personal and collective IT skills that we have acquired, including the smooth orchestration of online classes, are only limited by our imagination.

### **Conceiving of humans as language (and cultural) resources**

Hopefully, educators who benefitted from the collaborations and sharing of online teaching expertise in preparation for emergency remote teaching (which has now become routine), will be able to apply that ethos, and the skills learned, to their own teaching. One way this can be done is through what is variably referred to as foreign language telecollaboration, Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE), or virtual exchange (Guth, Helm, & O'Dowd, 2012; O'Dowd, 2018).

These negotiated exchanges are generally arranged by like-minded teachers who bring their geographically distant classes together to enhance the language development and/or cultural awareness of learners on both sides of the exchange. At the tertiary level, this might involve university English majors in Japan interacting, through Moodle and shared Google docs, over the course of a semester with learners in an advanced Japanese course in New York. There are some projects that facilitate these exchanges by bringing together language classes from multiple countries and institutions in those countries for engagement in standardized tasks and activities, such as participating on forums, exchanging captioned photos that introduce holidays, local food, future dreams, etc. A large-scale project of this kind is the International Virtual Exchange Project, organized by Eric Hagley (Hagley, 2020) for learners of English around the world. Thousands of learners join this Moodle-based project every year.



### Rationale for engaging in an Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE)

An OIE that the present author has been engaged in for the last 7 years centers on the exchange of an artistic product, photographed tableaux vivants based on concepts that may be understood in culturally diverse ways. The project will be used here as a vehicle to explain how to initiate a project and negotiate with partners abroad the most educationally sound and enjoyable tasks and activities that are capable of producing "Ah huh" moments.

OIEs are intended to nurture a wider set of competences than the four basic skills which have traditionally been the focus of language teaching. We have moved on from the notion that competence in a second language (L2) involves the mastery of the linguistic knowledge that a native speaker possesses (Galante, 2020). Now, thanks to Dell Hymes (1972), and others, language use within communities is emphasized and we think of communication as part of a rich repertoire that brings together linguistic and cultural aspects, including nonverbal behavior such as gestures and eye contact. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC)—terms that arose from the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or CEFR—look at language and culture in a unified way instead of artificially dividing them. The goal of a OIE would be to develop high levels of PPC as it demonstrates an ability...

"...to use language according to the social situation, overcome breakdown in communication through the use of different languages, be aware of 'otherness,' identify similarities and differences among cultures, understand different cultural practices and norms, and use language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner, including mixing languages or alternating them at the discourse level" (CoE, 2020).

It is clear that the largely traditional notions of what constitute "language resources" that we saw in the OULC survey data fall far short of addressing these competences, while Online Intercultural Exchanges, if properly designed, may have a better chance of doing so.

O'Dowd & Waire (2009) created a highly useful taxonomy of 12 typical tasks carried out in OIEs (Fig. 8).

Although helpful in proposing a rich variety of engaging tasks, exchanges

- Authoring “cultural autobiographies” (visual and text formats)
- Virtual interviews of exchange partners
- Informal discussion (sometimes based on prompts)
- Exchanging stories (e.g., from local legends, folk tales, etc.)
- Comparing parallel texts (“Three Men and a Baby” with French original)
- Comparing class surveys (same survey given to both parties in the exchange)
- Analyzing cultural products (films, poems, items in tourist shops)
- Translating (translate text from L1 to L2 without seeing original)
- Collaborate on product creation (PPT, essay, multimedia product)
- Transforming text genres (Ss in one group help partners rewrite text in different genre in their L2)
- “Closed outcome” (e.g., info gap activity like “spot the differences”)
- Making cultural translations/adaptations (of TV ad, film scene)

Fig. 8: Taxonomy of typical tasks carried out in OIEs [adapted from O'Dowd & Waire (2009)].

that involve an artistic or dramatic product that is exchanged, interpreted, and discussed is conspicuously missing, which led me to try to fill that gap in creating the tableau vivant task which an exchange can be centered around, which incorporate other tasks that fit with the respective goals of the exchange partners.

#### **Illustration of OIE focused on the exchange of artistic products**

Although intrepid educators have been carrying out OIEs since the 1990s—which in those pre-Web 2.0 days may have been confined to email exchanges on selected topics along with “snail mail” exchanges of VHS videotapes that stimulated further discussion—it was not until the smartphones, tablets, and other wireless devices began to take hold that the bar to initiating exchanges substantially lowered as they became liberated from the walls of the classroom. Some art-related projects for children, not initially part of an OIE, made use of smartphones in museums to interact with artworks. One of them, the MyArtSpace project (Sharples et al., 2007) had students access multimedia content that augmented information provided about art works. They were tasked with trying to understand the works and “send[ing] photos, audio recordings and notes captured at the museum to a website which enabled them to share and



discuss their findings back in the classroom" (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Another initiative, the Gidder project (Pierroux, 2008) also involved a museum visit and the use of smartphones to pre-select works of art that they would then write captions for and "curate" on a blog and class wiki.

### *The tableau vivant exchange introduced: Laying the groundwork*

Laying the groundwork for an OIE involves intense negotiations between the exchange partners, preferably well in advance of the commencement of the exchange. These items should be considered:

- 1) What each of you would like to get out of the exchange for your students.
- 2) How do the tasks in the exchange fit with the goals set for students in the respective classes?
- 3) What the principal tasks in the exchange will be (The tasks on each side need not be identical).
- 4) How much of the exchange will contribute to the students' final grade (ideally it should play a role)?
- 5) What platforms will be used for the exchange? (WhatsApp? A Moodle? Blogs? Web conferencing?)
- 6) Clear instructions for what the students must accomplish in the exchange are negotiated and refined.
- 7) Will the exchange be entirely asynchronous (may be necessary depending on time zone differences)?
- 8) Students should be asked for their feedback after the plan is presented so adjustments can be made.

**Sharing a Google doc with the partner teacher to compare notes for each of the items is helpful.**

Fig. 9: Important considerations when embarking on an OIE.

The tableau vivant task, if carried out early in the term, can create a relaxed atmosphere and warm feelings between the two sides of the exchange. Each side will have a chance to see how the members of the partner class express themselves, both verbally and nonverbally. It has the potential to reveal interesting differences and commonalities in the way the partner classes interpret the concepts given to them through their bodies. Here is the procedure for the activity. Fig. 10 shows some questions on an intake survey that students take

which is meant to ascertain where students stand on Hofstede's (2021) various value dimensions such as collectivism vs. individualism, power distance, etc. Survey results will be a point of discussion in the exchange.

They are also asked what they associate with each other's country to determine what, if any, stereotypes are held. The last item of the survey (Fig. 11) asks the students for their free associations to word prompts, concepts that will be the themes of the tableau vivant that the students will create.

**3. Images of our partner country and our own**

16. What three words come to mind when you think of the USA? Type each word on a separate line.  
アメリカといえば何が思い浮かびますか、3つの単語を英語で教えてください。

[When Japanese students answer this question please write the three ENGLISH words you associate with the USA.]

17. What three words come to mind when you think of Japan?  
日本といえば何が思い浮かびますか、3つの単語を英語で教えてください。

[When Japanese students answer this question please write the three ENGLISH words you associate with your own country.]

18. Do you agree that a company's rules should not be broken—not even when the employee thinks breaking the rule would be in society's best interest?  
会社の規則は、従わない方が社会のためになると思ったとしても、破るべきではないと思いますか。

strongly agree 全くその通りだ    agree そう思う    disagree そうは思わない    strongly disagree 全くそうは思わない    undecided どちらとも言えない

19. If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems in the marriage.  
妻は夫より給料が高いなら確実に結婚に問題が起る。

strongly agree 全くその通りだ    agree そう思う    disagree そうは思わない    strongly disagree 全くそうは思わない    undecided どちらとも言えない

Fig. 10: Some of the intake survey questions meant to uncover implicit values.

#### 7. Word Associations

This semester we will be engaging in a "tableau vivant" exchange project. The first stage of that project involves noting down our associations with some universal concepts which might be understood somewhat differently depending on one's culture, background, and personality. Avoid using a dictionary or thesaurus when completing this section and DO NOT write words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to the words in the list.

[Example: If the word prompt were "society," you might write "bonds" or "human bonds" in the box.]

29. Type in the word(s) or short phrases (in English) that you most closely associate with these word prompts. [If you type in more than one word or phrase for a particular prompt, be sure to separate them by commas.]

justice	<input type="text"/>
trust	<input type="text"/>
endurance	<input type="text"/>
work	<input type="text"/>
respect	<input type="text"/>
evil	<input type="text"/>

Fig. 11: The last item on the survey elicits free associations to abstract concepts which may be conceived somewhat differently depending on one's personality, cultural background, or even current events. Phrases selected for each item will be consolidated for each side of the exchange and made into word clouds.

Next, groups of 4 or 5 students on each side of the exchange are assigned to represent 3 or 4 of the concepts listed in Fig. 10 as tableau vivant. Each one is



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photographed and carefully labeled (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12: Example of Japanese students (on the left) representing "tragedy" and Colombian students (on the right) representing a much more elaborate and visceral interpretation of "tragedy" through a series of three tableaux.

After the tableaux vivants have been created and recorded, the groups are asked to write a detailed description of what they were trying to represent using a Google Form (Fig. 13). That will later be compared to interpretations of the tableaux by the exchange partners.

Descriptions of your tableau vivant stories

Working together with your group members, write brief descriptions of your tableau vivant story. Tell us the concept you were trying to represent in each of the tableaux, and what you were trying to convey through your actions.

TEAM UNICORN

Long answer text

TEAM RAINBOW

Long answer text

Fig. 13: Groups who created the tableau write down what they were trying to convey.

The partner classes then exchange tableau, try to guess with concepts correspond to which tableau, and give as detailed an interpretation of the scene as possible. There are always some that are completely mystifying and those are best for discussion. An extension activity is to have the students collaborate in

their group (using a shared Google Doc) to write a 300-400 word story elaborating on ONE of the tableau they created (Fig. 14). The stories are then exchanged for comment and discussion.

#### trust

1 response

When his parents arrived at the police station, he remained silent no matter how hard the cop tried to persuade him to confess. Not long before, when the police came to the shop where his friend shoplifted, his friend had run away, completely abandoning him and putting all the blame on him.

"You didn't do it, did you?" his father asked. Seeing her son say nothing, his mother burst into tears. "No...oh my God...what a bad son! Where did it all go wrong?" His father said to her in a calm voice, "Well, there's no proof yet, right? I don't think he actually did it, but just..."

Suddenly the son shouted, "I didn't do it! Why don't you guys just believe me?" His father said "It's because you have always been lying to us. Don't you remember that you promised you would eat dinner and go to bed by the time we got back home but you were actually just playing video games until midnight while we were out? And these kinds of things happened many times! Come on, my son. We are both working and busy. Don't get us in trouble anymore. Please just be a nice son."

The son replied, "have you ever imagined how lonely I felt without you guys at night? I just wanted you to pay more attention to me. That's why I've been lying to you."

His parents realized how bad they had been to their son and apologized to him. And his father said, "Sorry my son, we promise that we are going to spend more time with you. It was our fault."

The son forgave his parents. After that, it also turned out that their son was innocent of the crime. Thanks to this incident, the family could finally build a strong bond and they started to believe and respect each other.

Fig. 14: A short story written by a group on the Japanese side who created a tableau for "trust."

The tableau vivant activity takes about three weeks to complete, with the students doing some of the work as homework and some of it (e.g., creating the tableau) in class. Not all of the tableau will reveal interesting cultural differences but often the similarities are illuminating. For instance, whatever the nationality or ethnic group assigned to "freedom," the U.S. Statue of Liberty is almost always represented.

#### *Activities in the exchange beyond the tableau vivant project*

The tableau vivant phase of the exchange is intended to break the ice between the exchange partner classes and it is just as much about self-knowledge as it is knowing about the "other" as this opportunity is the first for many of them to think deeply about concepts like "evil," "the elderly," "love," or



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- It was one my favorite parts of the class.
- It was very unique and enjoyable because we rarely express emotions using our whole body.
- I think it was interesting because the Colombian students had different ways of expressing the same concepts.

The other parts of the exchange negotiated between the two sides will differ depending on the needs of the respective groups. If the partner class is studying the Japanese language and the other is studying intercultural communication in a content course, for example, it can be a tandem language/culture exchange (Tardieu & Horgues, 2019) in which those studying Japanese write all their posts and assignments in Japanese while those on the Japan side communicate through English. Each group responds to the substance of what has been communicated in their second language. The use of an LMS (learner management program) is useful for keeping the exchange organized and on track. Figure 15 displays a screenshot from a Moodle course that is used for a current exchange

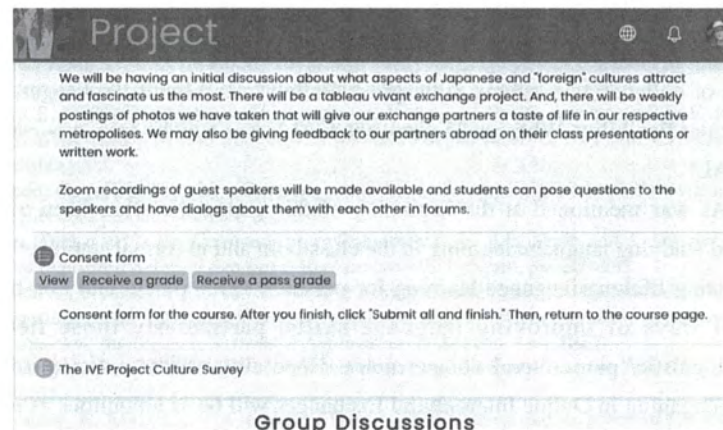


Fig. 15: A description of the exchange and what students can expect of it on the project's Moodle course page. [Acknowledgments and thanks to Eric Hagley for allowing the course to be hosted on the IVE site.]

between students at New York University and Aoayam Gakuin University's English Department.

### Conclusion

In this paper historical data from a study conducted a decade ago at the Oxford University Language Centre (OULC) was reevaluated in light of the period's pivotal time in the history of technological development. The appearance, and more widespread use, of mobile devices with increasingly greater capabilities presaged a shift in how language learning resources would be conceptualized and used. There was a transition toward dynamic resources that were more up to date, available on demand, and which allowed for human interaction. The static holdings of language resource centers, language labs, and libraries would find it hard to compete with the resources that inhabited a device residing on the real estate of one's palm.

Perhaps the present historical moment—when language teachers as well as almost all other educators, have had to upgrade their digital tool kits to meet the demands of nearly two years of online teaching—will accelerate the paradigm shift in how we view resources still further. The skills gained in learning how to conduct classes through an online distance mode, as well as hybrid and hyflex, are likely to vastly change the landscape of what teachers will see as possible in terms of collaboration among colleagues, Online Intercultural Exchanges, and curricular flexibility. Whereas 25 years ago CALL was a niche area, now we are all CALL.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there has been a bias toward studying language learning in the classroom and in formal settings while neglecting lifelong language learning for personal development and non-traditional ways of improving language skills, particularly those tied to plurilinguistic/ pluricultural competencies. Hopefully, we are entering an era when engaging in Online Intercultural Exchanges will be as ubiquitous as using Zoom has been over the previous year. Mobile communications shrunk the world and COVID-19 has shrunk it still further.



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