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 Pitfalls & Potholes: Testing languages *in situ*

Don Maybin  
 Shonan Institute of Technology

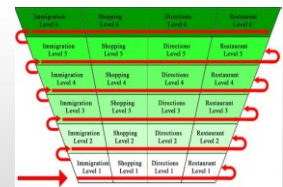
ABLE: Action-Based Language Empowerment

- Schedule 1  
 2 weeks classroom training  
 > onsite testing (5 days)
- ↓
- Schedule 2: “blended learning”  
 1 week online training  
 +  
 2 weeks classroom training  
 > onsite testing (5 days+)



ABLE Course Characteristics

- 8 participants; very mixed group
- limited time (sense of urgency?)
- task-based / functional focus
- spiral > automatic recycling [“horizontal” vs. “vertical”]
- develop communication skills [key language is formulaic]
- integrated (classroom > online; online > classroom)



Research Focus

- change in self-efficacy
- ability to communicate, complete tasks *in situ*
- sustained interest in L2
- interest in other L2’s



Data Collection

- Survey 1: pre-course (language needs > course content)
- Survey 2: pre-online (L2 learning profile, motivation, sense of efficacy)
- Survey 3: post-online training, pre-classroom (perceptions of online training)
- Survey 4: post-classroom, pre-travel (perceptions of classroom; cf. online)
- Survey 5: onsite evaluation 1 (pairs complete specific jobs)
- Survey 6: onsite evaluation 2 (individuals complete specific jobs)
- Survey 7: post-onsite (change in self-efficacy; motivated to study L2> L3,L4...)
- Survey 8: 3-6 months post-course (sustained language learning interest)



### Onsite Evaluation 1 (pairs) - Evolution

- original solo tests stressful
- pairs > corrupted data? (cf. Vygotsky's "scaffolding")
- S1, S2: recording devices
  - ethical concerns
  - poor sound quality
- S1, S2: test survey + pair debriefing



### Onsite Evaluation 2 (solo) - Evolution

- S1 with local in disguise (Tina & Yoshi in Sofia)
- S1 with local at a distance
  - assistance? (students in Ubon)
  - <http://jalt-publications.org/archive/proceedings/2007/E123.pdf>
- S1 "on own"
  - task contexts (e.g. schools)
  - (filmed from a distance)
  - post-test interview
- Onsite Evaluation 3
  - repeat Onsite Evaluation 1? (Loris in Cambodia)



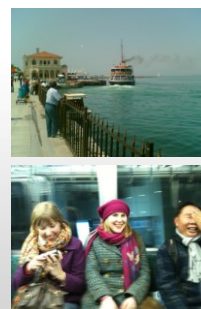
### Tests determine course content

- generic activities (shopping)
  - vs. specific, local (Cambodian transportation)
- Survey 1: needs analysis influences content
- exotic purchases
  - soccer paraphenalia (Korea)
  - ankle bracelets (Turkey)
- exotic activities
  - fruit carving (Thailand)
  - scuba diving (Thailand)
  - herbal steaming for private parts (Korea)
- medical conditions / medicine
  - irritated bowel syndrome (Hungary)
  - anti-depressants (Korea)



### In Situ Hurdles – Onsite Evaluation 1 (pair)

- urban location > use of L1 or English
  - arrange native "decoys" (Thailand)
  - verify pre-test locations (Hungary)
- misinformed native informants
  - Turkish ferries, Korean fortresses
- personality pairing
  - shy vs. extroverted participants
  - clashing couples
- racial risks
  - right language, wrong face



### In Situ Hurdles – Onsite Evaluation 2 (solo)

- cultural confusion (Akinori in Thailand)
- killing with kindness (Yukiko in Istanbul)
- pure panic (Richard in Istanbul)
- hidden agendas



### The End(less) Results

- desire to communicate
  - Tomomi & Pietro
- desire to learn other L2's
  - Naoko (5<sup>th</sup> course!?)
- increased self-confidence
  - Sونسuke job interview
- desire to see / help the world
  - Yukiko > Cambodia
  - Hidekazu > Mauritania
- ability to function on own
  - Takayuki & Shiota in Italy



### Interested?

- Check out...

[www.sulantra.com](http://www.sulantra.com)

◆  
<http://blog.donmaybin.com>

◆  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oJtU6VIX4>

◆  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwpOBC866uY>

- All feedback is read – and appreciated!  
[maybin@center.shonan-it.ac.jp](mailto:maybin@center.shonan-it.ac.jp)

- Spring, 2014: Chinese > Sechuan, China

