Unlocking ESP Potential: A Culture-Infused Approach to Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

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Abstract: *This paper's objective is to outline the unique aspects of imbuing ESP into a MALL practice. On the one hand, it focuses on the technical intricacies involved in developing a mobile application for FL learning and assessment. On the other hand, it delves into the incorporation of cultural elements within the exercises it offers. In terms of the former aspect, the Erasmus+ project LanGuide state-of-the-art mobile application targeted four distinct specialised fields (academic, mobility, administrative, and IT), six different languages (English, Romanian, Slovenian, Italian, Croatian, and Spanish), three language proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), and three types of users (students, teachers, and administrative staff). Regarding the latter aspect, LanGuide took a unique approach to integrating cultural elements into the exercises offered through its mobile application by merging two views, crafting task environments tailored for each exercise, incorporating cultural elements from the languages it focuses on and imbuing them into the drills created in and for the English language. Thus, LanGuide set itself apart from other language learning mobile apps, not only by aligning ESP with Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, but also by naturally blending the communicative teaching approach for foreign languages with the pedagogical techniques of the digital age.*

Keywords: *MALL; ESP; cultural element; cultural literacy; cultural competence; cultural awareness; digital era;*

1. Introduction

In today's digitally driven world, mobile devices have become omnipresent tools that infuse various aspects of daily life, including education. One area where mobile technology has shown significant potential is language learning. Thus, the way learning languages has been approached is constantly evolving. The era of heavy textbooks and limited opportunities to interact with native speakers is now a thing of the past. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) refers to the use of mobile devices to support language learning outside of traditional classroom settings and has emerged as a powerful tool, employing the ubiquity of smartphones and tablets to transform language acquisition.

According to Stockwell (95-110), MALL offers several advantages that contribute to effective language learning. Firstly, mobile devices provide learners with access to a variety of language resources anytime, anywhere.

Mobile applications, online dictionaries, language learning platforms, and multimedia content allow learners to engage with authentic language materials and practice their language skills on-the-go. Additionally, the portability and convenience of mobile devices enable learners to incorporate language learning into their daily routines, maximising learning opportunities and promoting continuous practice. Furthermore, the interactive and engaging nature of mobile applications, which often include gamified activities, quizzes, and multimedia content, can enhance learner motivation and engagement, leading to more effective learning outcomes (Stockwell 95-110).

In this way, MALL capitalises on the strengths of mobile technology, offering learners unmatched flexibility and accessibility. More than what the communicative framework has managed to introduce with foreign language learning, i.e., a real-life-context-centred skills integration, research by Czerska-Andrzejewska (43-52) highlights the shift from teacher-centred to student-driven learning with MALL, empowering learners to access materials and practice their target language wherever they are and whenever they can. This portability breaks down geographical and time constraints, allowing learners to squeeze in a quick grammar lesson during their commute or practice vocabulary while waiting in line.

Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (271-289) are of the opinion that the versatility of mobile devices makes them suitable for a wide range of language learning activities. For vocabulary acquisition, learners can use flashcard apps or language learning games to practice and reinforce new words and phrases. According to Săftoiu et al (200-206), a good example in case is the GooseChase mobile application, since

> Learning new vocabulary is a challenge and may be achieved in various ways. Since we wanted our students to delve into real-life experiences and learn the specialised language in a fun way, we designed team activities in GooseChase as missions that needed to be carried out (…), throughout the city. (Săftoiu et al 204)

Language exchange platforms and social media apps allow learners to connect with native speakers and engage in authentic language communication. Podcasts, videos, and interactive language courses provide opportunities for listening and comprehension practice. Furthermore, language learning apps often incorporate speech recognition and language assessment features, allowing learners to receive feedback on their pronunciation and language proficiency (Kukulska-Hulme, Shield 271-289).

Beyond convenience, MALL offers a diverse range of language learning activities. Learners can refine their pronunciation through speech

recognition applications, expand their vocabulary with spaced repetition software, or immerse themselves in authentic content like podcasts and news articles. MALL applications can also cater to different learning styles, with some focusing on gamification and others offering more structured, textbook-style approaches, thus the impact of MALL extending beyond individual learners. Mobile devices promote a sense of community, enabling language learners to connect with native speakers and fellow learners across the globe. This can provide invaluable opportunities for conversation practice and cultural exchange.

However, despite its potential benefits, the implementation of MALL is not without challenges. One significant inconvenience is ensuring equitable access to mobile devices and internet connectivity, particularly in underserved communities or regions with limited resources. Moreover, the vast range of language learning apps and resources available can be overwhelming for learners, making it difficult to select high-quality and relevant materials. Additionally, Wu et al (817-827) also mention issues related to privacy, data security, and digital distractions that must be addressed to ensure safe and focused learning environments. Consequently, while mobile devices offer a variety of resources, effective language learning still requires dedication and a structured approach. MALL should ideally be used in conjunction with traditional classroom learning or other methods to ensure a complex and coherent language development.

Accordingly, MALL represents a significant advancement in language learning and offers a promising approach to language education, exploiting the power of mobile technology to facilitate flexible, personalised, and engaging learning experiences. By employing the benefits of MALL and addressing its associated challenges, educators can empower learners to develop their language skills effectively in diverse contexts, by enabling them to take control of their language acquisition journey, offering them the flexibility, accessibility, and diverse learning opportunities they need to succeed in more rapidly and satisfactorily. As mobile technology continues to develop, MALL is expected to become an even more essential tool for anyone seeking to unlock the world of languages.

2. Literature review

2.1. Tailored Learning on the Go: ESP in the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning Age

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has long been recognised as a specialised branch of English language teaching tailored to meet the specific needs of learners in various professional contexts. With the proliferation of mobile devices and the advent of MALL, ESP instruction has undergone

significant transformations. This shift has created a fertile ground for the flourishing of ESP, as the portability of MALL perfectly complements its targeted nature. A nurse learning medical terminology through interactive quizzes on their smartphone during breaks, or an engineer practicing technical vocabulary using flashcards while commuting represent dynamic examples in this respect. Research by Rajendran and Yunus (586-609) highlights the potential of MALL for ESP, emphasising its ability to deliver context-specific content and cater to learners' individual needs. Learning materials can be tailored to specific industry jargon, allowing learners to master the language used in their chosen field.

Furthermore, MALL enables a more immersive, interactive, and engaging learning experience for ESP, addressing the diverse preferences of its learners. Language learning apps can integrate real-world scenarios, such as role-playing business negotiations, practicing presentations, or applying vocabulary in the street. This practical approach helps learners not only understand the language but also gain the confidence to use it effectively in their professional settings. Gamified quizzes, interactive exercises, and multimedia content make learning more enjoyable and effective, while also providing immediate feedback and assessment. Additionally, in Cavus and Ibrahim's opinion (78-91), mobile devices facilitate authentic communication and collaboration among ESP learners, allowing them to engage in real-world tasks and projects relevant to their professional domains. The collaborative nature of MALL offers learners of ESP the possibility to connect with colleagues or subject-matter experts from around the world through online forums or language exchange apps, allowing peer-to-peer learning and practice within industry-specific contexts, creating, at the same time, a sense of community.

However, it is important to acknowledge that MALL for ESP requires careful planning and development. Content creators need to ensure the materials are relevant to specific professions and utilise terminology that aligns with particular activities' standards and the precise features of the users alongside their specific needs. Moreover, integrating assessment tools within MALL applications can help track learner progress and identify areas that require further improvement, just like in a gamified environment. In nuce, this is what the LanGuide project aimed at, via its mobile application dedicated to particular personae, with personalised profiles for whom dedicated ESP exercises were carefully designed by an Internet-based Content Manager considering the characteristics of the users and their expectations.

Thus, the rise of MALL presents a unique opportunity to enhance ESP learning. By maximising the potential of mobile technology, ESP educators can create customised, engaging learning experiences that equip

learners with the targeted language skills they need to succeed in their chosen fields. As MALL technology continues to evolve, even more innovative ways can be expected to tailor language learning to specific professions and academic disciplines. MALL has reshaped the landscape of ESP education, offering unprecedented opportunities for personalised, flexible, and effective learning experiences. By employing the power of mobile technology, ESP educators can provide learners with tailored, on-demand access to specialised language materials, interactive learning activities, and authentic communication opportunities – all of which are essential for meeting the specific language needs of professionals in diverse fields. As technology continues to evolve, ESP programmes must adapt and innovate to ensure that learners are equipped with the language skills necessary for success in their respective professions.

2.2. Untangling the Knot: Language and Culture in Foreign Language Acquisition

The path to fluency in a foreign language is not paved solely with vocabulary lists and grammar drills. It delves into the heart of a culture, revealing a complex relationship that fuels effective communication. Language and culture are intricately intertwined, in Kramsch's view, and understanding this connection is paramount for successful foreign language acquisition.

Language serves as a window into a culture's soul, a 'mirror' (Hartono et al 93-103) reflecting the values, beliefs, and customs of a culture. Proverbs, idioms, and even casually mundane greetings all carry cultural weight. By way of example, the Korean phrase 'mangeo seumnida' translates literally to 'I have eaten rice', but its cultural significance goes beyond simply stating satiety, the Japanese term 'omotenashi' encapsulates the concept of hospitality, while the Spanish phrase 'sobremesa' embodies the tradition of lingering at the table after a meal. Thus, understanding such nuances prevents literal translations that can lead to misinterpretations. By exploring the language, learners gain insight into the cultural intricacies and worldview of the target language community (Kramsch).

Culture, in turn, shapes the way a language is used. Hofstede's work on cultural dimensions highlights how cultures with high collectivism might prioritise indirect communication, reflected in their use of euphemisms and avoiding direct confrontation. Recognising these cultural influences allows learners to navigate social situations with greater ease. Furthermore, according to Byram and Feng, language acquisition becomes a gateway to cultural immersion. Literature, music, films, dance, journalism, and cuisine unveil a society's values, traditions, and history, aspects that are usually covered by more complex language programmes, such as summer schools.

By engaging with these cultural expressions, learners gain a deeper understanding of the 'why' behind the 'how' of the language.

This interconnectedness has profound implications for foreign language learning. A focus on grammar and vocabulary exclusively is not enough. Integrating cultural elements into the learning process facilitates a richer understanding of the language. This could involve exploring cultural references in literature, discussing social customs, or even role-playing everyday scenarios, as language and culture are not independent entities, but rather two threads woven together to form the tapestry of communication. By acknowledging this intricate relationship and actively incorporating cultural understanding into their learning journey, foreign language learners can unlock a deeper level of fluency and forge meaningful connections across cultures.

Language use is deeply intertwined with cultural context, including social norms, communication styles, and non-verbal cues. For example, the use of honorifics in Korean or Japanese reflects hierarchical social structures, while the directness of communication in English-speaking cultures may differ from the indirectness prevalent in some Asian cultures. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for effective communication and building rapport with native speakers (Byram).

However, even if still sharing the perspective on the importance of the cultural element when teaching a foreign language, Gay (106-116) emphasises the importance of culturally responsive teaching and the need for educators to prepare themselves adequately for teaching in diverse classrooms. She argues that simply having good intentions is not enough; teachers must actively seek to understand the cultural backgrounds and experiences of their students in order to create inclusive and effective learning environments. Gay advocates for a proactive approach to professional development, encouraging teachers to engage in self-reflection, seek out resources, and collaborate with colleagues to develop their cultural competence.

Cultural sensitivity is essential to language proficiency. Learners who are accustomed to cultural norms and values can navigate social interactions with greater ease and fluency. Moreover, cultural competence promotes empathy, respect, and appreciation for diverse perspectives, which enriches the language learning experience. As learners immerse themselves in the cultural context of the target language, they develop a deeper connection to the language and its speakers, leading to more authentic and meaningful communication (Saville-Troike). The degrees to reach cultural literacy start from becoming culturally aware, by simply acknowledging the complexities of differentiation, and go through being culturally competent, thus avoiding the embarrassing stance of possessing linguistic fluency and proficiency in a

foreign language, particularly in terms of productive language skills, but lacking the capacity for perspectivisation and contextualisation of linguistic and cultural meaning in real-life social situations.

Cultural awareness is a crucial component in raising understanding and harmony in diverse societies. It involves recognising, observing, and valuing the beliefs, practices, and perspectives of different cultural groups (Bennett 21-71; Brislin; Hofstede). By acknowledging cultural diversity, individuals can develop empathy and sensitivity towards others' customs and traditions, promoting inclusivity and social cohesion (Lustig and Koester). Cultural awareness not only enriches personal experiences but also enhances interpersonal relationships and communication skills (Searle and Ward 449-464). As a result, individuals become better equipped to navigate multicultural environments and engage in meaningful cross-cultural interactions. Through increased cultural awareness, societies can move towards greater acceptance, tolerance, and mutual respect, laying the foundation for a more harmonious and interconnected world (Bennett 21-71; Brislin; Hofstede).

But cultural awareness, while essential, represents just the onset; the subsequent critical phase involves advancing to cultural competence. According to Nechifor and Borca (297), being culturally competent means that

> on the one hand, as a student in a multicultural class, one can not only be aware of differences and complexities, but can already know how to deal with them, handle them, and respond to their specificity. On the other hand, as an instructor, after becoming aware of the difficulty of teaching to a multicultural class exactly due to the same differences and complexities, one can manage the entire process in a professional way, having correct reactions, politically correct answers, a lot of bibliography to cover from this point of view. (Nechifor and Borca 297)

The same authors proposed the concept of 'culturacy' as the ultimate logical consequence, 'the fifth necessary skill, next to the four basic ones, which can help build the complete profile of the experience of learning a new language' (Nechifor and Borca 298), in direct connection to the idea of proficiently navigating the cultural element of the target language aimed at for acquisition. This vision shares Kramsch's (8) belief that

> to identify themselves as members of a community, people have to define themselves jointly as insiders against others, whom they thereby define as outsiders. Culture, as a process that both includes

and excludes, always entails the exercise of power and control. (Kramsch 8)

In this way, the concept of the 'fluent fool', as articulated by Barnlund (4-14), can be successfully tamed. This deficiency underscores the importance of early foreign language learning stages, where an understanding of cultural customs and preferred behaviours can be cultivated. By emphasising cultural comprehension from the beginning, individuals can avoid falling into the trap of this phenomenon, thereby enhancing their ability to navigate diverse social contexts effectively (Barnlund 6).

In conclusion, the relationship between language and culture is intricate and symbiotic, particularly in the context of foreign language acquisition. By recognising the cultural foundations of language, learners gain a deeper understanding of both the language itself and the people who speak it. Embracing cultural diversity enhances language learning outcomes, advancing cultural sensitivity, empathy, and effective communication skills that transcend linguistic boundaries.

3. Unveiling the Methodological Framework: Exercises Design, Participants, and Data Collection

Considering all of the above, the LanGuide project introduced a novel approach: it developed tailored exercises for English language learners in specialised domains like mobility, secretarial/administrative work, IT, and academia and integrated them into a mobile application, enabling learners to promptly and conveniently enhance their language skills, grammar, and vocabulary proficiency in these specific areas, without neglecting the cultural element but catering for this component in a very original manner.

The LanGuide project began as a collaborative effort between two multinational teams: linguists and IT specialists. Linguists from universities in Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Croatia worked alongside IT experts from universities in Croatia and Sweden. Together, they developed a framework for language exercises, which underwent peer review and adaptation for multiple languages. The IT team then created a Content Management Platform (CMP) to host these exercises, with input from the linguists. Exercises were integrated into the CMP and adapted to various formats, including drag-and-drop and multiple-choice. The IT team subsequently developed a mobile application based on the exercises from the CMP framework, with input from both teams on technical aspects. The application underwent testing and feedback sessions before its official release, ensuring alignment with the project's goals and Gruba's (630) notion of the interdependence of computers, students, and instructors in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

The LanGuide project faced the challenge of integrating cultural elements into English language exercises designed for the specified domains, as, unlike previous perspectives outlined in the literature review, this task involved incorporating the host country's culture, such as Romania's, into exercises primarily focused on English language proficiency. This unique approach aimed to familiarise users with real-life situations, administrative processes, and cultural nuances they might encounter during an Erasmus+ mobility, using English as the medium of instruction. The implementation encompassed exercises at all levels and across various language skills, grammatical structures, and vocabulary ranges. To achieve this, a two-step framework was adopted: creating a task environment that presented detailed real-life situations related to Romanian administration, followed by the inclusion of cultural elements wherever feasible, as outlined in the literature review.

A solid database of 623 English language exercises, 177 Romanian language exercises, 173 Croatian language exercises, 151 Italian language exercises, 338 Slovenian language exercises, 363 Spanish language exercises was created by the international team of linguists and samples of the complex approach underpinned by the curious case of this particular context-driven application are, as follows, extracted from the 86 English language exercises based on a Romanian cultural background:

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Advanced
- **Learning person:** Administrator
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Student dropout rates
- **Skill:** Reading
- **Source:** Authentic production

Read the short fragment describing the evolution of dropout rates during one academic year. Then choose the appropriate graph which correctly represents the situation by adding the number in the text box:

The present graph shows the school dropout rates of our students, as recorded by the official documentation of the university, during the last academic year, according to the analysis performed by the chief-secretary with the rector's office. As it can be seen, the figures varied from one month to the next and there are different reasons which generated the fluctuations.

At the beginning of the year, when the motivation level was still high, dropouts started very low, at 1000 students. However, in January, right

before the time when, in Romania, universities prepare for the winter session, there was a dramatic increase. In February and March, during and after the exam session, the rise continued, but more gradually than in January, as going ahead with the exams was more important than considering dropping out. April was a better month, with a sharp fall to 2000 students, because the first part of the second semester is always more pleasant. But in May, right before the summer session, things worsened and there was a steady increase, whereas, in June, dropouts once again increased, as this month capitalises on every skipped course and seminar, the lack of information accumulated and disinterest manifested throughout the entire university year.
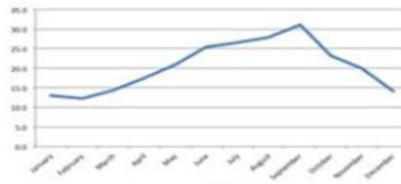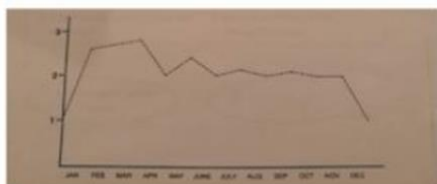
However, from the beginning of July to the end of October, meaning during the summer vacation, the dropout rates fluctuated slightly and then levelled off in November. We then saw dropouts falling rapidly in December, ending at 1000 students once again.
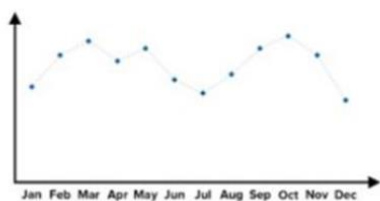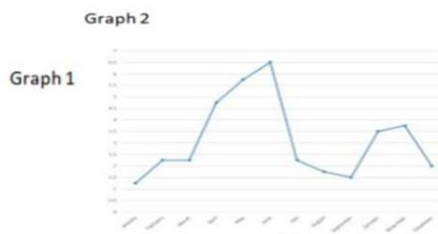
The appropriate graph is: Graph 1 / Graph 2 / Graph 3 / Graph 4.

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Basic
- **Learning person:** Administrator
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Dialogue in the Secretarial office
- **Skill:** Speaking
- **Source:** Authentic production

Imagine the following speaking contexts consisting of different possible dialogues taking place in your secretarial office. Look at the visitors' interventions and then match them to the secretary's questions / answers:

a. Hello, how can I help you?
b. Can I take your coat, Ms. May? Would you like a biscuit?
c. Good afternoon. My name is May, Dora May, and I am an assistant lecturer at the University of Manchester. I have just arrived for my teaching mobility at your university. Is this the secretarial office of the Erasmus+ department?
d. I can call a taxi for you, Ms. May. We usually recommend Martax, as a private taxi company.
e. You'll have to speak to our vice-rector, Mr. Doru Muntenescu, who is responsible for any student-related matters, including room distribution in our university's hostels.

1. As a newly arrived Erasmus+ student at *Transilvania* University of Brașov, can you tell me whom I should contact regarding my accommodation with the university? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e**
2. Hello, I'm looking for my Erasmus+ coordinator, Ms. Cristiana Demetrescu. *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e**
3. That would be very kind of you. And yes, as a matter of fact I would, as I haven't eaten since my arrival in Brașov, at noon. *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e**
4. What shall I take to get to my hotel, Mr. Dragu? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e**

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Basic
- **Learning person:** Student
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Erasmus + student life at the host university
- **Skill:** Speaking
- **Source:** Authentic production

Consider the following possible speaking contexts that you may find yourself in as an Erasmus+ student and match the questions to the answers.

a. It is upstairs, in room TI8.
b. I'm sorry, we're not allowed to provide it, but if you want, you can make an appointment with him.
c. It is on July 4th.
d. It's Mr. Lăzărescu, assistant professor, Ph.D.
e. My appointment with the Faculty Erasmus coordinator is at 9:30 am.

f. At her office, on Colina, room II29.
g. The Erasmus+ coordinator, under whose supervision you've been from the beginning of the exchange.

1. Where's the department photocopy machine? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
2. What is the Dean's telephone number? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
3. When is the Department meeting regarding the situation of the transferable credits? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
4. Who is the Dean of the Faculty? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
5. When is your appointment with the Faculty Erasmus coordinator? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
6. Where can I find the coordinator of the Erasmus+ programme of this Department? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**
7. Who will be in charge with checking my student supplement before I return to my home university? *Select:* **a/b/c/d/e/f/g**

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Basic
- **Learning person:** Student
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Functionally motivated conversation at the university (1)
- **Skill:** - (Grammar)
- **Source:** Authentic production

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition.

1. I'm afraid the Dean of the Faculty of Letters is not *Select:* **in/at/on/through** his office at the moment.
2. The Erasmus coordinator is not *Select:* **in/at/on/with** work this week. She's *Select:* **on/at/through/with** the airport, boarding *Select:* **on/at/through/in** a plane to Switzerland.
3. Our English lecturer is *Select:* **at/with/on/in** a teaching mobility in Iceland. He'll come back next week and will assist you *Select:* **with/on/in/through** your problem.
4. Wait a minute; I'll put you *Select:* **through/on/in/at** to the Vice rector's office.
5. Mr. Lăzărescu is away *Select:* **in/on/at/with** Japan.

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Basic
- **Learning person:** Student

- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Functionally motivated conversation at the university (2)
- **Skill:** - (Grammar)
- **Source:** Authentic production

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition.

1. The secretary isn't here *Select:* **through/on/in/at** the moment.
2. The students are *Select:* **on/in/through/at** holiday from the end of July until the beginning of September.
3. Hold *Select:* **on/in/through/at** a moment, please.
4. Please fill *Select:* **in/through/on/with** this form if you want to request hostel accommodation within our campus.
5. If you want to use our university's eLearning platform, you have to sign *Select:* **with/through/on/in** with your institutional account.

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Advanced
- **Learning person:** Administrator
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Interview and acceptance letters
- **Skill:** Writing
- **Source:** Authentic production

The following extracts are from two different types of letters: an invitation to an interview letter and a letter of acceptance. The paragraphs are all mixed up. Put them in the correct order to produce the two correct letters.

1. Letter of invitation>
Paragraph 1 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 2 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 3 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 4 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 5 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**

2. Letter of acceptance>
Paragraph 1 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 2 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 3 *Select*: **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**
Paragraph 4 *Select:* **1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9**

1. We are pleased to bring to your attention the interest that we have decided to invest in you, as we were very impressed by your qualifications, as well as by your personal style and behaviour. Consequently, we are now in the position of offering you the job.

2. We shall be conducting interviews on Wednesday, 16th July 2020, and we would like to ask you to contact us to arrange a suitable time, upon mutual convenience.

3. Dear Ms. Cassels
Thank you for your letter of application for the post of secretary with the Rector's office.

4. We look forward to meeting you.
Yours sincerely,
Simona Columbeanu
Jonathan Dryer (Mrs.)
HR Department / UNITBV

5. We enclose a letter of acceptance for you to sign and return to us within the next seven days.

6. We have narrowed our selection process to a short-list of four candidates of whom you are one, and would like to invite you to attend an interview.

7. We look forward to welcoming you onto our staff and waiting for your reply as soon as possible.
Yours sincerely,
Simona Columbeanu
Jonathan Dryer (Mrs.)
HR Department / UNITBV

8. Dear Ms. Cassells
Thank you for attending the interview for the position of secretary with the Rector's office.

9. We would kindly ask you to bring your qualification certificates with you to the interview.

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Intermediate
- **Learning person:** Student
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** The Erasmus+ Programme: Problems with a study mobility
- **Skill:** Speaking
- **Source:** Authentic production

Match the problems you might encounter in a study mobility (marked 1-10) to the offers made by a secretary in the utterances a-n.

1. I seem to have lost my way in the corridors of this building. Could you help me with some directions to my classroom?
2. I'm going to be late for my next lecture scheduled within my Erasmus mobility.
3. The envelope I had sent to my host University did not reach the destination.
4. I need some local currency.
5. How can I get to the Dean's office?
6. I think I'll have to send the Learning Agreement and the Financial Contract to the Erasmus Office right away.
7. I need to post these letters today.
8. I have to confirm my return flight and send a scanned copy to the Erasmus Office.
9. I'm not sure I can find my way out of this building!
10. I have an appointment to see Ms. Dițulescu.
11. I will need accommodation during my mobility at *Transilvania* University.

a. I'll tell her you're here, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait a bit: she's in a meeting with another Erasmus+ student.
b. I can help you change some money at the bank this first time; in this way, the next time you will know what to do.
c. I'll write down the number of the room on this paper, but in general the first letter stands for the building, the Roman number indicates the floor and the Arabic number tells you the room.
d. I can post them for you.
e. I'll call and see if the secretariat found it. If not, you will have to send it again.
f. I'll call the hostel administration and arrange that for you, but beforehand you'll have to write an application addressed to the Vice-rector who is in charge with this aspect.
g. I'll show you on a campus map.
h. I'll call them and explain you'll be late; your documents problem was urgent and needed quick solving.
i. I'll show you the way, but as tip, always follow the green arrows on the floor.
j. I'll call the airline and confirm the flight for you, then I'll scan your boarding pass, but eventually you'll have to send an email with the proof attached yourself.

k. I can post them for you, but an email with the electronic version of the documents would be a good idea, as well.

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Advanced
- **Learning person:** Student
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Submitting original documents
- **Skill:** Speaking
- **Source:** Authentic production
- **Type of text:** oral account

You are a student at the Faculty of Letters, *Transilvania* University of Brașov who has applied for an Erasmus+ study mobility in Greece. The secretary of the Erasmus+ department has informed you about the possibility of being disqualified from the competition, unless you bring the original papers needed for the application file, but you seem to have problems submitting them in due time. You are in the secretary's office now and you have to defend your case. Prepare an oral account regarding this situation, explaining why you cannot hand in the required papers before the deadline, asking for an extension of the deadline and offering alternative solutions to the problem meanwhile. Consider using an appropriate register, a wide variety of vocabulary items and grammatical structures, a well-organised and coherent discourse. Provide personal arguments and examples. Talk for approximately 3 minutes.

Self-evaluation marking scheme:

between 1 – 5 points – minimal user
between 6 – 10 points – good user
between 11 – 15 points – very good user

1. I introduced myself. *Select:* **YES/NO**
2. I briefly stated the problem, using my own words (not any of the phrases form the task environment). *Select:* **YES/NO**
3. I explained why I couldn't bring the documents in due time. *Select:* **YES/NO**
4. I asked for an extension of the deadline. *Select:* **YES/NO**
5. I offered alternative solutions. *Select:* **YES/NO**
6. I built arguments. *Select:* **YES/NO**
7. I used examples. *Select:* **YES/NO**
8. I used a wide range of vocabulary. *Select:* **YES/NO**

9. My grammar structures were complex (I used at least three different complex patterns). *Select:* **YES/NO**
10. I used cohesive devices. *Select:* **YES/NO**
11. I was fluent (I made pauses no longer than 2 seconds). *Select:* **YES/NO**
12. I stayed within the time limit of 3 minutes. *Select:* **YES/NO**
13. I was politically correct. *Select:* **YES/NO**
14. I referred strictly to what I was assigned to do. *Select:* **YES/NO**
15. I concluded my intervention. *Select:* **YES/NO**

- **Language:** English
- **Level:** Basic
- **Learning person:** Teacher
- **Field:** Secretarial
- **Topic:** Teaching in Romania. Options for teaching in Romania
- **Skill:** Reading
- **Source:** Authentic production

Read the text and answer the questions:

Educators have a wide variety of options to teach in Romania. Qualified teachers have the opportunity to teach in public schools across the country or Romania's private international schools, most of which are located in Bucharest. To teach English in Romania, teachers can also apply to teach in public schools; English teaching jobs are also available in private language centres. In order to stay competitive in an EU teaching job market, teachers will need to hold a TEFL certificate. Previous experience is often required as well.

a. in Romania
b. public schools and Romania's private international schools
c. in public schools and in private language centres
d. TEFL

1. Where do educators have a wide variety of options to teach? *Select:* **a/b/c/d**
2. Which are the two options for qualified teachers? *Select:* **a/b/c/d**
3. Where can a language teacher teach English in Romania? *Select:* **a/b/c/d**
4. What kind of certificate does a teacher need to stay competitive in an EU teaching job market? *Select:* **a/b/c/d**

4. Unlocking Insights: Exploring Results, Implications, Constraints, and Future Avenues

The exercises in the LanGuide project immerse English learners, whether Romanian or international, in real-life scenarios related to 4 different specialised fields. These scenarios simulate experiences that learners may encounter in Romania or before embarking on an Erasmus+ exchange, effectively integrating cultural elements into English language exercises. The inclusion of cultural references such as institution names (*Transilvania* University of Brașov, Faculty of Letters, Centre for Learning Modern Language, the Department of Continuous Education), toponyms, field clues, local educational practices, and location indications (Brașov - "located in the heart of the country", classroom names TI8, II29, the address of The Rectorate building: "20 Eroilor Blvd", the prefix in the telephone number which is valid for Romania: 004, Colina, the name of a trusted taxi company: Martax , the institutional email and platforms account extension: @unitbv.ro), as well as bureaucratic procedures provides users with insights into Romanian administrative practices. Additionally, proper names of individuals (Silvana Enescu, Lorena Davidescu, Simona Columbeanu, Mr. Lăzărescu, Cristiana Demetrescu, Cornelia Dragu) further enrich the cultural experience, creating social familiarity by means of specific linguistic clues. These exercises exemplify a unique approach that aligns with contemporary language learning methodologies, offering practical information relevant to living, visiting, and studying in Romania and ensuring relevance and engagement for learners.

The LanGuide project integrates Chun's (663-680) both psycholinguistic and sociocultural theories, by focusing on cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and cognitive load in language learning, and by immersing learners in real-life contexts relevant to their field of study and cultural background. Schulze's (301-312) observations on the interdependency of actors in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) are also addressed, emphasising learner-environment interactions. The project's exercises are meticulously designed to reflect authentic academic, mobility exchange, secretarial, or administrative scenarios, promoting Chapelle's (585-595) learner autonomy and personalised learning styles, thus avoiding isolated variables typical of CALL and incorporating an ethnographic component, enabling language progress and continuous improvement (Chapelle 585-595).

LanGuide exemplifies a balanced approach, where linguists and IT specialists collaborated to prioritise user-friendly and pedagogically sound materials (Beatty). Additionally, guidelines such as identifying technology's purpose and delineating benefits for students aid in maintaining equilibrium between technology and pedagogy (Chapelle, 585-595). Addressing 'the monolingual bias' presents another challenge, as some learners bring multiple linguistic resources that CALL materials often fail to activate

(Buendgens-Kosten, 1-16). While commercial CALL products may not prioritise plurilingualism, initiatives like the LanGuide project aim to support interculturality and multilingualism (Kompara Lukančič and Fabijanić, 33-74).

CALL offers several general advantages irrespective of the learning environment. One key benefit is its ability to tailor learning input to individual learner needs instantly (Bush, 443-470). Additionally, CALL tools provide immediate feedback, promoting self-awareness and autonomy in learners (Chapelle). The LanGuide mobile application not only effectively incorporates these features, enhancing its usability, but it also addresses such challenges by continuously improving its performance based on evaluation feedback, ensuring optimal functioning.

5. Conclusions

In today's globalised world, cultural competency is increasingly valued, particularly in professional settings such as multinational companies, educational exchanges, and multicultural classrooms. Teachers, especially those of foreign languages, must possess cultural awareness to effectively navigate diverse interactions and contribute to cultural understanding. This not only develops skills like acceptance, patience, and empathy, but also enhances motivation, as individuals are drawn to cultures, they seek to integrate with (Gardner et al; Harmer). The incorporation of cultural elements into language teaching, learning, and assessment has become essential, whether it involves imbuing the culture of the source language or that of the target language community. The LanGuide project, discussed in this paper, exemplifies the unique approach of including Romanian cultural elements in English language exercises, underscoring the importance of cultural adaptation in language education, and highlighting how language learning can accommodate the complexities of real-world contexts. By addressing the needs of various stakeholders, such as students, teachers, and administrative staff participating in mobility programmes, LanGuide exemplifies a comprehensive approach to language education that embraces cultural diversity and promotes meaningful engagement with target language communities.

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