

A multilingual background for telecollaboration

Practices and policies in European higher education

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Abstract

The Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP) is a telecollaboration network linking European university classes with classes in the US and beyond for nearly 20 years. Such collaborations have enabled students to participate in realistic projects, fostering transversal and language skills – including English as a lingua franca – which are highlighted in university policies at European, country/region and institutional levels. In turn, telecollaboration can support Internationalisation at Home, along with virtual mobility objectives, increasingly prominent in European higher education.

Considering the grassroots nature of TAPP, whose instructors design their own partnerships and assignments, this contribution examines TAPP projects in light of language policies from a dual bottom-up/top-down perspective. Thus, considering the importance of language policies of several European countries involved in TAPP (Belgium, France, Italy, Spain), this paper analyses how TAPP teaching-learning practices align with such policies in terms of multilingualism and interculturality.

Attention is paid to students' roles – subject-matter experts, linguists/translators, project managers, usability experts – and their native languages. Emphasis is placed on how students relate to English from their various perspectives as native speakers, second-language speakers, language experts or language learners. Lessons derived from the analysis of such practices can inform policy makers as they make provisions for Internationalisation at Home, mainly in Europe, while also introducing comparisons between European and US perspectives.

Keywords: telecollaboration, language attitudes, English as a lingua franca (ELF), multilingualism, interculturality, co-writing, translation, editing

1. Introduction

A telecollaboration network, Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP) has linked European and US university classes for the last two decades (Mousten et al. 2008; Maylath et al. 2013; Vandepitte et al. 2016). Collaborations have enabled students to participate in projects which replicate the roles, tasks and workflows of industry and usually involve collaborative writing and translation across national boundaries. As a dialogic process that sustains collaboration between partners geographically distant from each other, telecollaboration lends itself to the development of language and intercultural skills (Guth and Helm 2010; Sadler and Dooly 2016). Telecollaboration – also known as online intercultural exchange or virtual exchange (O’Dowd 2018) – is on the rise, especially in Europe, as attested to by the long-standing organisation UniCollaboration and its dedicated *Journal of Virtual Exchange*,¹ as well as by the recent EU initiative within the Erasmus+ programme to launch a Virtual Exchange platform (Helm 2018).² It is also in accordance with university policies at European, country/region and institutional levels. For example, the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) Ministerial Conference (2012a) aims “to enhance graduates’ employability and to strengthen mobility as a means for better learning”, and makes specific recommendations (2012b) within an overall framework of university internationalisation that includes Internationalisation at Home. Many instances of telecollaboration, such as TAPP, are fully aligned with both Internationalisation at Home (Verzella 2018) – understood as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen and Jones 2015: 69) – and virtual mobility objectives, increasingly prominent in European higher education (Europa.eu 2018). Although the principles of telecollaboration have been aligned with European internationalisation and language policies, only recently have they gained a central position on the Erasmus+ agenda (Helm 2018).

This article investigates the degree to which TAPP exchanges help attain the goals set out in language policies at different levels. Taking both a top-down and a bottom-up approach, the article first describes general European language and internationalisation policies. It then examines country or regional policies, and institutional policies, within which the TAPP exchanges take place, characterising the extent to which such exchanges adhere to such policies. The

1. <https://journal.unicollaboration.org/>.

2. <https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual>.

European countries analysed are Belgium, France, Italy and Spain, the first and the last being bilingual or even multilingual with specific language laws. As TAPP exchanges usually involve classes in the US, it, too, is briefly examined. Even though the US lacks national language policies, various American states have promulgated their own policies.

Considering the importance of multilingualism in language policies, the following section analyses a survey of TAPP students' attitudes towards English and multilingualism, many of whom are bi- or multilingual, along with those of US students who are native speakers (NS) of English. The final section discusses the TAPP goals of Internationalisation at Home, employability and multilingualism through telecollaboration, which yields a varied picture that is relevant to Internationalisation at Home and Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC). The latter aims to provide graduates with the necessary support to operate in an international environment, through "the incorporation of international, intercultural and or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study" (Leask 2015: 9). As the TAPP is a grassroots project initiated by instructors and fully integrated in curricular courses, lessons can be derived from bottom-up practices to inform policy makers.

2. TAPP within European higher education language policies

2.1 European language policies

Over the years, the EU has promoted multilingualism and language learning quite explicitly: "The EU's multilingualism policy has two facets: striving to protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity; promoting language learning".³ More specifically, multilingualism is promoted through the 2+1 policy (learning two foreign languages in addition to the mother tongue) (*/*COM/2003/0449 final**),⁴ which derives from deep EU values: "In an EU founded on the motto 'United in diversity', the ability to communicate in several languages is an important asset for individuals, organisations and companies".⁵ The same policy documents assign importance to the comparability and transferability

3. https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_en.

4. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: an Action Plan 2004–2006 */* COM/2003/0449 final */*.

5. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/142/language-policy>.

of skills, so as to measure language learning across Member States, for example, to monitor the extent to which the 2+1 language aim is achieved (e.g. as in the European Indicator of Language Competence /* COM/2005/0356 final */).⁶

Two important outcomes of this policy were the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio, derived from the CEFR and aimed “to foster linguistic and cultural diversity, to promote intercultural learning, to support lifelong plurilingual learning, to develop learner autonomy and to provide a transparent and coherent means to record communicative competence”.⁷ These instruments include both language and (inter)cultural skills, which also lie at the core of the foundation of the EU (ETS No.018).⁸

This policy for the promotion of plurilingual competence coexists with a growing trend in the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which may involve a certain linguistic hegemony (Campbell 2005). At the same time, ELF can be considered as additional, rather than detrimental, to multilingualism, as House (2003) does in her distinction between “languages for communication” and “languages of identification”, thus rendering ELF necessary not only for non-native speakers (NNS) but also for native speakers (NS) of English to interact successfully in global contexts (Cogo and Jenkins 2010: 275).

2.2 “Englishization” and language policies in European higher education

The widespread adoption of English has affected universities, especially as a result of the redesign of curricula based on a student-centred competence-based model of learning (González and Wagenaar 2003). This transformation of the European higher education landscape started with the creation of a common frame of reference within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA n.d.) in 1999 by 29 countries in what we now know as the Bologna Declaration, whose main aims are to promote mobility for graduates and teaching staff and the spread of qualifications in a larger European job market. Today the Statement of the fifth Bologna Policy Forum (EHEA Ministerial Conference 2018) unites 56 countries in its endeavours to support higher education.

Not only the Bologna process but also major transformations due to globalisation and competition (Hazelkorn 2011) have led to progressive “Englishization” (Phillipson 2009), a phenomenon that is not without

6. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The European Indicator of Language Competence /* COM/2005/0356 final */.

7. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/principles-and-guidelines-and-cefr>.

8. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018>.

controversy (Canagarajah 2006; Lanvers and Hultgren 2018). It also arises from international mobility, which can increase linguistic diversity (multilingualism), while English tends to be used as the lingua franca, so that “the relationship between multilingualism and Englishization is of a mutually perpetuating dynamics, whereby increased multilingualism also leads to increased use of English” (Dimova et al. 2015: 5).

2.3 TAPP in the context of European language policies

Telecollaboration, like TAPP exchanges, is aligned with EU policies on the promotion of multilingualism and interculturality as well as on the use of digital media for language learning.⁹ With partners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and projects focusing on translation and international professional communication, TAPP lays the ground for both the appreciation of multilingualism (e.g. translation activities into Danish, Dutch, French, Italian, etc.) and the use of ELF, from the perspective of intercultural learning, as stated in the TAPP aims: “to share insights into collaborative writing across borders and cultures, and, in the course of this work, to gain knowledge of others’ cultural bases”.¹⁰

Over the years, TAPP collaborations have developed in multiple forms, as instructors are free to design a joint assignment for their students, using a variety of freely available digital tools for communication and collaboration. Partnerships most often feature bilateral operations, linking two classes (Humbley et al. 2005; Maylath et al. 2008). Occasionally, they feature multilateral operations, which may link up to seven classes and involve several student roles and complex project management tasks, replicating what happens in the professional world (Maylath et al. 2013; Maylath et al. 2013). To date, they have included the following:

- Writing-usability testing-translation: This is the most common assignment in multilateral projects, when writing classes (authoring texts) are linked with translation and usability testing classes to produce multilingual documentation, often in the form of user-oriented instructions, thus replicating typical workplace processes.
- Translation-reviewing/editing: Usually as part of multilateral partnerships, translation classes initiate the project by translating texts – often published news articles – then have NSs review and edit the texts.

9. https://ec.europa.eu/education/content/improving-effectiveness-language-learning-clil-and-computer-assisted-language-learning_en.

10. https://www.ndsu.edu/english/transatlantic_and_pacific_translations/.

- Reviewing oral presentations: Engineering student teams prepare and record oral presentations, which are then peer reviewed by fellow engineering students abroad. Most commonly, NNS authors have been linked with NS reviewers. A recent assignment involving spoken interaction included the writing of professional texts by US students based on interviews with EU students.
- Joint usability testing and user experience planning: This less common assignment has been successfully conducted several times between linked usability and user experience classes in Finland and the US.

Regardless of their expected outcomes, TAPP partnerships pay special attention to learning, collaboration and communication processes and include such materials as learning reports where students evaluate the activity and their learning. Thus, in addition to experiencing multilingualism and intercultural communication, TAPP participants are encouraged to reflect explicitly on learning and intercultural communication (e.g. Moustén et al. 2012; Verzella 2018).

In light of TAPP's versatility, the next section examines a variety of partnerships through the prism of language policies at national, regional and institutional levels, and how TAPP teaching-learning practices align with university language policies (Liddicoat 2017) in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain in terms of multilingualism and interculturality. Based on Spolsky's (2004) model of language policy as including a community's practices and beliefs – in addition to formal planning – and also applying to any speech community regardless of its size, we approach policies from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective, describing both telecollaborative grassroots practices and written institutional policies, together with beliefs either implicit in the design of the activities (§2.4) or explicit in the analysis of students' attitudes (§3).

2.4 Telecollaborative practices in the context of university language policies in European countries

The country-by-country analysis below shows how TAPP is implemented in different European universities partnering with US universities. For each European country, and following a top-down approach, a general account is provided of the language policy of the country and more specifically how it affects the use of language(s) in the particular universities participating in TAPP, by referring to institutional policies. Specific TAPP projects are then discussed in each particular context. For the purposes of comparison, a brief reference is also made to implicit language policies in the US.

2.4.1 Belgium

The TAPP translation classes organised at Ghent University strengthen translation trainees' EFL-competences to assess differences between different English-speaking areas and different conceptualisations of the world among Flemish and American students. As such, they fulfil Ghent University's goals of Internationalisation at Home and follow the Education and Examination Code, which includes explicit language regulations regarding access requirements for students, foreign language study programmes, the language of evaluation, the doctoral training programme and the doctorate, lecturers-in-charge and language coaching measures. In particular, language course units (e.g. "Academic English" and "Economic English") can be organised, along with supportive sessions and monolingual, explanatory vocabulary lists of standard terminology. These regulations remain in line with the Flemish Codex for Tertiary Education (Codex Hoger Onderwijs 2013), which stipulates Dutch as the official organisation language, allowing any programme to use a different language (e.g. by non-Dutch speaking guest professors), as long as quality and democratisation are guaranteed and the student is offered surplus value and increased employability.

While the regulations usually do not specify the foreign languages to which they are applicable, in the majority of cases, English is the language referred to, and international developments with ELF are now seeping into the Flemish educational domain, which is not yet even 100 years old. Indeed, a century ago, Flemish citizens fought hard to have a university with Dutch as its official language. Established in 1817, Ghent University became the first Belgian university, in 1930, to replace its official language of French with Dutch. After the ratification of various language laws since the nineteenth century (Hooghe 1993), and after a set of decentralisation reforms in the twentieth century, the complex language law situation in the Flanders Region of Belgium is now regulated by the Flemish Government and explained to its citizens in a language law manual on a website (Steunpunt Taalwetwijzer s.d.). When used privately or in cultural organisations, any language is allowed. However, the areas of governmental authorities, business, law and education are regulated by language laws. They generally impose Dutch as the language to be used, thus defending the original Dutch language of the geographical area and valorising it within its "ecolinguistic habitat", a term borrowed from Meylaerts and du Plessis (2016: 279), but they also allow for exceptions. Although under Flemish law – for instance, for all social relations between employers and employees and for (legal) documents for staff – the language used needs to be Dutch, official languages from an EU state or a state from the European Economic

Area (19 July 1973, 1 June 1994, 14 March 2014 decrees) are also allowed, as is multilingualism as a job requirement (Decision of the Flemish Government, 14 April 2000), both in public and private organisations.

Consequently, with English texts, produced by US partners, being translated into Dutch, TAPP projects strengthen students' passive knowledge of English. Likewise, TAPP projects in which the Flemish students translate Dutch texts into English, which are edited for the US market by American students, strengthen the translation trainees' active English language competences. In addition, the students learn to communicate with unknown partners at an international, interdisciplinary level professionally, using English, and spread the image of Dutch as a language of business at home, the fifth most required language in the UK (Louwerse et al. 2018) and a language of culture to become better known abroad.

2.4.2 France

TAPP translation classes at Université Paris–Diderot similarly promote active skills in English. In fact, one of the great advantages of TAPP is the oral communication competences that students have to put into practice. Since they have few oral classes in the master's programme, they see TAPP as a great opportunity to converse not only with American students but also with European counterparts in English. They are aware that English is a key language in French workplaces, and they consider TAPP a rare opportunity to practise English.

Although French universities wanting to gain visibility for foreign students have joined a movement of Englishisation and some master's degrees are now taught in English only, the constitution of the Fifth Republic states in its second article, "la langue de la République est le français". French was, indeed, made the administrative language of the Kingdom of France for legal documents and laws by the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts of 1539, and the Académie française was established in 1635 to act as the official authority on the usage, vocabulary, grammar and official dictionary of the French language. Although today more than 75 languages can be counted in Metropolitan France and overseas areas of France, this constitutional prohibition of any language other than French gaining national status has been the basis for successive French governments' refusals to legislate in favour of regional or other languages spoken in France. In 1994, the Law of Toubon made the presence of any language other than French illegal in advertisements, government publications, workplace memoranda and other public documents. Despite this situation, however, French TAPP students

accept multilingualism and interculturality well, as both notions constitute the basis of applied language competencies.

2.4.3 Italy

In Italy, introduction of a foreign language in all university courses following the Bologna process has meant that, for the purposes of internationalisation, the language of choice is English, the requirements generally being B1-level for undergraduate courses and B2 for second-cycle courses, where higher levels are required. The drive to internationalise has led to the establishment of many second-cycle courses that are taught entirely in English. In this context, TAPP for students of languages and translation plays an important role in that it affords them – even students that, for different reasons, cannot go on international exchanges – the possibility to participate in a virtual exchange and learn through writing and translation more about cultural differences, thus equipping them with more competences and skills that are suitable for their future professions as intercultural mediators, translators or interpreters. Of particular value to Italian students is the chance to learn about different conceptualisations and attitudes through discussion with their US partners, to acquire mediation skills in case of conflict, and to know more about technical writing in a range of contexts. The exchange is as close as possible to a real-life work simulation, but it has a built-in safety net in that the clients are US partners and learning does not occur by being thrown in at the deep end, but rather through the friendly, helping hands of partner students and facilitators, in line with what is suggested at EU level for virtual exchanges.

2.4.4 Spain

This perspective is set in Catalonia, a bilingual region with both Catalan and Spanish as the official languages. Citizens have the right to use either language in any context, including higher education. The language policy of Catalan universities has been described in detail by Cots et al. (2012) and Cots et al. (2014), who characterise it as being “on the European margins”, defined as “contexts in which there is a local language that is not one of the major languages of Europe, and therefore the university carries the responsibility to contribute to guaranteeing the use of the language and resist pressure from bigger languages” (312). In other words, in a context in which two languages coexist – and where university language policies have traditionally ensured the use of Catalan as the working language – English has recently been introduced with the aim of encouraging multilingualism and internationalisation. This situation is reflected in institutional policies, like that of the Universitat

Politàcnica de Catalunya (UPC). In its Language Plan,¹¹ UPC defines itself as “a multilingual university” (Catalan, Spanish and English).

In order for this multilingualism (or trilingualism) to be realised, one of the most immediate needs is to increase students’ level of proficiency in English, as reflected in a new language requisite being introduced in bachelor’s degrees so that students have to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language – usually, English.¹² One of the ways to fulfil this requisite is through courses taught in English.

Internationalisation policies also place emphasis on Internationalisation at Home (IaH) (cf. the Spanish Ministry of Education’s [2014] internationalisation strategy). At the institutional level, IaH is considered a strategic challenge that also includes IoC, to fulfil the overall aim of “promoting international culture and competencies ... both among those people who have participated in mobility (mobile people) and those that have not (non-mobile people)”.¹³ TAPP is fully integrated in curricular English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses focusing on language and communication skills. ESP courses also incorporate intercultural skills (e.g. Aguilar 2018) as they aim to prepare students to operate in international academic and professional environments. Because of their varied levels of English proficiency, engineering students tend to adopt a language learner role, thus conferring on US students the role of language authority/consultant in the bilateral authoring-review partnerships and the roles of project manager, lead author and interlocutor with other EU partners in complex multilateral projects. Conversely, UPC students’ authority and ownership are reflected in their subject-matter expert role (Maylath et al. 2013) when technical texts are involved. Besides, students also have the opportunity to gain greater exposure to English, as they have to use it in meaningful contexts. Through participation in such realistic projects that require authentic communication with international partners and audiences, students become ELF users. At the same time, in the case of translation projects, they can use their plurilingual repertoire and gain sensitivity towards other languages.

2.5 TAPP for students in the United States

Perhaps surprisingly, the US (like the UK) does not have an official national language. English dominates to such an extent that there is no need to declare

11. <https://www.upc.edu/slt/en/language-and-terminology-service/upc-language-plan/upc-language-plan-pdf>.

12. <https://www.upc.edu/slt/ca/certifica/b2>.

13. https://www.upc.edu/sri/ca/estrategia/pla-de-politica/pla-de-politica-internacional-2017-2021-1/12-pla-dinternacionalitzacio-de-la-upc_2017_2021.pdf.

it official, thus creating a de facto policy. However, some states, out of a fear of non-English-speaking immigrants, have declared English their official language. Indeed, 27 states did so by 2002 (Crystal 2003: 140).

The launching point for many individual states' policies came in 1917, when the US declared war against the German and Austro-Hungarian empires. Until then, states like Minnesota allowed the young to be instructed in any language. In Minnesota itself, a third of all schools taught primarily in German, while others taught primarily in Norwegian or Polish, even as the majority taught primarily in English (Ripley 1981). Almost overnight, these schools were pressured to cease teaching in any language but English (Ripley 1981; Alam 2016). An "English only" ideology persists in US higher education. Horner and Trimbur (2002) trace its roots to the second half of the nineteenth century, when the modern university gradually turned away from a bilingual classical curriculum that emphasised language study (Latin and Greek) and also separated English from "foreign" languages (597). In this environment, student enrollment in foreign language courses has not kept pace with growing numbers of students entering university. According to the Modern Language Association Survey,¹⁴ in 2016 only 7.9% of US university students enrolled in foreign language courses.

However, the increasing linguistic diversity of the US student population has led scholars in the fields of writing studies and applied linguistics to vigorously resist the prevailing monolingual orientation in US higher education in favour of policies and pedagogies that build on the language resources of multilingual students (Horner et al. 2011a; Horner et al. 2011b). TAPP collaborations support this approach, which aims to help all students, including monolingual English users, "gain fluency in working across language difference" (Horner et al. 2011a: 312). The informal interactions of TAPP collaborations expand US students' awareness of multilingualism when they discover that their partners are not only proficient in at least two languages but typically are also striving to learn one or more additional languages for professional or personal purposes. Furthermore, TAPP collaborations prompt US students to revise their previously unexamined assumptions about English and how languages work. For example, in their role as American English authorities on translation projects, US students often encounter grammatically correct uses of English that do not sound natural to them. Such infelicities are opportunities for US students to gain insight about the structure of the translation students' home language, which may have influenced their rendering of English, or to learn about varieties of English that are standard elsewhere, such as British English.

14. <https://www.mla.org/content/download/83540/2197676/2016-Enrollments-Short-Report.pdf>.

3. Students' attitudes towards multilingualism and English as a lingua franca

TAPP partnerships involve different disciplines, both linguistic and non-linguistic, in which participants may adopt different attitudes towards English and other languages. Are these different language attitudes related to students' characteristics, such as their language background (i.e. NSs or NNSs of English), and/or their majoring in language or in another subject (such as engineering)?

To explore students' attitudes, data were collected from several TAPP institutions during the winter of 2018–2019, through an online Google form survey based on Gardner's (2004) *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery*. Considering that most students had participated in a virtual exchange aimed at promoting multilingual and multicultural awareness, we expected them to show overall positive attitudes, both toward English and multilingualism.

The ten items chosen for EU settings are listed in Table 1. Each was measured on a six-point Likert-scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). They combine attitudes to English and foreign language learning with intrinsic (Dörnyei 1994) as well as integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner 1983) and the related construct of self-confidence (Clément et al. 1994). As the questionnaire aimed to compare the attitudes and motivations across language majors in different universities and with those of engineering majors, greater emphasis was placed on intrinsic and integrative motivation, so as to be able to identify possible differences across settings.

Ghent University participants were recruited among all English language students in the bachelor's and master's programmes of applied language studies, which usually form part of TAPP collaborations. Data were gathered online during their examination session in January 2019. One third of these students (n=22) were Master of Translation students who were on the verge of starting a TAPP collaboration during winter semester 2019. Paris–Diderot students participating in the survey were undergraduate translation and technical communication students who had participated in virtual exchanges. University of Padua students were master's students majoring in two languages and specialising in translation in the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies. UPC students were final-year undergraduate engineering students taking ESP courses on speaking or writing skills and TAPP participants in the winter term of 2018. Thus, the first three universities in Table 1 represent language and translation majors' views, whereas UPC participants represent language learners.

Table 1. EU

	Ghent (n=69)		Paris (n=34)		Padua (n=66)		UPC (n=21)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.	5.72	0.51	5.71	0.94	5.74	0.59	5.38	0.92
2. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	5.25	0.85	5.06	1.18	5.38	0.84	5.29	0.64
3. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	5.14	0.83	5.74	0.90	5.70	0.61	5.86	0.36
4. I feel confident when asked to speak in my English class.	4.39	1.03			4.27	1.20	4.24	1.22
5. I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day.	3.86	1.24	4.62	1.33	4.44	1.17	4.05	1.36
6. I wish I could have many native English-speaking friends.	5.13	1.03	4.91	1.14	5.37	0.84	5.24	1.18
7. To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.*	1.58	0.77	2.09	1.22	1.76	1.01	2.38	1.24
8. I enjoy meeting people who speak foreign languages.	5.38	0.82			5.64	0.67	5.10	0.94
9. I would rather see a TV programme dubbed into our language than in its own language with subtitles.*	1.09	0.33	1.38	0.78	2.09	1.42	2.71	1.74
10. My interest in foreign languages is very high.	5.54	0.65			5.62	0.65	5.00	0.77

*Low scores in questions marked with an asterisk reveal a positive attitude. Blank cells indicate a question that was not included in the questionnaire for that setting. The highest scores are in bold type.

The overall picture that emerges is quite positive, showing high levels of interest in English and learning languages. High overall scores (and consistent across settings) are obtained for items #1 and #10 (interest in many foreign languages), #2 (a high level of English) and #3, (instrumental motivation towards English). Slightly lower scores (and less agreement) can be found for those items related to confidence when speaking English in class (#4) and perseverance in their dedication to learning English (#5), which could be explained by personal factors, such as time or perceived self-confidence.

The same test battery was used with US students, although some of the questions were different due to the NS status of respondents. They were undergraduate professional communication majors at the University of Wisconsin–Stout (UWS) who completed the questionnaire after TAPP

collaborations in spring and autumn 2018. The aim was to discover the extent to which TAPP collaborations encouraged American English monolingual students to expand their awareness of multilingualism and revise their attitudes towards English.

In spring 2018, UWS students (n=22) provided editing feedback for a text that had been translated into English from Dutch by Master of Translation students at Ghent University. UWS students also summarised synchronous interviews in English with undergraduate students at the University of Trieste. Finally, in autumn 2018, a different set of UWS professional communication majors (n=15) provided editorial feedback for research articles written in English by NNS graduate students in the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade.

The items chosen for the US questionnaire are listed in Table 2. Items 1–5 were measured on a six-point Likert-scale, from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 6. Item 6 was measured on a seven-point scale (1=very low and 7= very high).

Table 2. US

Questionnaire items	UWS (n=37)	
	Mean	SD
1. I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.	5.43	0.90
2. I really have no interest in foreign languages.*	1.92*	1.36
3. If I planned to stay in another country, I would try to learn their language.	5.70	0.57
4. I enjoy meeting people who speak foreign languages.	5.54	0.61
5. I would rather see a TV programme dubbed into our language than in its own language with subtitles.*	3.41*	1.42
6. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being "Very Low" and 7 being "Very High", my interest in foreign languages is...+**	5.57	1.28

*Low scores in questions marked with an asterisk reveal a positive attitude. ** The score for this question is calculated out of 7.

Similar to their EU counterparts, US English speakers showed a positive interest in learning other languages after participating in a TAPP collaboration. In a context of similar results across settings and status of English, perhaps the most remarkable difference was found in engineering students' highest score for instrumental motivation (acknowledging the importance of English for their career, in question 3), while language majors assigned their highest scores to items related to intrinsic motivation and the desire to learn many languages. Instrumental motivation, which could be expected among

engineering students (cf. Al-Tamimi and Shuib 2009; Gonzalez-Ardeo 2016), may also be related to their interest in English classes, not as high as that of language majors.

In the face of monolingual US students' interest in multilingualism – similar to that of EU students' – the question that arises is whether virtual exchanges like TAPP increase students' sensitivity towards multilingualism and interculturality, an outcome of internationalisation experiences abroad (Byram and Dervin 2008; Cots et al. 2016) and at home (Jones 2016).

Despite the limitations of this study in terms of the small sample and diverse numbers of respondents in each setting, a conclusion that emerges is that virtual exchange can help students – whether NS or NNS of English and language or engineering majors – (continue to) appreciate multilingualism, as all of them revealed attitudes of openness to other languages and cultures. Such attitudes point to recent trends that align virtual exchange with internationalisation policies (de Wit 2016; Verzella 2018) and deserve closer attention in further studies.

4. Lessons learned and further implications

TAPP partnerships that have developed during the past two decades can be considered strongly aligned with European language and university policies. Such policies have become more explicit in the recognition of telecollaboration (or virtual exchange) as an activity that brings together students and instructors from different languages and cultures, thereby recognising the benefits of a grassroots initiative, which is usually “not on the radar” (Helm 2018: 48). The processes by which such partnerships are developed and the interactions in which students engage are as important as the actual outputs – whether they be translations, edited texts or oral presentations and reviews. Such interactions yield multiple opportunities for experiential learning through reflection on language(s), collaboration and intercultural communication. On the other hand, from the point of view of instructors, they can benefit from the network structure of the TAPP as they do not have to design assignments from scratch; rather, they can draw on assignment designs and support from experienced participants.

Virtual exchanges such as those in the TAPP stimulate students' awareness of multilingualism and intercultural communication. This awareness raising takes place as students make their languages and cultures better known abroad, both through TAPP outputs (for example, when translating into different European languages) and as they draw on each other's linguistic and cultural repertoire.

Different types of matches among European and US students can contribute to greater appreciation of each other's cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, because of their focus on professional competences, tasks and practices, TAPP exchanges align with the promotion of graduates' international employability (Estes-Brewer and St Amant 2015; Jones 2013). TAPP interactions provide scenarios for online professional collaboration, where students are expected to manage complex situations, take roles and interact as would be expected of them in the international workplace, while opportunities are afforded for intercultural exchange (and also intercultural blunders without major consequences, unlike what would happen in real life) and for multilingualism (especially in those interactions that involve translation). TAPP thus contributes to raising students' awareness of the importance of communication and interculturality in global professional contexts.

Although the language used in collaborations is mostly English, which may involve a certain linguistic hegemony (Campbell 2005), we concur with House (2003) that ELF is an addition, rather than a threat, to multilingualism, as it is a "language for communication" (vs "language of identification"). In TAPP, where none of the European students are NSs of English, ELF is added as a working language to the natural multilingualism brought to TAPP exchanges from participants' backgrounds. In many cases, English is also the L2 that various European partners are learning to become multilingual citizens – and TAPP exchanges are intended to contribute to that L2 learning aim.

In addition to showing the awareness raising potential of TAPP, this study has also yielded findings on the attitudes of language and non-language majors, as well as those of NSs and NNSs toward multilingualism and EFL. In general, European students, whether language or non-language majors, aimed at acquiring a high level of English proficiency and expressed interest in other languages. Similarly, monolingual US students also expressed high levels of interest in other languages. Although these findings should be confirmed with larger populations, it would be particularly interesting to compare these results with those from courses not featuring virtual exchanges to discover the extent to which such international contacts increase motivation to become multilingual.

From the multiple day-to-day exchanges carried out via the TAPP, diverse lessons can be learned about the implementation of virtual exchange, which provide instructors and students with the opportunity to explicitly discuss instances of genuine multilingual and intercultural communication. In addition, such lessons can inform policy makers at different levels, especially at the institutional level, in a bottom-up process. The fact that TAPP exchanges function without funding or institutional agreements offers the advantage

of flexibility but also complicates institutional reporting and incorporation into institutions' policies. Therefore, more dialogue between instructors/departments and institutional policy makers can help achieve greater coherence between policies and practices and duly recognise institutional initiatives that favour internationalisation and global employability. Articles, such as this one, that examine a wide range of virtual exchanges in different institutional and geographical settings are testimony to projects that promote multilingual and intercultural education within IaH.

Accounts of virtual exchanges that connect grassroots practices with policies at different levels can contribute to making such practices more visible. Thus, learning about such practices can help policy makers craft more precise recommendations for the integration of virtual exchange in internationalised curricula, in order to promote students' greater appreciation of the complex multilingual and multicultural world that we inhabit.

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