Using PowerPoint to develop pupils' oral skills in modern foreign languages

Verna Brandford and Rebecca Wilson
Institute of Education, University of London

INTRODUCTION

The increased use of ICT has undoubtedly changed the face of teaching and learning in all subjects including modern foreign languages (MFL). This is characterised by improved presentation of pupils' work, raised levels of interest and motivation, and an increase in opportunities for pupils to integrate their ICT skills developed outside the subject, in creative and imaginative ways.

Whilst there is good practice in the use of ICT in MFL, its role in raising attainment and as a source for creativity is often underdeveloped or not fully exploited. Word-processing and desktop publishing, beneficial though they may be, still tend to predominate (Ofsted, 2002).

This case study focuses on the use of ICT, and PowerPoint in particular, within French lessons as a catalyst to generate pupils' language use and to develop their oral presentation skills through the medium of the target language. It is primarily concerned with the use of PowerPoint by pupils to revisit and extend upon material learnt previously, to create and present their work orally with little, if any support (National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages: 2f,i 3a).

The study is not based on any particular construct. My colleague during the project, an ICT teaching support analyst, and myself were interested in measuring the outcomes of pupils' use of the PowerPoint package to produce extended utterances in the target language as part of a presentation rather than through more traditional methods.

There has been concern expressed about the development of pupils' oral skills in the target language and the fact that speaking remains the weakest skill. Pupils are still unwilling to use the target language and continue to make inadequate progress in key stages 3 and 4 (Ofsted, 2001-2002). The effective application of ICT across subjects is seen to be in need of significant improvement.

The report further suggests that schools "develop a curriculum that builds on pupils' ICT experiences outside school, that contribute to their ICT competence".

In a recent subject specific report on the use of ICT competence in schools, applications were found to "offer relatively little input to the development of speaking skills other than reinforcement of pronunciation through the repetition of sounds and the practice of basic patterns in closely controlled exercises" (Ofsted, 2002).

The project was undertaken as an opportunity to investigate how one might harness pupils' ICT and language skills and positively affect attitudes and achievement within the modern foreign languages classroom. In pursuit of meaningful learning goals using ICT and the target language, consideration was given to the criteria suggested by Norbert Pachler (1999):
- Engagement
- Consideration of purpose and audience
- Evaluation and synthesis of information
- Developing personal standards for writing
- Participation in a literate community.

THE CASE STUDY

Nine high schools in a West London Local Education Authority were invited to participate during the spring and summer terms of 2002 in a programme of support devised by my colleague and myself, to raise levels of motivation and attainment in speaking skills through focusing on the use of PowerPoint to prepare oral presentations at key stages 3 and 4. Given the fact that most pupils are required to give a presentation as part of their GCSE oral examination at the end of key stage 4, it seemed to us that the project would be relevant and valid, providing teachers and pupils with the opportunity to use the PowerPoint package and subject matter in a purposeful and focused way.

Following a twilight session at the LEA teacher

> "The project was undertaken... to investigate how one might harness pupils' ICT and language skills and positively affect attitudes and achievement"

Address for correspondence:
Verna Brandford and Rebecca Wilson
Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL

centre, for teachers of MFL using PowerPoint, led by the ICT analyst and myself, one high school opted to participate in the project. The purpose of the session was to introduce colleagues to the potential use of PowerPoint as a teaching tool in the first instance and then to identify ways in which pupils could subsequently use it to develop and support their learning in the subject. The session was crucial in developing the teachers' confidence to use the package and to ensure its effective deployment in the classroom.

The participants were Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10 in a girls' high school where the languages studied are French, German and Spanish. The pupils were from a range of cultural backgrounds and the majority had Asian heritage languages. The last Ofsted report for the department reported that the "Schemes of work... need further development so that they reflect the National Curriculum better and include regular use of computers" (Ofsted school report, 1996).

At the first meeting, topics, dates, pupils' levels and timetables were discussed with colleagues in the school and it was agreed that our visits would focus on observations and working with teachers and pupils during lessons. The ICT analyst and specialist would offer technical support. The topics detailed in schemes of work were to form the basis of the project, notably personal identification. It was decided that pupils should prepare five minute presentations over a period of six sessions. Pupils were also to be made aware at the beginning of the project that their work might be assessed formally.

A questionnaire was designed to be distributed to the teachers and pupils at the end of the project as part of the evaluation process. Field notes were also written during each session and discussions with the class teachers.

> "The participants were Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10 in a girls' high school"

Questionnaire for Pupils about Language Project

Name:

Form:

1. **What is your favourite subject?**

2. **Do you enjoy learning languages? Why?/Why not?**

3. **Do you like speaking in the target language? Why?/Why not?**

4. **How often do you speak in the target language during lessons?**

5. **Do you enjoy using computers in your lessons? Why?/Why not?**

6. **Do you think using ICT helped you with your learning/using the target language? If yes, how?**
   (i) PowerPoint
   (ii) Video camera
   (iii) Digital camera
   (iv) Microphones

7. **Do you think presenting your PowerPoint slide show helped you to speak the target language? If yes, how?**

8. **What aspect of the project did you enjoy most and why?**

9. **What aspect of the project did you enjoy least and why?**

10. **How could this project be improved?**

In spite of the limitations of the questionnaire as the main research tool, it was felt that it would nevertheless provide an opportunity for the pupils to reflect and comment on the project. Additionally, the teachers would be able to identify aspects of motivation and how exploitation of the PowerPoint package might be advantageous to the learner in developing speaking skills and inform future curriculum planning.

Our first visit to the school commenced with an introduction to the project and its objectives. Some exemplar material from a previous project was demonstrated. Pupils appeared interested and enthusiastic from the outset. The element of choice concerning subject matter and the possibility of working independently of the teacher, through, for example, surfing a number of internet sites, were key motivational factors (National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages: 2h 3e 4a 5e,h).

Although most pupils were familiar with the PowerPoint package, the first session helped to focus their attention on aspects of the medium that would assist them in planning and subsequently enhance their presentations. The use of a digital camera, inserting photos and pictures and adding sound to the slides proved to be popular activities which provided an opportunity not only to incorporate other activities into the project purposefully, but also to develop pupils' use of other technologies through MFL, thereby adding some kudos to the subject.

We attended subsequent sessions and we also organised regular meetings together and with the MFL class teachers in the school. The number of sessions was not as extensive as planned (six in total). It was still possible to gauge the extent to which pupils were using their ICT capability effectively to support the completion of the target language task. This took a variety of forms: the use of online translations, dictionaries (and exercise books); using appropriate searching techniques, they scrolled through texts to extract information from a range of text types. (National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages: 3d).

Although much of the lesson was conducted in English, with possible opportunities missed by the class teacher to use the target language, what became evident was the fact that pupils were willing and motivated to take risks with familiar language in order to express themselves (National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages: 2e,f). They consulted each other, their exercise books or the teacher to check language where their knowledge was less secure or where further clarification was necessary. The World Cup and "celebrity" elements proved to have a huge appeal, ranging from the ubiquitous Posh and Becks to the deceased rapper Tupac Shakur. That said, a number of pupils were quite content to present the "bog standard" descriptions of relatives and friends.

The opportunity to practise, revisit and recycle material was a linguistic objective. The interaction generated by pupils' enthusiasm and a desire to present correct material in front of their peers and teacher was very evident. The desire to appear competent in front of their peers forced them to focus on specific aspects of the language, such as adjectival agreement and word order but also to apply their knowledge appropriately and accurately. Colleagues, including myself, were able to draw pupils' attention to patterns in the target language they had previously encountered, to elicit the rule or encourage them to manipulate the language in order to produce new utterances as well as to discuss strategies to improve their accent and pronunciation (National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages: 1a,b,c, 2b 5a). Although the meta-cognitive skills involving both language and ICT during lessons could not be realistically explored in a project of this nature, pupils clearly benefited from the opportunity provided to assimilate and reiterate information, to repair gaps in their knowledge and build on their understanding to use the target language for their own purposes. The technology tools became items "…to learn with" rather than "expedient production tool(s)" (Deaney, Ruthven and Hennessey, 2002), providing a medium through which they were able to engage more directly with trying to work the language out and supporting literacy skills (Ofsted, 2002). Pupils were required to demonstrate reading skills in skimming and scanning extended texts, identifying, comprehending and retrieving relevant details, all of which would suggest significant cognitive engagement.

During the sessions, as pupils prepared the slides they were encouraged by the teacher to practise the material orally. They were often quite surprised by the amount of target language they were able to produce when presented with the challenge to do so without referring to written support. Consequently, language was committed to memory and most pupils were able to produce utterances of variable length and accuracy. As envisaged at the outset, the quality of the learning was such that one teacher was able to use the presentation as part of the formative assessment process for one of the groups.

The activity was sufficiently open-ended to enable pupils to not only exploit material from the internet for their own purposes, but also to seek out relevant information to present and communicate coherently to the rest of the group. This was a positive feature and highlighted the autonomous nature of the task. Whilst connections with pupils' literacy skills were easily identifiable, aspects relating to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development should not be underestimated. For example, taking responsibility for appropriateness when retrieving/presenting details about individuals and the ability to interact and collaborate with peers and the teacher in the ICT room constitute elements of a SMSC dimension.

"The opportunity to practise, revisit and recycle material was a linguistic objective."

REFLECTIONS

The use of PowerPoint, whilst not a panacea for developing pupils' oral skills in modern foreign languages, nevertheless offers a wide range of opportunities for language learning and proved to be a key factor in motivating pupils by creating a positive learning experience in line with the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages. The activities were purposeful, relevant and pupils wanted to speak. This was due in part to the opportunity to bring their own world into a school context and share this experience in a meaningful way. Working in small groups provided another source of variety which enabled the teacher to take on a more facilitative role and to be used as a language resource to boost confidence. Discipline was good and the atmosphere in all lessons was conducive to active learning where pupils were on task and engaged. Although the plethora of material on the internet sites visited by the pupils sometimes served to detract from the main focus of the activity, there were concrete outcomes in the form of the slides prepared with notes or visual prompts and a video recording of one class.

The questionnaires completed by the pupils were illuminating. The more positive comments were where the respondents felt that the project had been useful in motivating them to use the target language, more than they would normally in lessons; they enjoyed organising the slides for the presentation and working with peers and they had learned how to use the digital and video cameras to insert photos and sound. However, they felt the time was insufficient; the project lacked a focussed objective; they were daunted by the presentation and concerned about their pronunciation.

> "PowerPoint helped us to use the target language because we had the bullet points and pictures to help us"

> "Memorizing was easier"

> "Making the slides was quite fun and at the same time using French with it"

> "We had to speak so we learnt more"

> "The project could be improved by having more time to work and practise"

> "I enjoyed learning my slides' words because it is easy to do and it encourages you to learn it right for the whole presentation"

> "I didn't enjoy saying the presentation script out loud because I forgot how to pronounce a few words."

The questionnaires completed by the teachers involved in the project were equally revealing:

> "I feel confident to develop and use the ideas of this project with other classes/groups"

> "Some produced quite lengthy presentations"

> "Yes, all pupils were enthusiastic …and prepared and presented an excellent piece of work. Their motivation and confidence to speak increased"

> "More preparation time in class is needed to practise speaking skills"

> "I will continue to use PowerPoint as a tool for developing speaking skills at key stages 3 and 4."

Questionnaire for teachers about languages project

1. **Why did you become involved in the project?**

2. **What were your expectations/learning objectives for the pupils?**

3. **What were the criteria for the group chosen to participate?**

4. **In terms of the oral skills, have pupils improved/not improved?**

5. **Have your ICT skills benefited in any way? If yes, how?**

6. **Were your objectives achieved/not achieved?**

7. **Were there any problems during the project? If yes, how were they resolved?**

8. **How will you build on the skills developed in the project?**

There are significant issues which would need to be addressed should the project be replicated more widely and effectively. An analysis of the case study raised the following questions:

- Were instructions for the task sufficiently clear?
- To what extent did all pupils contribute and use the target language appropriately?
- How much new material was covered?
- How might time have been managed more effectively?
- Were all pupils ready to present the material at the time allotted?
- Had the project made any significant impact on pupils' progress in the area of speaking skills?
- How might teachers have managed without the technical support available?

CONCLUSION

The case study illustrated the following:

- Pupils were able to build on language and ICT skills in a meaningful way.
- Differentiation by outcome enabled the teacher to focus on specific aspects of individual pupils' oral work and to give immediate feedback or support.
- The presentations were examples of genuine communication.
- The need for a more structured approach when using ICT in the classroom.
- The prior transfer of material on to an intranet site would have focussed access and reduced time wasted. It would also have avoided the problem of pupils visiting irrelevant sites and would allow teacher control over suitability and linguistic content.
- The confidence and expertise of teachers using ICT will impact significantly on its effective deployment in the classroom.

While we would concede that the majority of pupils had not made any noticeable progress in attainment target two, feedback confirmed that others had improved by as much as two levels. The use of the PowerPoint package to develop pupils' oral skills had provided some insight into how subject knowledge might be integrated with other

knowledge and made accessible (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996). Pupils were motivated and willing to contribute their ideas based on personal interests. The linkage with other cross-curricular skills such as literacy, and more tenuously with SMSC, enabled pupils to make connections in their learning in a purposeful and enjoyable way. Comprehensive coverage of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for MFL was a bonus!

The opportunities to heighten teaching and learning in MFL using ICT should be considered in light of its potential to not only allow pupils to manipulate and generate language for their own purposes but perhaps the related and unexpected advancements in:

- friendship exchanges
- data sharing
- collaborative artefact creation
- peer critiquing and question asking
- all characteristics of successful projects.

(Pachler,1999)

NOTES

- Our thanks and appreciation to staff and pupils at Bentley Wood High School for Girls, Harrow

REFERENCES

Cooper, P. and McIntyre, D. "The importance of power-sharing in classroom learning", in Hughes, M. (ed), (1996) *Teaching and Learning in Changing Times*. Oxford: Blackwell

Deaney, R., Ruthven, K. and Hennessey, S. (2002) "Pupils' perspectives on the contribution of information and communication technology to teaching and learning in the secondary school", *Research Papers in Education*

DfES (1999) *The National Curriculum for England, Modern Foreign Languages*

Dobson, A. (1998) *MFL Inspected: Reflections on inspection findings,* London: CILT

Ofsted (2000-2001) Subject report, Modern Foreign Languages

Ofsted (2002) *ICT in Schools: Effect of government initiatives. Secondary Modern Foreign Languages*

Pachler, N. with Reiman, T. "Teaching beyond the classroom", in Pachler, N. (ed), (1999) *Teaching Modern Foreign Languages at Advanced Level*. London: Routledge.

TTA (1998) The use of ICT in subject teaching, Identification of training needs, Secondary Modern Foreign Languages

On va faire une présentation sur David Beckham

Par Jenny Roberts et Veena Surendrakumar

Identité

- Nom: David Beckham
- Date de naissance: deux Mai 1975
- Lieu de naissance: Leytonstone
- Nationalité: Britannique

Description Physique

- Yeux verts
- Les cheveux marron
- Assez grand
- Très mince

La Famille

- Son père: David Edward Beckham (Ted)
- Sa mère: Sandra West
- Deux sœurs: Lynne et Joanne
- Sa femme: Victoria
- Ses fils: Brooklyn Joseph et Romeo

Profession

- C'est un joueur de football célèbre.
- Preston N.E.
- Manchester United
- Angleterre

Personalité

- Intelligent
- Marrant
- Motivé
- Travailleur
- à la mode

La Routine

- se lève
- s'habille
- mange
- travail
- joue
- rencontre
- rentre
- se couche

- aller au restaurant
- visiter ses parents
- gagner
- terrain de sports

Merci Au Revoir