

Title:

CROSS-LINGUISTIC TEAMWORK FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Since 2002 the “Innsbruck Model of *Fremdsprachendidaktik*” (IMoF; *Innsbruck Model of Foreign Language Teaching*) has been practising new approaches in (foreign) language teacher education by offering for all future (foreign) language teachers one integrated program of multilingual training, which means that students of English, French, Greek/Latin, Italian, Russian and Spanish attend together multilingual courses which are complemented by workshops for each language. With its multilingual and team-oriented lessons IMoF intends the promotion of cooperation between prospective foreign language teachers in schools. Therefore during a semester students have to work together in cross-linguistic teams in order to analyse learning materials; i.e. they transfer the lecture’s input into practice. This paper aims at looking at the students’ perspective of their teamwork by presenting quantitative data and at drawing first implications for university teaching.

CROSS-LINGUISTIC TEAMWORK FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVEⁱ

INTRODUCTION

The following paper will give insights into the cross-linguistic model of foreign language teaching at the University of Innsbruck. This aims by giving multilingual and team-oriented lessons to act as a model for the students and therefore to foster cooperation between teachers of different foreign languages.

Blömeke (2011, 346) notes that, although pre-service teacher education has been constantly adapted, it retains particular structures. For example, „die universitäre Ausbildung, selbst die der mehrsprachigen Philologien (wie Romanistik und Slawistik), [...] [hat] es bislang übersehen, Mehrsprachigkeit im Hinblick auf die praxisbezogene Ausbildung von Französisch-, Italienisch-, Portugiesisch-, Spanisch- oder Russischlehrern zu reflektieren.“ⁱⁱ (Meißner 2001, 114) This is also the case in schools because, despite the increasing multilingualism of students – and their parents and teachers, a so-called “monolingual habitus” (Gogolin 2008) is maintained. It is therefore necessary to give prospective teachers appropriate training to get them to realise their own multilingualism and that of their future students.

Following Meißner (2001, 115), it can be assumed that “das Studium das langfristig wirksame berufliche Selbstkonzept prägt, das heißt, eine monolinguale Ausbildung führt zu einem monolingualen Selbstkonzept: Die Studierenden fühlen sich etwa als Englischlehrer oder Italienischlehrerin.”ⁱⁱⁱ But cross-linguistic work requires the activation of the common ground of languages and cultures (cf. *ibid.*, 120). Since 2002 the “Innsbruck Model of Fremdsprachendidaktik” (IMoF) at the University of Innsbruck has been practising new approaches in (foreign) language teacher education, which is shown below.

INNSBRUCK MODEL OF FREMDSPRACHENDIDAKTIK (IMoF)

Background Information on IMoF

IMoF was created in 2000 as part of the reorganization of the teaching curriculum at the University of Innsbruck. The persons responsible for language teaching at the departments for English, Romance and Slavic languages implemented, especially on the initiative of the Department of Romance Languages, with the so-called “*Innsbrucker Modell der Fremdsprachendidaktik*” a cross-institutional approach. This means that the teacher training for language teaching was in a first step offered cross-linguistically for all modern languages selected (English, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish) and in a second step for ancient languages (Greek and Latin), too. In the academic year 2001/02 the new teaching curriculum finally came into force and the first courses were conducted in the winter term 2002/03 (cf. Hinger 2007, 245f.; Hinger 2009, 498; Hinger et al. 2005, 17; Kofler et al. 2004, 44). With the Unit of Foreign Language Didactics at the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies at the University of Innsbruck the former cross-institutional cooperation within the university structure was formally established in 2009. Therefore IMoF is the first academic organizational unit in Austria which implements cross-linguistic teacher training (cf. Unterrainer, Hinger 2010, 184). The teaching program offered by IMoF (cf. Figure 1) includes three modules, which are presented in the following section. The initial module consists of the cross-linguistic course “Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages” and a language-specific workshop, which are both attended in the same semester (usually 3rd or 4th semester). The final module is – similar to the initial module – made up of a cross-linguistic course, “Testing and Assessment“, and a language-specific workshop. In contrast to

these modules, the middle module contains almost exclusively language-specific courses that can be selected by the students according to what is on offer. However, there are some cross-linguistic courses that are primarily for students who study two languages.

initial module		middle module	final module	
“Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages”	language-specific workshop	mainly language-specific courses	“Testing and Assessment”	language-specific workshop
2 c.h.	1 c.h.	4 c.h.	1 c.h.	2 c.h.
10 course hours (c.h.)				

Figure 1: Pre-service teacher education for foreign languages offered by IMoF

Principles of IMoF

- Cross-linguistic Teaching**
 IMoF works cross-linguistically and takes into account aspects of multilingual education. Thus principles and theories of learning and testing languages, which are common for all languages, are taught in the cross-linguistic courses (cf. Hinger 2007, 246f.). In other words, students of English, French, Italian, Greek/Latin, Russian and Spanish have largely the same training in language teaching. These languages are used in the cross-linguistic courses as target languages for tasks and exercises so that the students can experience different languages in the teaching sequences (cf. Hinger, Unterrainer 2008, 325).
- Team Teaching**
 Another key principle of IMoF is team teaching. In this regard IMoF refers to Perry and Stewart (2005); accordingly, various possibilities of team teaching can be located on a continuum of cooperation (cf. Hinger 2007, 251f.). For IMoF this means that the cross-linguistic courses have a high degree of cooperation, while the language-specific courses have mainly a low degree of cooperation (cf. Hinger 2009, 502):



Figure 2: Degree of cooperation (adapted from Perry, Stewart 2005, 564, cited in Unterrainer, Hinger 2010, 186)

The above figure shows – as just mentioned – that the cross-linguistic courses have a high degree of cooperation since all areas of the course (from planning to evaluation) are carried out in the team. However, the language-specific courses have predominately a low degree of cooperation (cf. Hinger 2007, 251f.). Cross-disciplinary work in teams can be regarded as favorable for teachers; for example, García and Sylvan (2011, 395f.) postulate that: “Teachers, like students, are assumed to be diverse and have various strengths.” Team teaching allows mutual, constructive feedback, which stimulates critical self-reflection: “It may, therefore, be necessary for them [teachers] to have another person, a ‘critical friend’

(Stenhouse 1975), as an observer who can talk about teaching in a collaborative undertaking.” (Farrell 2001, 368) This “critical friendship” encourages discussions and reflections, which in turn can improve the quality of teaching and learning (cf. *ibid.*, 368f.). Therefore IMoF hopefully acts as a model for the students for their future cooperation with teachers of different languages (and disciplines). To what extent this is valid will be shown – after a definition of “team teaching” – by a study of the author.

(CROSS-LINGUISTIC) TEAM TEACHING AND TEAM LEARNING

Cross-linguistic Team Teaching

Sandholtz (2000, 40) identifies three types of team teaching:

- (1) two or more teachers loosely sharing responsibilities;
- (2) team planning, but individual instruction; and
- (3) joint planning, instruction, and evaluation of learning experiences.

As already mentioned, the different types of team teaching can be situated on a continuum. At the low-collaboration end courses are planned by a group, but taught individually by the team members. Team teaching at the highest level of collaboration means that the “courses are co-planned, co-taught and evaluated by a pair or group of teachers. These courses are self-contained with instructors working simultaneously in the classroom.” (Perry, Stewart 2005, 564)

Most team-taught courses will be located in the middle of these extremes. While the cross-linguistic courses of IMoF have a high degree of cooperation, the language-specific ones have mainly a low degree of cooperation. “A much more collaborative approach has been termed ‘four-handed’ instruction (Corin, 1997), in which two teachers typically work in the same classroom with interchanging faculty roles involving one leading the activity and the other assisting.” (Perry, Stewart 2005, 564)

According to Buckley (2000, cited in Perry, Stewart 2005, 564), there are many approaches to team teaching. Buckley (*ibid.*) offers one possible definition of team teaching: “Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students learn.”

Similarly to the different degrees of cooperation, we can distinguish two types of team teaching (cf. Groneberg 2006, 41):

- Synchronic team teaching: team members teach simultaneously
- Diachronic team teaching: team members teach consecutively, one after another

The synchronic team teaching (as it takes place in the cross-linguistic courses of the initial and final module of IMoF) facilitates cross-language work, since the exchange between the lecturers can take place directly in the course, and is therefore evident for the students (cf. *ibid.*, 44).

As already mentioned, through team teaching IMoF aims at acting as a model for cooperation among students (of different languages) as prospective teachers since otherwise teachers tend to go it alone:

“[...] the dominant school structure continues to emphasize teacher autonomy more than collaboration. [...] Little change will take place in schools unless teachers are observing, helping, and talking with each other (Barth, 1990). [...] A community of peers is important not only in terms of support but also as a crucial source of ideas and criticism [...] collaboration is also a strong predictor of student achievement gains (Rosenholtz, 1989).” (Sandholtz 2000, 39f.)

As part of a project the author has tried to adopt the principle of team teaching to suit the students' perspective by using the term "team learning". The team teaching experienced is made explicit to the students by showing them how team learning can work within a cross-linguistic group. Students should, therefore, use the team teaching as a model for their own learning at university, so that they can rely on team teaching as teachers. Therefore, the author explained to the students of the experimental group the connection between the team teaching by the IMoF-team and their team learning during the course. This connection is briefly presented below.

Cross-linguistic Team Learning

The starting point for the team learning has been the mainly individual and language-specific work of students during their studies. By insisting on cross-linguistic groupwork of the students, the collaboration among prospective teachers should be encouraged. More precisely this groupwork aims at increasing the cross-linguistic collaboration between prospective teachers of different languages.

The author adopts the definition of team teaching on the basis of Buckley (2000, 4, cited in Perry, Stewart 2005, 564) and comes to the following point: "Team learning involves a group of students working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help each other learn." According to Perry and Stewart (2005, 564), the following cooperation continuum for team learning can be derived:

- High degree of cooperation: The task is jointly planned by the group members and (simultaneously) performed.
- Low degree of cooperation: The task is planned in a (cross-linguistic) group and later performed individually by each member of the group.

Furthermore, we can speak of "six-handed" learning (adapted from Perry, Stewart 2005, 564) in the case of this groupwork because the cross-linguistic group of three students work (simultaneously) together on the same task (textbook analysis) for a semester. After each of them has analysed his or her "own" textbook (e.g. for English, Italian and Spanish), the analyses are compared with each other and a final report is written in the group.

CROSS-LINGUISTIC TEAMWORK FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE. INSIGHTS INTO A STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK

The author's study was conducted with the students (N=90) of the course "Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages" in the winter term 2011/12. The participants in the study are future teachers of English, French, Italian, Latin, Russian and Spanish. The following sections describe the research design and the results of the study.

Research Design

The emphasis of the present study is on the question "How can future language teachers – as part of a teaching seminar – be prepared for (cross-linguistic) team teaching?"

To answer this question, the following research methods were used:

- Case study (cf. Albert, Marx 2010, 82) with two groups:
 - Experimental group: students (44) get a hand-out with explicit instructions for the task in teamwork, together with continuous references to the importance of (cross-linguistic) teamwork by the author (as one of the course lecturers)
 - Control group: students (46) do not get explicit instructions
- Questionnaire:
 - For the written inquiry the author used a questionnaire with a sliding scale, designed by herself, from "I do not agree at all" (1) to "I agree entirely" (4). The results of the paper-

pencil-survey were entered into SPSS 18.0 and analysed. After this analysis the four-point scale was reduced to a nominal one for the descriptive presentation of the data. For the inferential analysis, however, the four-step scale was maintained.

The students were surveyed three times during the semester.

1st data collection (November 2011): paper-pencil-survey with 79 students

2nd data collection (January 2012): paper-pencil-survey with 84 students

3rd data collection (March 2012): online-survey with 20 students

Unlike the first two surveys, the last was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire, which had an impact on the response rate. Therefore the results of the third survey will not be presented in this paper.

Findings

Here the descriptive statistical results are shown, before insights into the inferential statistics are given.

90 students who were team-taught in four parallel groups of the course “Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages” took part in the present study in the winter term 2011/12. Due to absences of the students and to the choice of data collection (paper-pencil vs. online questionnaire), the sample varies from 84 (second survey), 79 (first survey) to 20 students (third and final survey). For the following description of the sample the data of the second survey is used, since it has the highest number of students participating.

52.50% of the students have English as their main field of study. With 13.80% Italian is in second place of the languages studied. 9.50% of the students study French, while Spanish and Russian were chosen by 5.00% of the students. Latin is studied only by one person (1.30%), which is due to the fact that the language-specific workshop for Latin is only offered each summer term.

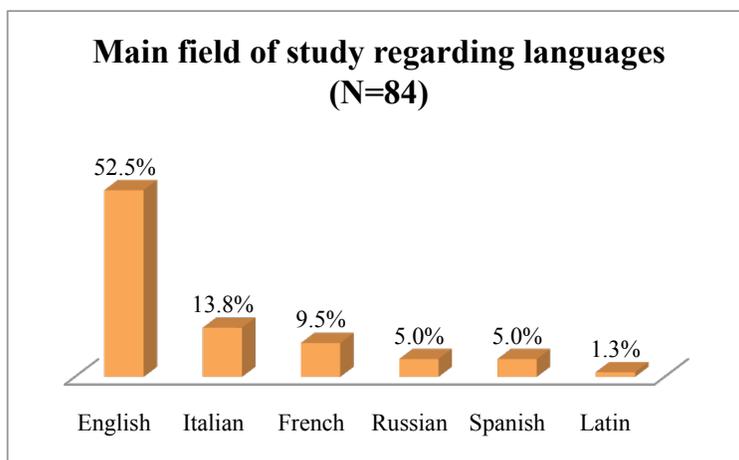


Figure 3: Main field of study regarding languages (N=84), winter term 2011/12

As the second language being studied, English and Italian, each with 10.30%, are at the top. Spanish was chosen by 9.00% of the students, followed by Russian and French, with 6.40% and 5.10% respectively.

In the first survey (early November 2011) students answered questions with the thematic focus on team teaching. After having reduced the four-point scale to a nominal scale, it is observed that 84.80% of the students reported not having experienced team teaching as a student at school. Conversely, 79.70% of the students surveyed would like to conduct team

teaching (as they have experienced it at IMoF) in their own teaching. 91.20% would like to cooperate with colleagues from other languages (such as joint classes, projects, and so on). In terms of multilingual teaching, this represents one of the objectives of IMoF, but verifications at later points in time would be necessary. 56.80% of the students have already experienced team teaching at university outside IMoF. The half-open question revealed that almost all of these students had experienced team teaching in courses of the Department of Teacher Training and Education Research (ILS). Still, however, 43.20% had no experience with team teaching at university outside IMoF. 64.10% of the students stated that the course “Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages” would act as a role model for their future teaching in a team. In short, for almost two-thirds of the students surveyed IMoF fulfills its aim here.

In the second survey in January 2012 the same questions as two months before were asked, namely to state possible changes by attending the course “Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages”. The agreement to cooperate with colleagues of other languages increased from 91.20% to 96.40%. 85.70% (compared to 79.70% in the first survey) would like to conduct team teaching in their later classes. But in the second survey IMoF can only partly act as a role model for team teaching because 51.90% (12.20% less than in the first survey) indicated that the course “Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign languages” would be a model for their team teaching, while the remaining 48.10% denied this.

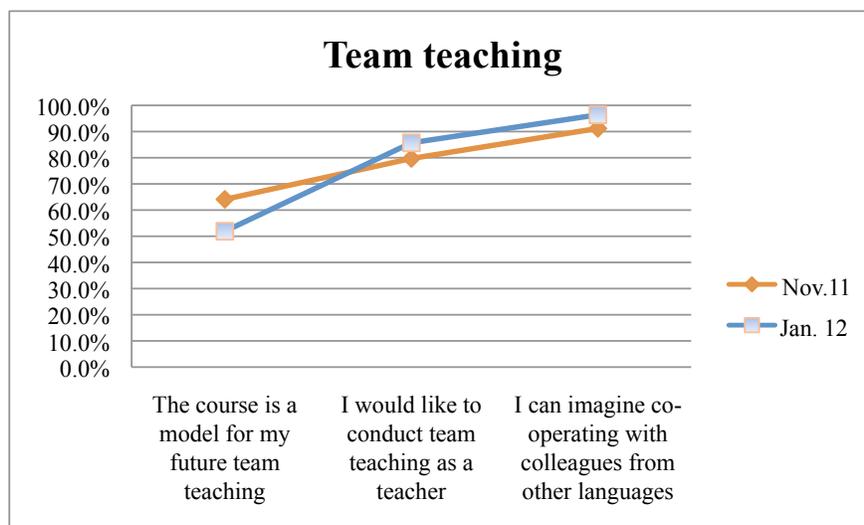


Figure 4: Items on team teaching at two different points in time (Nov. 2011, Jan. 2012)

In a second step involving inferential statistics, differences (proved by the Mann-Whitney-U-test using SPSS 18.0) between the experimental and the control group are partly shown. In the first survey the experimental group would like to conduct significantly more team teaching as future teachers ($p=0.041$). With regard to the second survey, it is noticeable that the experimental group liked groupwork significantly more ($p=0.005$). Furthermore, for the experimental group the collaboration in the team was significantly more efficient ($p=0.008$). Moreover, the team members of the experimental group gave each other constructive feedback significantly more often ($p=0.000$). In addition, the experimental group considered the team task a positive challenge significantly more often ($p=0.040$) and for the experimental group the task seemed significantly more useful for their later work as teachers ($p=0.003$).

Finally, the experimental group indicated a significantly higher estimated workload for the task ($p=0.005$).

CONCLUSION

This study with 90 students of the course "Introduction to the Teaching of Foreign Languages" has aimed at increasing the awareness of cross-linguistic team teaching. Therefore, in the case study conducted the students of the experimental group – in contrast to the control group – received instructions (written and oral) for the required cross-linguistic group task. Furthermore, the author (as one of the lecturers) brought home to them the similarities of the lecturers' team teaching to the students' team learning. To determine changes in attitude, written surveys were conducted during the winter semester 2011 /12. Generally speaking, the students have not experienced team teaching at school. When comparing the results of the two surveys presented, it is striking that the students in the experimental group generally expressed higher approval. The experimental group liked groupwork more than the control group. Furthermore, the students in the experimental group worked more efficiently in the group, which in turn resulted in constructive feedback. The experimental group perceived the groupwork as a positive challenge and invested quantitatively more time in the group task. Last but not least, for the students of the experimental group the group task was significantly more useful for their future work as teachers.

This leads us to conclude that the instructions for the cross-linguistic group task and the explicit references to the team learning in the experimental group were largely successful. Therefore, it can be posited that the reasons for teamwork and cross-linguistic teamwork must be made explicit. It also seems that students do need clear guidelines before they can work autonomously. Therefore future language teachers can be prepared for (cross-linguistic) team teaching by them being prepared for groupwork through a model which is made explicit.

ⁱ The author would like to thank her colleague Andrew Milne-Skinner for his comments that have helped improve the manuscript.

ⁱⁱ Translation: "university education, even multilingual philologies (such as Romance and Slavic languages), [...] [has] failed so far to reflect multilingualism in terms of the practical training of French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish or Russian teachers."

ⁱⁱⁱ Translation: "study has a long-term effect on professional self-image, in that monolingual training leads to a monolingual attitude of mind: students tend to regard themselves as English teachers or Italian teachers."

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APPENDIX: EXTRACT OF THE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Konkrete Vorgangsweise (adaptiert nach Barkley 2005, 256f)

Alle Gruppenmitglieder bringen sich in den folgenden Phasen bestmöglich ein:

- **Erste Phase** (*Team learning*, hoher Kooperationsgrad)
 - Kennenlernen, Festlegen der Aufgaben und der Verbindlichkeiten innerhalb der Gruppe (z.B. Vertrag)
 - Feststellen der vorhandenen Sprachen in der Gruppe, Wahl eines geeigneten Lehrwerks (A1, GERS) → Ziel: maximale Vielfalt an Sprachen und Lehrwerken
 - Erstes Brainstorming zur Aufgabenstellung (s. Infoblatt im eCampus)
 - Literaturrecherche zur bestmöglichen Bewältigung der Aufgabenstellung (s. u.a. Fachliteratur im eCampus); Fokus auf Fragestellungen und den darin enthaltenen Begrifflichkeiten
 - Gemeinsam Fahrplan für weiteres Vorgehen erstellen
- **Zweite Phase** (*Team learning*, hoher Kooperationsgrad)
 - Organisation der im ersten Treffen gesammelten Ideen
 - Jedes Teammitglied bringt mindestens eine für die Arbeitsaufgabe relevante Fachliteratur mit und präsentiert der Gruppe relevante Informationen daraus; GERS-Lektüre ist Basis für alle
 - Gemeinsame Vorgehensweise für die Einzelanalyse der Arbeitsaufgabe:
 - Wie werden die Fragestellungen vom Team verstanden?
 - Welche Kriterien werden für die einzelnen Fragestellungen, d.h. für die Lehrwerkanalyse, innerhalb des Teams angewandt?
 - Grobgliederung der gemeinsamen Arbeit wird festgelegt
- **Dritte Phase** (*Team learning*, niedriger Kooperationsgrad)
 - Individuelle Analyse des gewählten Lehrwerks
 - Rohfassung der eigenen Analyse, einschließlich Ergebnisse mit Belegen aus dem Lehrwerk (Zitierweise s. Stylesheet im eCampus)
- **Vierte Phase** (*Team learning*, hoher Kooperationsgrad)
 - Vergleich der Einzelanalysen
 - Gemeinsame Verschriftlichung des Berichts → Erstellen einer gemeinsamen Rohfassung
 - Gemeinsame Korrektur der Rohfassung, v.a. Überarbeitung und Korrekturlesen
 - Pünktliche Abgabe der Arbeitsaufgabe (mit Infoblättern aller Gruppenmitglieder)



Gemeinsame Arbeit in der Gruppe	Eigenständige Arbeit anhand der im Team vereinbarten Kriterien etc.
Erste Phase Zweite Phase Vierte Phase	Dritte Phase

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