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Innovative pedagogies series:

(Re)learning to write and speak in UK higher education

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Introduction

For much of my undergraduate degree, I was a ventriloquist's dummy. Now, being a dummy does not sound like something that should happen at university. At the very least, it implies inauthenticity, superficiality and the repetition of things already known by others. But in fact, my experience of being a dummy was an entirely useful, even life-changing, one. Reflecting on my own experience of (re)learning to write and speak at university has enabled me to link my experience of being a 'dummy' to some of the challenges related to their use of language(s) faced by my current students. I suggest that there are three reasons why (re)learning to write and speak is an important issue for UK universities. These reasons are related to the judgement of academic integrity, the provision of equal opportunities and the futures of our academic disciplines. This case study describes two innovations that were designed to raise awareness of how students can add new ways of speaking and writing to their repertoires, in ways that are useful, fair and even part of the development of our academic disciplines.

My experience was, briefly, as follows. At my very first tutorial, my brilliant first year tutor helped me begin to see beyond the edges of the thinking I had done previously, at school. Throughout my first year, I read the work of many new (to me) writers with enthusiasm, even excitement, and discussed their ideas with my tutor and with my fellow students. In my own talk, and in my writing for assessment, I enjoyed the process of recycling words and phrases that (to me) sounded appropriate to my new ways of thinking. In my first year, being a 'dummy' was a creative, fun, idea-altering process.

However, early on in my second year, a different tutor stopped me in a corridor and asked whether I had copied one of my essays from an unacknowledged source (in the days before text-matching software, of which more later). I hadn't copied my essay, and couldn't understand why they might think that I had. On reflection, of course, the second-year tutor wasn't convinced that my essay sounded like what they thought of as 'me'. Inevitably, I only slowly began to learn to write and talk in the 'academic' language of the new books I was reading. I remember feeling that, right up until the last few weeks before my final exams, my attempts to combine the many new words and phrases I had learned were somewhat dummy-like: unconvincing and copied-sounding. Just in time, under the pressure of repeatedly practising timed answers to exam questions, I started to feel comfortable in my new language. Although I had grown up speaking and writing English, and using it at school, I needed almost three years to learn to blend new words and a new style with what I already knew, and in a way that sounded to my tutors enough like 'me' to pass as 'mine'.

Many of my current students face a similar challenge to the one illustrated by my own language (re)learning experience: how to acquire the linguistic resources required to succeed at university. Many face the extra challenge of converting into 'academic English' what they can already do in other languages. They may also have the additional problem of having to work out whether, and if so how, the other languages or varieties of English they already use may or may not be used/useful in their new context. As new members of our linguistically complex academic community, both UK and international students are experiencing the affordances, and the limitations, of their own linguistic resources. They are expected to learn, often without being taught, how to use their English in new, 'academic' and discipline-specific ways. Raising both tutors' and students' awareness of this particular challenge, which is, of course, only one of many our students face, feels to me like an increasingly important task.

This case study of pedagogic innovation describes two attempts to raise the awareness of students and staff of the acquisition and use of 'context-appropriate' language. These contexts vary from the localised situations that arise in interaction between individuals engaged in specific tasks (a seminar discussion, for example), to what we tend to think of as more generalised situations such as 'appropriate academic writing'. 'English as a lingua franca: an online tutorial for raising awareness about English as an international language' was concerned with classroom talk and aimed to raise students' awareness of their use of English in mixed language groups (that is, in groups which included multilingual users of English as an additional language). 'Learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual classrooms' was concerned with students' writing, and aimed to raise awareness amongst staff of the acquisition and use of discipline-specific language by their UK and international students.

This case study begins with a brief consideration of the context in which our attempts to raise awareness and change practice occurred, and why (re)learning to write and speak in linguistically diverse universities is an important issue. I go on to describe our two attempts to raise awareness and change practice, and then review the research (including our own) that underpinned the innovations. Finally, I conclude this study with some suggestions for how others might adapt/adopt the innovations I describe.

Innovating in how we raise awareness of writing and speaking at university

In this section I briefly consider the context in which our attempts to raise awareness and change practice occurred, and why (re)learning to write and speak in linguistically diverse universities is an important issue. I then go on to describe our two attempts to raise awareness and change practice, the first attempt related to speaking and the second to writing.

The introduction to this case study described my own experience of (re)learning to write and speak at university, and the excitement and fear that I felt. I grew up in the UK and went to English language schools but, as my account shows, continued to acquire new ways of writing and speaking as a university student. Although we have little actual data about the numbers of languages other than English used by staff and students in UK higher education (HE), growing numbers of international students and more multilingualism in UK schools probably mean that our universities are even more linguistic diverse than ever before. These 'old' and 'new' forms of linguistic diversity in UK HE are important for at least three reasons, reasons related to the assessment of academic integrity, equal opportunities and the future of our academic disciplines.

The first reason, related to how we judge academic integrity, is illustrated by my own experience. Learning to speak and write in a new style is a long-term apprenticeship and involves recycling the words and phrases of more accomplished users. The rules around what may and may not be recycled and how this should, or does not need to, be indicated are very complicated. These rules, rarely explicitly stated in their entirety, differ between disciplines, tutors and task types (essays versus exams, for example), and take time to learn.

As tutors we tell our students that they need to 'reference correctly', as if we don't know that our own ideas about correct referencing are subtly different from our colleagues', different from the guidance on our library website and also different from the practice of other the other author/publishers whose work our students are reading. More importantly, we assume that 'referencing' is only a technical matter and not, as my story shows, a long, perhaps difficult, process of finding a voice. As tutors, are we sure that we have a shared understanding with each other, and with our students of the difference between what we might call 'poor scholarship' and academic misconduct? Are we calling the inevitable process of finding a voice 'poor scholarship'? Are we wrongfully accusing students of academic misconduct? None of these are questions that are easily answered, including by a percentage calculated by text-matching software.

The second reason why diversity is important, in the context of learning to speak and write at university, is related to equal opportunities. Many of our international students are face the challenge of converting into 'academic English' what they may already be able to do (or not) in their other languages. There will be huge variety here. Some students may have read and written for their undergraduate degrees in languages other than English but in disciplines/academic cultures with similar conventions to the academic discipline/culture in which they find themselves in the UK. Others may not. Our UK students also bring their own, different (perhaps related to their social class or geographical location) grammars and vocabularies of English. The UK students are also confronted with the need to work out what, of English they already know, counts as 'correct' in their new context of study and which bits to hide from their tutor's view.

All of this relates to the question of equal opportunities: are we, as tutors, aware of this linguistic diversity in our students? Do we think that it is our responsibility to help our students learn to convert what they already know into 'correct' academic English? Do we even have a shared understanding of what correct academic English is? How accepting are we prepared to be of 'other' varieties of English in our students' work (and if we are, which varieties) and of other languages (for example, the use of relevant sources written up in a language other than English)? As these questions imply, some of our students (UK and international) will bring linguistic resources that give them a head start at university and others will not, and this is a situation which creates a serious potential threat to the provision of equal opportunities for all.

The third reason why diversity is important, in the context of learning to speak and write at university, relates to the future of our academic disciplines. Our students bring varied types of linguistic capital (and related social and cultural capital) into our classes. How they are allowed to deploy this capital may have an impact on the development of our academic discipline. To disallow difference could limit innovations in writing and thinking from which we, other members of our discipline, and other users of the knowledge we produce, could benefit.

Our (perhaps) multilingual, incipiently academically literate students face a very challenging task. The acquisition of new ways of speaking and writing that enable them to work together in class, and which we, as their tutors, value, is essential to their success. It is therefore also essential for us to be aware that our students are (re)learning to speak and write, and to think of ways of supporting them that are inclusive and transparent.

In the next section of this case study I describe in detail two innovations in pedagogic practice that were designed to raise the awareness of both students and staff of these new ways of writing and speaking. The first innovation aimed to raise students' awareness of their use of English in mixed language groups (that is, in groups which included multilingual users of English as an additional language and which, therefore, were using English as a lingua franca). We called this innovation, 'English as a lingua franca: an online tutorial for raising awareness about English as an international language'.

The second innovation was concerned with writing and aimed to raise the awareness of staff of the acquisition and use of discipline-specific language by their UK and international students. We called this innovation, 'Learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual classrooms'. In designing this innovation, we considered what the academic literacies that matter to staff might be and how we currently help our students, both UK and international, to acquire these new literacies. We wondered whether we could be providing these opportunities more effectively and efficiently. We aimed answer these questions and, on the basis of these answers, create innovative resources to fill any gaps in our provision.

How this practice evolved

Re-learning speaking: English as a lingua franca

Two critical incidents that occurred in seminar discussions for modules I was concurrently teaching provided the impetus for the first innovation described in this section of the case study. The incidents exemplified and challenged routine, taken-for-granted aspects of the classroom context in which they occurred and, in response to the critical incidents, I designed a series of classroom tasks that required my (UK and international students) to record various conversations with each other. These conversations provided the data for a research project that I briefly describe in the next section, together with other relevant empirical and theoretical research. The innovation I describe here was developed as a result of working on the analysis of my data and resulted in an online awareness-raising task available for use (including re-purposing) at www.englishlinguafranca.com. I begin this account of the first innovation by describing the critical incidents and then go on to describe the aims and methods of the online task.

In the first incident, I showed a teacher training video to UK students on an 'Introduction to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages' module. The aim of the video was to demonstrate ways of checking classroom language learners' understanding of new grammar and my students had a 'while-viewing' task that focused on some relevant techniques. After the video, I turned to my students to begin a discussion based on the task and noticed an uneasy atmosphere. Abandoning the task, I asked the students what they thought of the videoed demonstration. A number said that they didn't like the teacher because she was teaching English using her 'Scottish' accent. In the discussion that followed, some students said that English language teachers should repress a regional accent and speak 'standard English'. The issue of a language 'standard' was debated heatedly; with reference to what language learners hear, what they acquire, and possible implications for identity and power implied by the idea of a 'standard' form. We talked about the students' own regional accents and dialects (mainly from Yorkshire and the North East of England) and the ethical and practical difficulties of sustaining a completely different accent for teaching purposes.

Around the same time, I was also teaching a 'Communication Skills' module to a group of international students on a pre-undergraduate Foundation Programme. The international students had also shown interest in attitudes to different varieties of English, their own and others they were hearing for the first time, both 'local' and 'foreign'. The students commented on how their past and present tutors' voices contrasted with the various accents they were hearing outside their classroom. A number of students in part-time jobs had had the experience of being 'misunderstood' by English people. One Polish student, working in a café, told the class about a situation in which she had, she felt, clearly stated the price of a cup of coffee to a customer who replied, "What? (no pause) Oh, it doesn't matter, I'll ask somebody else".

Reflecting on these two incidents, I designed a series of tasks that required both groups of students to meet, talk and record their conversations, providing me with data that I discuss in more detail in the next section of this case study. Based on the findings of the data analysis, and of other relevant theoretical and empirical research, I came up with four principles that inform the way in which I now introduce mixed language group work to both UK and international students. Written with students in mind, the principles are as follows:

Principle 1: Make audio recordings of your talk. Without recordings most, if not all, the interesting details of the interaction are lost, leaving only a vague impression of outcomes and very little information about the features of the interaction that led up to the outcomes. These (largely inaccurate) impressions are likely to be consistent with pre-existing beliefs about a person, task or situation. These beliefs can only be challenged by very careful listening to what is actually happening in specific interactions.

Principle 2: Transcribe sections of your talk as a way of paying attention to what is happening in a recorded interaction. But be aware that if a transcript is to be fairly easily readable, it will inevitably involve selecting some features of the talk and disregarding others. Recognise that this is the first act of analysis. Compare your transcription/initial analysis with that of your interlocutor and consider similarities and differences, and the possible reasons for these.

Principle 3: Peruse your data, noting how you and your interlocutor usually treat each other's utterances, and what happens if there is a deviation from this internally generated 'normality'.

Principle 4: Reflect on possible relationships between professional/institutional contexts and your data. We always bring assumptions about each other and about the nature of our current task to our interaction, and we can speculate about what our assumptions, and those of our interlocutor, might be. But what we can see in the data are the actual consequences of the way we talk for the roles/identities that we make available for each other, and the usefulness of these roles for our task achievement. In addition to speculating about global causes, we need to observe local causes and their immediate and potential longer term effects.

The first step in creating an awareness-raising task, based on the four principles outlined above, was to think through which aspects of their talk I wanted the students to pay attention to.

After trialing several versions, I arrived at a list of questions which are grouped into five sections A – E, with A as a compulsory question and the option to choose one of questions B – E, as follows:

Section A: What is the main aim of the discussion? Who decided that this is the aim? Does the recording show that that everyone agreed with this aim? How do the people in the discussion show that they agree or disagree with this aim? In addition to what people say, try to listen for how they say it; for example, do they put stronger stress on some words, does their intonation rise or fall, do they speak louder or more softly and so on?

In the discussion:

Section B: Does anyone misunderstand what another person is saying? How do they show that they have misunderstood? What is the reaction of the misunderstood speaker? Is the misunderstanding sorted out? How? Who sorts the misunderstanding out? What is the effect of any misunderstanding on the group's achievement of its aims?

Section C: Does anyone disagree with what another person is saying or how they are saying it? How do they do this? What is the reaction of the corrected speaker? Is the disagreement sorted out? How? Who sorts the disagreement out? What is the effect of any disagreement on the group's achievement of its aims?

Section D: Does everyone have an equal opportunity to speak? Does anyone interrupt another speaker? How do they interrupt? What is the reaction of the other speakers to the interruption? What is the effect of the distribution of opportunity to speak on the group's achievement of its aims?

Section E: Does anyone: laugh; sigh; hesitate; repeat (maybe using slightly different words) an opinion or question several times; repeat (maybe using slightly different words) another person's opinion; use slang, idioms or taboo language; mix different languages? How? What is the effect of any of these features on the group's achievement of its aims?

Having worked with the students on the list of awareness-raising questions, I designed an activity that can be done in class or by students working independently. I decided to call the group activity a 'tutorial'. The decision to require students to record their classroom talk was based on principle one.

The second step in the tutorial is based on principle two: transcribe. My experience of my own data analysis had shown me that transcription is a valuable way of starting to close pay attention to features of the talk.

Principle three, 'peruse', underpins the list of questions A – E in that it encourages the students to notice how they themselves are talking and how they treating each other's utterances.

Principle four is that students should reflect on possible relationships between the way they are talking and their global professional/institutional contexts, but also keep in mind the ways in which they are co-creating local contexts for each other. I called the activity, 'English as a lingua franca: an introductory tutorial' and published it online. In addition to the questions A – E the website has a brief introduction to the use of English in (potentially) multilingual contexts and to an interactional approach to the understanding of how conversation works.

The website has an example, in the form of a short video, of how two students used the four principles to do some thinking of their own. In the video, the students discuss, using the awareness-raising questions A – E, the 'with Rachel' extract (also included on the website), reproduced below.

Transcript: With Rachel

Andrew = UK student, Stelios = international student

Andrew: what- what parts of ummm like your lessons (.) have you enjoyed (.) doing (.) with Rachel.

Stelios: (2.0) hmm?

Andrew: what parts of your ermmm ((LS)) (1.0) foundation programme have you enjoyed doing with Rachel.

Stelios: (.) we- I don’t have Rachel.

Andrew: oh you DO:N’t? oh right. So what- (1.0) what lessons d- what lessons are you doin’?

The (.) symbol represents pauses of less than a tenth of a second, other numbers in brackets are pauses timed to the nearest second. Capital letters indicate increased volume and ((LS)) is a ‘lip-smacking’ noise. A rough transcript of Andrew and Stelios’s subsequent conversation about the 'with Rachel' extract (available as a video on the online tutorial), demonstrates how they used the questions A – E, follows. After some talk about the nature of their current task, they say:

Stelios: You put a verb into the sentence and you put after that "Rachel" which is the tutor but actually it wasn't that and that's why I asked "Hmmm".

Andrew: Yea, absolutely. Yes so at line one, this is actually me talking, and as Stelios was saying, you've got this staggered start, "what- what parts of", and all of these hesitancy markers, and the micropauses that he was talking about just further stagger and draw out this question, and I think maybe that's part of the reason it's hard to take in exactly what's being asked, and, yea, absolutely, the sense I got was that as I'm asking the question, and I'm getting no feedback of understanding, like receipt markers like "mmm" or head nodding, so I kept trying to align my question which I was going to get some kind of acknowledgement from.

Stelios: Yes but really you have left it at "enjoyed", and it would have been a perfect sentence.

Andrew: Absolutely and in retrospect I think that's one of the things I've learned is to not worry so much about having all the behaviours of understanding, and then trying to go further and further until I get that, but just going with what I've said in the first place, if it's not understood then obviously you can make that known when it's your turn, but I kept trying and so you get this very extended and complex question and, yea, at the end of line two there "with Rachel", as we both agree that's the trouble source it becomes…

Stelios: Yes "Rachel" is the trouble yea…

Andrew: That detracts from the question itself, so in line three when Stelios…

Stelios: Yes I think when I said "mmm", it was like “OK what are you talking about?”, it was like not understanding the sentence so you tried to change it again, but I'm thinking, “what happened?”, he tried to change it again, and instead of lessons which is a very simple word, you put ‘foundation programme’, which is more complex.

> **Andrew: Yes, so in trying again I've actually opted for a lexical item which I thought was the trouble source, that he didn't understand "lessons", and actually opted for something which was even more obscure, a lower frequency word, which just seems totally counter-productive, and obviously at line six it turns out that wasn't the problem.**

Andrew and Stelios, as the transcript of their discussion above shows, talk about local matters such as self-repair, repetition, and word substitution, and on the global topic of Andrew's assumptions about Stelios's (in)competence in English. They are able to notice various features of their talk and link these to their institutional and professional contexts, noticing ways in which they are drawing on, contributing to and contesting these contexts. Since its initial creation, the awareness-raising tutorial has undergone several revisions based on feedback from students. More research is necessary in order to be clearer about the benefits of a language awareness approach to communicating in lingua franca English in the contexts of this study. As well as asking students about their experience of the tutorial, analysis of recordings of students' use of the awareness-raising questions should be conducted.

Re-learning writing: learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual classrooms

The second innovation described in this case study, relates to (re)learning writing at university. We designed a project that aimed to raise the awareness of staff of the acquisition and use of discipline-specific language by their UK and international students. We called this project Learning, teaching and assessment in multilingual classrooms. In designing the project, we considered what the academic literacies that matter to staff might be and how we currently help our students, both UK and international, to acquire these new literacies. We wondered whether we could be providing these opportunities more effectively and efficiently. We aimed answer these questions by training students to interview each other, and by interviewing staff, and, on the basis of these answers, to create innovative resources to fill any gaps in our provision. A brief summary of our findings is provided in the next section, together with other relevant empirical and theoretical research. The innovation I describe here was developed as a result of our analysis of these findings and resulted in new classroom activities that are currently being tested by staff and students prior to publication on our University website as shareable resources. I begin this account of the second innovation by summarising the main conclusion of our study and then go on to describe how we have begun to develop our new resources.

The main conclusion of our study was that students need to learn new ways of writing at university alongside new content in ways that help them to see language and content as interdependent aspects of their academic discipline. Embedding new, discipline-specific, ways of writing (and reading) into the curriculum need not present an additional challenge to conveying existing course content, but can instead provide 'an added lens through which to view the subject content' (Chanock *et al.* 2012, p. 10). As a result of our study, and a review of the academic literacies literature, we aim to produce a series of seminar activities that are designed to easily adapt to varied subject matter and to introduce key academic literacy skills as part of a 'situated developmental process' (Dunham 2012, p.687). Our seminar activities, which we refer to in planning meetings as 'empty tasks', should prove helpful, as the literature demonstrates that best practice in the development of students' academic literacy skills is to 'embed explicit instruction, practice, and assessment of these into the curriculum of their degree' (Chanock *et al*. 2012, p. 2), rather than to relegate learning new ways of writing to a separate module. By embedding these skills within modules, we intend that students will be better able to effectively bridge the gap between the theory and application of academic literacy skills.

Successfully embedding these skills also places less emphasis on the deficit model in which students with 'problems' are required to 'solve' these by accessing extra-curricular, non-credit-bearing assistance. Those students most in need of help are likely to prioritise work for which they will receive academic credit (Chanock *et al.* 2012). It is therefore reasonable to suggest that embedding skills will allow our students to acquire subject knowledge and academic literacy skills whilst ensuring equality of access to all and avoiding the stigmatisation of certain student groups.

We began the development of the new resources by creating a long-list of features of academic writing that was partly based on the issues raised by the staff and students interviewed for our study, and partly on the types of topics often talk on the kind of 'standalone' study skills modules we were hoping to be able to do away with. The long list was as follows:

1. using sub-titles/section headings;
2. finding and using sources in languages other than English;
3. paraphrasing your sources;
4. summarising your sources;
5. integrating quotations into an argument;
6. differentiating between what you are presenting as 'fact' and what is your opinion;
7. formatting in-text references;
8. formatting the bibliography;
9. providing evidence for a(n) statement/argument: reference to previous research by study, single/multiple author etc.;
10. evaluating previous research findings;
11. describing your own and other people's methods;
12. using examples;
13. using generalisations;
14. recognising and designing arguments;
15. comparing and contrasting ideas – providing a counter-argument;
16. showing cause and effect;
17. introducing general criticism/the critical stance of a particular writer or theory – "these claims have been strongly contested ...", "xxx challenges the widely held view..";
18. recognising frequently used words on this topic/key terms/useful content-related phrases;
19. defining key terms;
20. writing introductions – contents and structure;
21. writing conclusions – contents and structure;
22. writing an opening sentence;
23. paragraph structure and length;
24. linking sentences, paragraphs, sections;
25. sign-posting: previewing the structure of a text, previewing and recapping sections;
26. introducing general descriptions of relevant literature: "a great deal of previous research...", "in recent years there has been...";
27. using reference words: it, they, she etc.;
28. sentence length;
29. reporting verbs: claimed, suggested, found etc.;
30. proofreading your own work – what to look for;
31. the language of numbers;
32. being cautious in order to avoid over-generalisation/when discussing implications or recommendations/when explaining results or writing about the future;
33. classifying or commenting on a system of classification;
34. punctuation: quotation marks, colons, commas, semi-colons etc.;
35. putting yourself into your writing or not: 'I' vs. 'the researcher', active and passive voice, conveying 'objectivity' vs 'subjectivity etc.;
36. writing about time: this study was, participant x reports etc.;
37. writing about the limitations of a theory/method/research design.

We circulated this long list to staff in one academic discipline, Business Management, and asked them to select their top priorities for development. Using the resulting short-list of features, we designed a set of resources that are currently being trialled with students. An example of one of the seminar tasks follows:

Evaluating Previous Research

This seminar activity can be carried out in small groups or by splitting the seminar group in two and assigning different texts to each half of the class. This will require access to a journal article of choice, and must be annotated on paper or using the iPad.

Estimated duration: approximately 50 minutes

Select a relevant journal article. Students do not need to read this in advance of the session.

Divide students into groups of 3-4 or split the entire seminar group in two. Consider mixing groups depending on ability, confidence, etc.

Initiate a discussion on source credibility – how can you tell whether a source is credible?

These may include:

Date of publication
Institutional affiliation of author
Publisher/journal title
Sample size
Information on ethics
Hedging – words and phrases including 'may', 'might', 'possibly', etc.
Evidence for arguments

Encourage the group to think about features of the writing that might indicate a poor choice of source, possibly including:

Presence of advertisements
Lack of a named author
Absence of elements identified in first list

Using the iPad, ask students to highlight sections of the text where the source meets the criteria for a good or poor choice of source. After this, ask students to present their annotated article.

Further adaptation or possible addition to build upon this activity: Take two or more potential sources on a topic, divide these between groups, ask groups to present the source to the group with respect to the evaluation criteria. Following group/individual presentations of sources, compare these and select which is most suitable for using as a resource and what value the others might have, if any.

The next stage in this development of our practice related to (re)learning to write will be to continue the trialling of the new resources, use feedback from students and staff to improve the usefulness of the tasks and publish the resulting set of activities on our University website.

Having presented two of the aspects of our practice that relate to speaking and writing at university in the UK, the next section reviews the research which underpinned the innovations and relates it to other relevant theoretical and empirical work.

How this practice is situated theoretically

The research project that was inspired by the two critical incidents described in the first half of the previous section underpins our new approach to helping students to think about new ways of speaking in multilingual classrooms. The project explored the conversational adjustments that occur in classroom talk between UK and international students navigating group tasks. Specifically, the research aimed to explore the relationship between conversational adjustments and misunderstanding, and whether adjustments and misunderstanding were a problem or a resource for the students. I found that, in mixed language groups, my students used a wide variety of ways of (un)successfully communicating meaning in evolving contexts that were oriented to, re-created and contested through talk. My findings, reported in more detail in Wicaksono (2012), provided support for the idea that developing an awareness of one's own talk and its effects on others is possible. The findings also suggested that adjusting one's talk in context-appropriate ways is the key to maximising the potential for task achievement.

The design of the awareness-raising task described in the previous section was based on a number of language awareness-raising studies carried out in institutional contexts (for example, Gumperz *et al.* 1979; Roberts and Sayers 1987). Roberts and Sayers describe training they conducted, which had a similar aim to the kinds of activities I planned to design. Their work involved helping minority ethnic and white workers, managers and trade unionists to improve their communication, but did not try, to teach people how to talk to a particular ethnic group.

As they report:

> **We are trying to help people to be more flexible and sensitive in dealing with all individuals. We are helping people to look into themselves and use resources which are in each one of us but which previous training, experience and systems have prevented us from using. There is no set of styles to switch between, rather a developing sensitivity which helps us question our own behaviour and not judge others by our own culture.** ***(Roberts and Sayers 1987, p. 133).***

Their work looked to the recommendation of John Gumperz that awareness is raised of the ways in which conversations are created step by step, and meaning is jointly negotiated. Gumperz's practical suggestions include recording conversations, then requiring the interactants to listen to their recordings and discuss whether, and if so, where, things have gone wrong (Gumperz *et al.* 1979, pp. 274-5). Similarly, Richards (2005), in an introduction to a collection of chapters on the uses of applied conversation analysis, illustrates what he calls a 'discovery to informed action' model for raising self-awareness; a model described as 'interventionist applied conversation analysis' by Charles Antaki (2011, p. 8) and as 'discursive action method' by Lamerichs and te Molder (2011, p. 184).

Richards suggests that both practising professionals and trainees:

> **"…could be sensitized to interactional possibilities that they had not hitherto considered, not in terms of procedures that they might follow […] but in terms of responding to competencies that [conversation analysis] has been able to expose. By thinking in terms of raising awareness, directing attention, developing sensitivity, challenging assumptions, etc., [conversation analysis] can contribute to informed professional action, helping professionals to deepen their understanding and develop new competencies".** ***(Richards 2005, pp. 5-6).***

The question of how to go about raising awareness is considered by Rampton (2010), who suggests ways of helping students learn about the relationships between signs, practice and ideology, and between language and culture. Rampton's practical suggestions include reading case studies and doing projects and, 'one of the most accessible, absorbing and effective ways of teaching people at any level' the micro-analytic data session (Rampton 2012, p. 10).

The study that underpinned the development of new ways of helping students to (re)learn to write was based on work which proposes that individuals become literate (including academically literate) through processes of interaction and observation, "until the ways of speaking, acting, thinking, feeling and valuing common to that discourse become natural to them' (Boughey 2011, p. 281). This approach goes some way to explaining the reasons why 'study skills' courses that are typically taught over the course of one semester, and separated from a student's other academic courses, are not an effective way in which to teach these skills. In other words, the acquisition of academic literacy is not a matter that can be 'fixed outside the discipline'

(Wingate and Tribble, 2012, p. 481) but must be taught in a way that makes this aspect of learning specific to the field and context of study. Yet, in spite of the wider academic consensus that first year courses teaching generic study skills topics are ineffective (Boughey 2011; Gunn *et al.* 2011), the separation of 'content' and 'study skills' continues to be a frequent issue in UK universities.

How others might adapt or adopt this practice

Both the innovations described here are available online (or will be in future) for use (including re-purposing) in other disciplinary and institutional contexts. We plan to continue to research the benefits and limitations of our practice, and to publish our findings. In addition to the specific activities I have described as part of this case study, the experience of collecting and analysing the data on which the design of the innovations was based has encouraged me to consider the following, additional ideas for making our universities multilingual spaces in which a wider range of languages and varieties of English is recognised and considered as potentially beneficial in the development of our academic disciplines. These ideas require further consideration of their possible advantages and disadvantages, and more detailed thinking about their operationalisation.

They are as follows:

1. incorporate language awareness-raising activities into all programmes where there is mixed nationality/language group work (and require such group work if it doesn't already happen). Encourage students to see 'understanding' as a joint effort;
2. design seminar activities and assessments that require students to access/share information in more than one language;
3. encourage literature searches in languages other than English;
4. make space for translation activities (in class or as homework) and encourage students to reflect on the lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and rhetorical differences they encounter;
5. incorporate an element of work experience in an environment where English is not the only language used;
6. include a language module as an elective in all academic programmes and include an assessment component which requires students to reflect on their experience of language learning/using;
7. critically review the institutional discourse around language difference and language learners/users. Are some languages/varieties more valued than others? Why? Is it implied that some groups of language learners/users have a language 'deficit'/'problem'?
8. make bi-/multilingualism desirable in all new (academic and administrative) post person specifications;
9. discuss with students and staff how assessments of competence in 'academic English' can elide differences of class, ethnic origin, nationality and gender;
10. provide more incentives for students to take up study abroad and international placements/opportunities.

Conclusion

Learning in a linguistically and culturally diverse context, where students are acquiring new ways of speaking and writing, requires university students and staff to adopt inclusive approaches to language, in order for linguistic (and cultural) knowledge to be converted into academic success and disciplinary advancement. The way we use language and languages is a very important part of an inclusive approach. Not to pay attention to language issues is to risk failing not only to educate our students but also failing to provide them, and ourselves, with equal opportunities for learning.

Raising the awareness of students and staff of how they are acquiring and using new ways of speaking and writing will reduce the danger of these failings. This will only be possible through further research and development of policy and materials to address current shortcomings. It's fine to be a dummy, but only when those around you are prepared for the possibility of new ways of speaking, writing and thinking in their academic discipline. And are willing accept that you are learning legitimately.

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