



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

# The E-LENGUA project:

## Using 'Pecha Kucha' to assess spoken production in English

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# E-LENGUA

“E-LEARNING NOVELTIES: TOWARDS  
THE GOAL OF A UNIVERSAL  
ACQUISITION OF FOREIGN AND  
SECOND LANGUAGES”

e L E N G U A



VNIVERSIDAD  
D SALAMANCA

CAMPUS DE EXCELENCIA INTERNACIONAL



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Our aim is to promote and support the integration of digital competencies in language curriculum design.



<http://elengua.usal.es>

We are a consortium of 7 university partners, tackling 7 e-learning challenges, in 7 languages!

The results will be included in an open access repository of best practices

# Who?

- University of Cairo, Arabic
- University of Coimbra, Portuguese
- University of Heidelberg, German
- Trinity College Dublin, English
- University of Poitiers, French
- University of Bologna, Italian
- University of Salamanca, Spanish



<https://youtu.be/GBJqWSJtpzM>

# What and how?

- **University of Cairo** To incorporate intercultural communication in the teaching of a foreign language, through subtitling
- **University of Coimbra** To foster the effective use of computer-mediated synchronic and asynchronous communication systems in FL teaching to facilitate learning (Moodle, Colibri, Skype, email, forums, Text to Speech). Creating Portuguese as a Foreign Language (level A1) (online course) and a Instructor-Learner Interaction Corpus
- **University of Heidelberg** To facilitate independent language learning that is accessible at all times and in all places, Mlearning and Ulearning.
- **University of Poitiers** To improve collaborative and interactive tools in FL teaching using Wikis, collaborative software, blogs, social networks and video games. Three specific actions: the use of the mobile-phone in the classroom and in other action-oriented tasks; the use of a university collaborative platform; the use of a MOOC.
- **University of Bologna** To promote meaningful learning of a foreign language through the integration of the affective component (motivation, attitude), through gaming.
- **University of Salamanca** To promote “Habla bien, escribe mejor. Claves para un uso correcto del español” (“Talk properly, write better. Keys for a proper use of Spanish”). Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
- **Trinity College Dublin** To foster innovative online language assessment through virtual learning environments.



Portal Colaborativo: Buenas Prácticas  
en la Enseñanza de Lenguas

The repository gathers information on best practices using ICT. Anyone can submit a best practice for the repository. All submissions will be reviewed according to UNESCO quality criteria before being published.

Email directly: [foco@usal.es](mailto:foco@usal.es)

FOCO is an open access repository of best practices in language teaching innovation available on a free website <http://foco.usal.es>

# The context

## Virtual Learning Environments



- Web-based technology that allow courses to be organised, delivered, tracked and assessed through embedded content, interactive applications and online communication and collaboration between learners and instructors
- Most frequently employed VLEs in the European HE context are Moodle and Blackboard Learn, with market share of 57% in 2017 for Moodle and 18% for Blackboard Learn (Hill, 2017)
- Watson and Watson (2007: 30) describe the “powerful potential” of Learning Management Systems
  1. “reusability across multiple contexts”
  2. “generativity” (generating new instruction)
  3. “adaptability to meet the needs of individual learners”
  4. “scaleability to meet the needs of both larger and smaller audiences without significant changes in cost”.
- Coates et al. (2005: 26) point out in their discussion of the influence of VLEs on teaching and learning, “it is not the provision of features but their uptake and use that really determines their educational value”.



# The Challenge:

## Online language assessment



- Significant leaps in educational technology in the last decade, but much of our educational and assessment practice has remained in older pedagogical practices, including placing the onus on teachers to ensure that student learning takes place, tending to encourage passivity in learners, and mistrusting learners' ability to self-assess or peer-assess.
- Progress in e-learning has allowed curriculum designers and instructors to create customised and learner-centred environments which foster engagement, allowing learners to take control of their pace, sequence and direction of their learning.
- The shift to a digital environment often simply = a migration of 'paper and pencil' tests to online formats. Online language assessment allows new tools and methods which can strengthen assessment and also inform pedagogical activities in online and blended classes.

## Coates et al (2005: 27):

“One of the most obvious limitations of LMS is their reliance on forms of assessment which can be automatically “corrected”, such as multiple choice and short response tests [...] The danger is that, if this is the most prominent aspect of the assessment function in LMS, it will drive pedagogy towards a simplistic form of the vitally important assessment and feedback loop.”

# The Tool:

## Assessing Spoken Production in Blackboard Learn through 'Pecha Kucha' presentations

Pecha Kucha is a slide presentation style invented in Japan in 2003, created by architects Mark Klein and Astrid Dytham (Klentzin et al. 2010), initially used for managing multiple presentations by young designers.

Pecha Kucha is a Japanese word (ペチャクチャ) which means chit chat or chatter, and the approach is increasingly been used in Europe for crowdsourcing and pitches in Pecha Kucha themed nights.

Pecha Kucha is a rigid and fast-moving which employs 20, mostly visual, slides which are shown for strictly 20 seconds each (6 minutes and 40 seconds in total). A concise, fun and fast-moving format, that has been described as a kind of visual haiku



# Pecha Kucha in L2 curricula

Pecha Kucha presentations can be delivered synchronously, live or via video calling applications, or asynchronously as a pre-recorded and timed slide/audio presentation which is then uploaded to the VLE for assessment.

## Online English Language Assessment 1: Assessing Spoken Production Skills



### Pecha Kucha

**In this assessment exercise, we use a Pecha Kucha presentation to assess your B1/B2 Spoken Production skills in English. The Pecha Kucha approach to presentations employs 20 visual slides which are shown for 20 seconds each (6 minutes and 40 seconds in total) along with a narrative from the presenter.**

Pecha Kucha is a Japanese word (ペチャクチャ) which means 'chit chat'. Pecha Kucha is a fast-moving oral presentation format for individual learners. This exercise asks to you prepare a set of slides in advance, and to deliver a short, timed presentation about your slides. This assessment is designed to allow you to pre-record your presentation in advance and to upload it to Blackboard Learn for review. For this assessment, you are invited to present on any topic of your choice. Below you will find step-by-step instructions to complete this assessment exercise.

# Pecha Kucha in educational contexts

Pecha Kucha has been the subject of academic discussion and investigation as a presentation format conducive to fostering student learning and engagement (Beyer, 2011; Beyer et al. 2012; Dunlap, 2011). Klentzin et al. (2010) provide a review of scholarly literature on the use of Pecha Kucha presentations in university instruction. They write:

Potential advantages for the use of Pecha Kucha as a pedagogical technique in the college classroom are evident. Similar to traditional PowerPoint presentations, Pecha Kucha provides students with both auditory and visual modes of instruction in thereby reaching students with two different learning styles simultaneously. Pecha Kucha also forces an instructor to focus on the most relevant information during the strictly timed presentation. (ibid., 160).

In a study of 67 US college students, Beyer et al. (2012) compared student recall between Pecha Kucha and PowerPoint presentations. They found more favourable student preferences for Pecha Kucha versus a traditional PowerPoint peer presentations, and found similar levels of recall and retention of material presented across both formats.






# Pecha Kucha in Blackboard Learn

In the E-LENGUA assessment unit in Blackboard Learn, students are:

- provided with an overview of the assessment exercise
- invited to watch an embedded video clip which presents an example of Pecha Kucha, selected from the Pecha Kucha website's Presentation of the Day ([www.pechakucha.org](http://www.pechakucha.org)).
- Presented with a structured Learning Widget within Blackboard which guides learners through the assessment activity



## **PechaKucha Assessment Exercise**

-  Instructions
-  Tips on how to select your images
-  Tips on how to create your script
-  Tips on timing
-  Assessment details

Klentzin et al. (2010: 161) address the impact the constraints of the format (rigidity of timing, need to make swift transitions whilst maintaining narrative integrity, restrictions of a short time frame which may render some topics too complex to address)

Dunlap (2011: 254), in her consideration of using Pecha Kucha in an online education context, notes that it is a case of carefully planned creativity:

Just because the Pecha Kucha format is intentionally informal, this does not mean that presenters do not have to prepare fully for their six minute and forty seconds. To avoid uttering too many “ummmms” and “ands” and running out of time, it is necessary to prepare and to practice. This becomes even more evident when recording a Pecha Kucha for online delivery. (ibid.).

In the preparation of the E-LENGUA task, learners are presented with tips on selecting images (including issues of copyright, visibility etc.), how to craft a script or story that maintains their listeners’ attention, and how to manage the technical details of a timed and pre-recorded slide presentation: valuable transferable skills.

# Assessment scheme

- As in other projects in the IWLP, combination of self- and teacher-assessment.
- Self-assessment = 10%, teacher assessment = 90%.
- Peer-assessment is conducted through making access to the teacher rubric open to all the class, but this is not formally scored at present.
- Rather than simply listening as audience members, all learners are encouraged to act as peer-assessors for their classmates' presentations.
- The self- and teacher-assessment materials for the Pecha Kucha presentation involve a checklist as well as an analytic rating scale.
- A three-point checklist ensures that presentations are:
  1. appropriately timed,
  2. that the slides are visual in nature
  3. that the narration continues for the duration of the slide show (no 'empty' time).

Learners who do not meet these criteria are deducted 10 points per item from their final overall score. In conjunction, an analytic rating scale is used as a basis for scoring spoken production. This rating scale is embedded in Blackboard Learn.



# Assessment rubric

Name Pecha Kucha Rating Scale & Checklist

Description Each Pecha Kucha presentation is assessed using the rating scale below, which assigns a numerical score by category: Phonological Control, Spoken Fluency, Grammatical Accuracy, and Vocabulary Range & Control. These are equally weighted, and a maximum of 100 points is possible. In addition, Pecha Kucha presentations must follow these three guidelines. Presentations will do not do so will be deducted 10 points per item. 1) Presentations should not exceed the time limits (20 seconds per slide, 6 minutes and 40 seconds in total) 2) Presentations should employ visual slides (slides without writing) 3) The narrative presentation should be continuous, and last for the full time of the presentation (no 'empty' time)

Rubric Detail

| Criteria                              | Levels of Achievement   |  |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
|                                       | Very Poor   | Poor   | Satisfactory  | Good  | Very Good   |
| <b>Phonological Control</b>           | <b>0 to 5 points</b><br>Almost unintelligible   | <b>6 to 10 points</b><br>Strong L1 accent  | <b>11 to 15 points</b><br>Fair L2 accent  | <b>16 to 20 points</b><br>Good L2 accent and intonation   | <b>21 to 25 points</b><br>Very good L2 accent and intonation  |
| <b>Spoken Fluency</b>                 | <b>0 to 5 points</b><br>Very slow and hesitant, frequent stops and starts                       | <b>6 to 10 points</b><br>Stilted and somewhat hesitant, but manages to keep going  | <b>11 to 15 points</b><br>Flows reasonably well in spite of occasional hesitations  | <b>16 to 20 points</b><br>Fluent, good expression   | <b>21 to 25 points</b><br>Very fluent and expressive, normal speech tempo   |
| <b>Grammatical Accuracy</b>           | <b>0 to 5 points</b><br>Very little control, grammatical errors impede the message              | <b>6 to 10 points</b><br>Errors frequent, difficulty with complex structures, but message intelligible                                     | <b>11 to 15 points</b><br>Good control of basic structures, some errors in more complex structures and discourse patterns         | <b>16 to 20 points</b><br>Only occasional errors, mostly in control of complex structures and discourse patterns          | <b>21 to 25 points</b><br>Very few noticeable errors, competent control of complex structures and discourse patterns          |
| <b>Vocabulary Range &amp; Control</b> | <b>0 to 5 points</b><br>Very limited vocabulary range, errors frequent and impede communication | <b>6 to 10 points</b><br>Limited vocabulary range, frequent errors. Little or no attempt to use specialist terms appropriate to the topic. | <b>11 to 15 points</b><br>Good general vocabulary range and control but limited use of specialist terms appropriate to the topic. | <b>16 to 20 points</b><br>Wide-ranging vocabulary choices and control. Demonstrates clear effort to use specialist terms. | <b>21 to 25 points</b><br>Very good control of vocabulary, demonstrates mastery of specialist terms appropriate to the topic. |

- An innovative approach to assessing spoken production, stimulating “creativity, enthusiasm, high energy and engagement” (Dunlap, 2011: 257), favoured by students over other traditional forms of slide presentation (Beyer 2011; Beyer et al. 2012)
- Responds to need to provide flexible course delivery, to cater to large numbers of language learners, and to incorporate innovative assessment methods using technology rather than relying on summative, paper and pencil testing
- Integration of slides and script within a strictly timed format, integration of content and language = a powerful means of engaging student interest and channelling their interests and specialisms, countering the disengagement that occurs during peer presentations (‘death by PowerPoint’)
- Valuable transferable skills –image copyright, learning how to create timed and recorded presentations, maintaining the floor, narrating transitions between slides, conveying a concise message to the audience, etc.
- Tools in Blackboard Learn also the VLE’s interactive functions to be used in conjunction with the requirements of the formative assessment, supplementing through discussion boards etc.
- **In sum: The challenge of delivering online assessment of productive language skills in a formative context is a significant one, but Pecha Kucha offers a worthwhile avenue for university language teachers and assessors to explore.**



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