

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Greenwich
Unit of Assessment: (UoA 28) - Modern Languages
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Applied Linguistics Research Group works on the learning and teaching of languages. The group concentrates on investigations which lead to greater knowledge and understanding of: a) the language(s) being learnt; b) the processes through which the language(s) are learnt; c) processes through which teachers may most successfully guide and assist language learning.</p> <p>Specifically, the group has worked on Input Processing and Processing Instruction (Professor Benati and Dr Laval), Oral Corpora of Spanish, Tense and Aspect in Language (Dr Arche) and on Representational Deficit/Ultimate Attainment, focusing on Tense and Aspect (Dr Liszka). The research findings have been and will be applied to situations of language learning and teaching and have been influential in determining educational policy, as shown in the REF3b case studies.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Recognising that it is important for research-based knowledge to gain acceptance before it is applied, the approach to enabling impact between 2008 and 2013 was based on two sequential stages: dissemination and application.</p>
<p><u>Dissemination</u></p> <p>All three members of the group have engaged in a series of activities to disseminate their research findings, including participating in national and international peer-reviewed conferences and presenting invited talks. Professor Benati has given talks at the UK universities of York, Oxford, Essex, York St John, and Reading; Japanese universities including Waseda and Kanagawa; and European universities including Thessaloniki in Greece, Aydin in Istanbul and the universities of Milan and Pavia, where he is visiting lecturer. Dr Arche has given invited talks and seminars at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of California San Diego. Dr Liszka has twice given invited talks at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.</p> <p>Professor Benati has been invited to deliver keynotes at conferences organised by the Universidad del Pais Vasco; Gakushuin, Tokyo; University of Catania; British Council Athens; JALT, and Tokyo among others. The group has organised academic conferences, eg <i>Colloquium on Input Processing and Processing Instruction</i>, BAAL Annual Conference, Leeds, 2003; <i>Colloquia on Processing Instruction: Theory and Research Trend</i>, Australian Association of Applied Linguistics, Melbourne, 2005; and <i>BAAL Special Interest Group Annual Meeting on Language Proficiency</i>, Greenwich 2008; and three major public workshops, <i>The Role of Grammar Instruction</i>, Greenwich, 21 April 2012; <i>Workshop on Argument Structure and Aspect of Adjectives and Participles</i>, Greenwich 22 and 23 June 2012; and <i>Processing Instruction: Twenty Years of Theory, Research and Applications</i>, Greenwich 4 September 2013. Further evidence of impact can be seen through the extensive reviews and citations of the group's work (see individual case studies).</p> <p>Dr Arche has participated in two sequential ESRC-funded projects with the University of Southampton. One of the main aims of the projects was to construct a database (eighty hours) of oral semi-spontaneous data along with transcriptions and tagged files from one hundred and twenty learners (L1 English) of three different proficiency levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced). The data has been made available to the scientific and public community via internet (http://www.splloc.soton.ac.uk/). Findings from the projects have made a significant contribution towards the understanding of several grammatical issues in second language acquisition research such as the acquisition of word order, clitic pronouns and tense and aspect.</p> <p>The various forums for dissemination outlined above have provided further opportunities to discuss and reflect upon the applications of the group's research to a wider audience and to society in general. Feedback has helped to inform and enhance the projects outlined in the two case studies.</p>
<p><u>Applications</u></p> <p>1. From 2010 to 2012, Professor Benati led an educational project addressing the need to improve the way languages are taught in schools in the Republic of Macedonia. The aim of this project, funded by OSCE/British Council and the High Commissioner for Minority Languages, was to develop a specialised second language teaching methodology for adoption by the Macedonian educational system. A teaching guidebook (translated into three languages and available online at http://www.britishcouncil.org/macedonia-projects-slm methodology.htm) and a training programme were developed and are now used to train teaching staff in schools and universities</p>

across the Republic of Macedonia. (See more details on how this project relates to our approach to achieve impact in section d); a full account is provided in 3b1.)

2. In 2013 Dr Liszka and Professor Benati initiated a pilot scheme to lead staff development sessions, based on their research for teachers of ESOL and modern foreign languages. To date they have successfully facilitated the workshops at two English language schools in London. A full account of this application is provided in 3b2. The workshops allowed professionals to learn about the latest findings in SLA research related to some of the most controversial topics of language acquisition and teaching: tense and aspect. The impact of these activities goes beyond the academic teaching community, since the final beneficiaries are both the learners and society as a whole. The better a second language is learnt by an individual, the more attractive they are to potential employers. On a societal level, workforces with strong second language skills are beneficial for national economies as globalisation increases.

c. Strategy and plans

Three main goals determine our future strategy and plans for achieving impact:

- To engage staff in the group to bid for external research contracts and to explore partnerships and links with local and national business communities. The group is currently developing a number of partnerships and projects which will secure further funds, eg Greenwich School Alliance, project on teaching methodology and language retention among school learners.
- To encourage a culture of entrepreneurship, fully supporting individuals in the group with aspirations to exploit the commercial potential of their research for the wider economic, cultural and societal benefit of the region, eg the group is currently developing the workshop on aspect and tense in English to be offered to the wider community of English teachers in the region, and as part of the teacher training programme offered by the University of Milan.
- To continue our involvement in projects that have a direct benefit for our stakeholders, teachers and students, and also have a direct impact for society and policy making, eg the group is currently writing collaborative bids with national (York University) and international institutions (Michigan University, UNSW, Munich) to conduct research which will have direct implications for improving teachers' skills and teaching methodologies.

In order to achieve these goals, the Applied Linguistics group meets regularly to identify specific 'needs' in society and see whether its research can meet specific requirements in the areas of language education delivery and policy. The group has an impact co-ordinator (Professor Benati) who is also the School 'Impact Champion'. The creation of a new Centre for Research and Enterprise in Language Learning and Teaching to provide framework supporting infrastructure for this work is one of our key objectives. Greenwich Research Enterprise (GRE) provides the support needed to identify opportunities for research grants in the UK and in Europe and for the costing of external bids.

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Four projects currently under development exemplify the outcomes of these discussions:

1. The group is developing a teacher training module for grammar instruction **to improve the way Arabic is taught both in the Middle East and in the UK educational system**. A PhD scholarship and further funding have been secured from the Libyan Embassy for this project. The main objectives are to develop an evidence-based and principled approach to grammar teaching, and to incorporate suitable strategies to improve the way teachers can teach Arabic more effectively. School teachers, universities, and government officials will be involved in achieving the objectives of this project.
2. The group is collaborating with Meikai University (Japan) **to develop a training module for the teaching of Japanese**. Funding has been secured from the Ministry of Education in Japan, The Sasakawa Foundation, and the University of Greenwich (PhD School scholarship) to undertake the research. Further funding is currently being sought from the British Academy

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(Small Grants Scheme). Expected outputs are a monograph on the learning and teaching of Japanese (Palgrave has shown a clear interest in publishing this book); a teacher training programme, and teacher training guidebook.

3. A project on the Greek language aims **to improve the way minority languages such as Greek are taught** in underway. A research grant has been submitted to the John Latsis Public Benefit Foundation (7840 Euros) to secure seed-funding, in collaboration with two universities in Greece. A conference 'Making language acquisition theory usable for teaching' will be organised in Athens in November 2014.
4. The group is planning a language project (MFL School Excellence Grant) in partnership with the Royal Greenwich Teaching Schools' Alliance **to improve the quality of pupils' experience of languages** (KS3-4-5) and support the professional development of language teachers. The main objective is to develop a teacher training module that will stimulate teachers by:
 - enabling them to devise language lessons that engage students;
 - providing the tools to explain grammar in more effective ways;
 - helping teachers to design appropriate language tasks;
 - providing teachers with more effective ways to engage and interact with pupils in the language classroom.

We are planning to offer two main initiatives within this project: Teaching and Learning Coaching, and Residential Summer Schools. The first initiative will provide a language teacher training programme for Schools in order to improve the way grammar is taught, to develop effective language tasks. The second initiative will consist of five days of intensive hands-on workshops led by all members of our group. The programme will be modular in structure, focusing on three pedagogical issues (grammar, interactive feedback, and language tasks), and will be suitable for both new and more experienced language teachers.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Applied Linguistics Research Group is committed to communicating its research beyond an academic audience to colleagues in the fields of education and educational policy making. Its outputs have demonstrated the role that Applied Linguistics research plays in enabling learners to acquire the skills necessary for successful language learning, and in enabling teachers to acquire the skills necessary to guide and assist language learning. Case Study One shows how the research findings relating to Input Processing and Processing Instruction have been applied to shaping of government policy within Macedonia, putting in place a more effective methodology in learning and teaching modern languages. The research insights have guided language educational policy in Macedonia and provided clear benefits for language teachers. The impact is currently being witnessed through the improvement of teachers' skills, which inevitably enhances job opportunities. The project's economic benefit can be seen through the cost effective teaching methodology, which includes web resources. This in turn has enabled outreach and an increase in participation.

Case Study Two shows how the research findings related to Tense and Aspect and Ultimate Attainment have been presented in an applied form in workshops for language teachers and students in the U.K. The feedback from the workshops described indicates that this staff development has had an immediate impact on these audiences. Practitioners reported that access to a deeper knowledge of what lies behind the process of acquisition and a clearer idea of what the weak points are allowed them to tackle long-standing issues with more confidence and in a more effective way. Formal feedback from the practitioners indicates that these activities were beneficial.

The significance and reach of the group's impact is highlighted by the public recognition of their work (see 3b1). They were invited to deliver the workshops described at prestigious institutions above; invitation to peer reviewed international conferences (BAAL, AAAL) and a number of invited talks at national and international level (eg Oxford, Essex, York, Reading, Waseda Tokyo, Thessaloniki); their work is cited in the field; they are part of editorial boards (eg *IRAL*, *Eurosla*) and scientific committees of international conferences (BAAL, AAAL, *Borealis-International Journal of Hispanic Linguistics*, *Romance Turn*, *BUCLD*, *Eurosla*).