

An Observatory for Foreign Language Usage in the Workplace

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Overview

- **Origin of the project : a Ph.D. thesis** "*English as a second language for French engineering technician students and English as a working language in the French aeronautical industry*"

=> new issues raised

- **Project** : The Creation of an Observatory for Language Usage in the Workplace

Research

At the crossroads of:

- the teaching and learning of foreign languages,
English for Special Purposes

and:

- work analysis

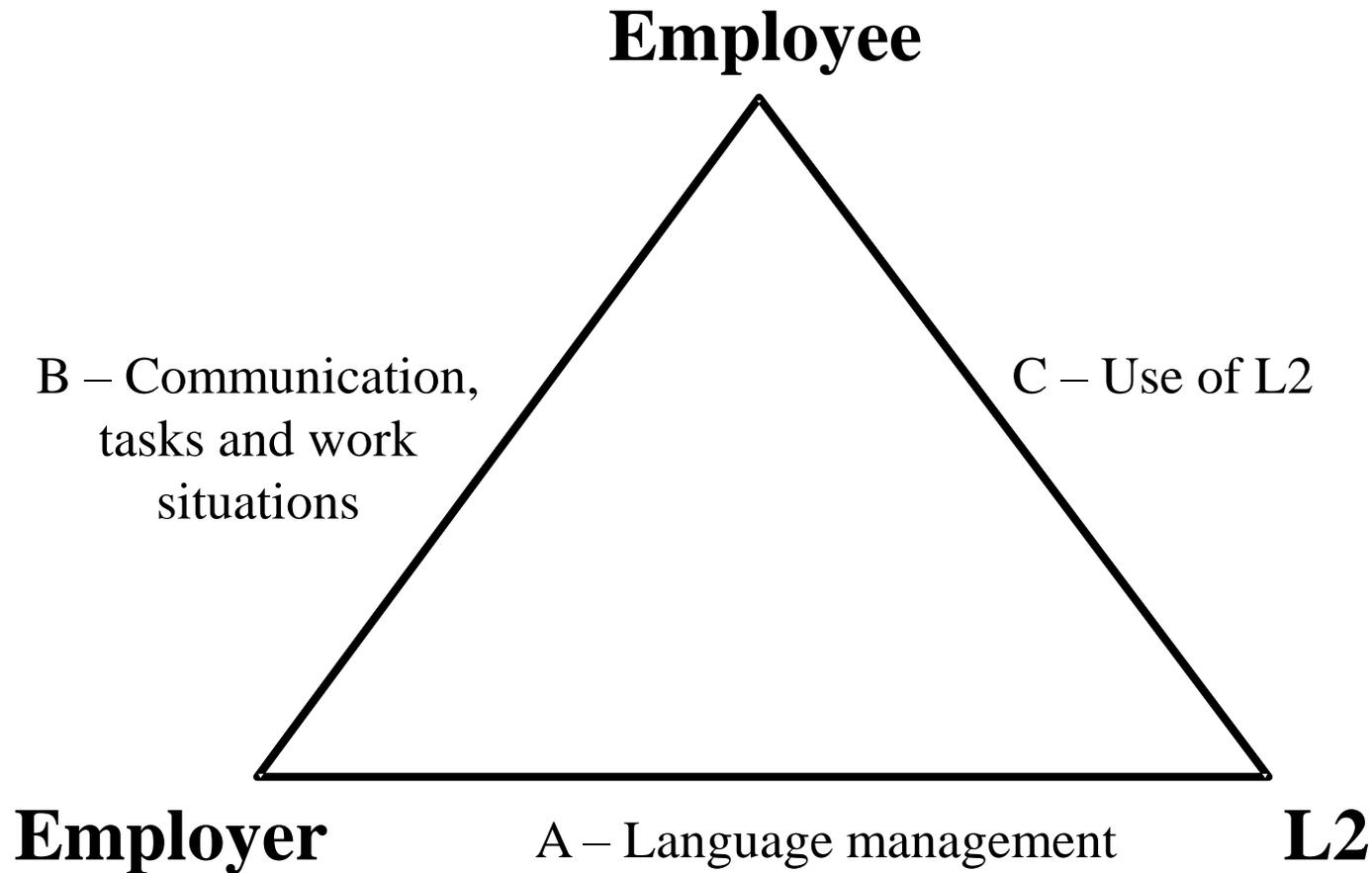
“Work analysis can be defined as the systematic investigation of (a) work role requirements and (b) the broader context within which work roles are enacted.”

(Morgeson and Dierdorff, 2011)

Methodology

- **Needs analysis carried out at university with:**
 - 1,873 questionnaires from mechanical engineering students (local and national levels) studying to be technicians.
 - English lecturers
- **as well as in the workplace with:**
 - former students now in employment (questionnaires, log sheets) in aerospace companies.
 - HR and technical executives (semi-structured interviews).

The Workplace Use Triangle (WUT)



Identification of problems

Educational shortcomings

- **Gap between the learners' perceptions** and the use of English as a foreign language in industry:
 - under-estimation of the importance of the English language
 - variation of the perceptions according to the sources
- **Foreign language anxiety in L2**

Continuous evolution of the work environment

- **Use of new technologies** (e-mails, teleconferences, new forms of collaborative work)
- Accumulation of tasks (multi-tasking)
- New needs due to changes in the career patterns of employees during their working lives

New Issue Raised

How to reduce the **shortcomings and the gap** between the learning/ teaching of foreign languages and the use of these languages in the workplace?

⇒ An innovative instrument:

**the Observatory for Foreign Language
Usage in the Workplace**

Definition of an Observatory

(Webster's dictionary)

- 1 a building or place given over to or equipped for observation of natural phenomena (as in astronomy) ; *also*: an institution whose primary purpose is making such observations



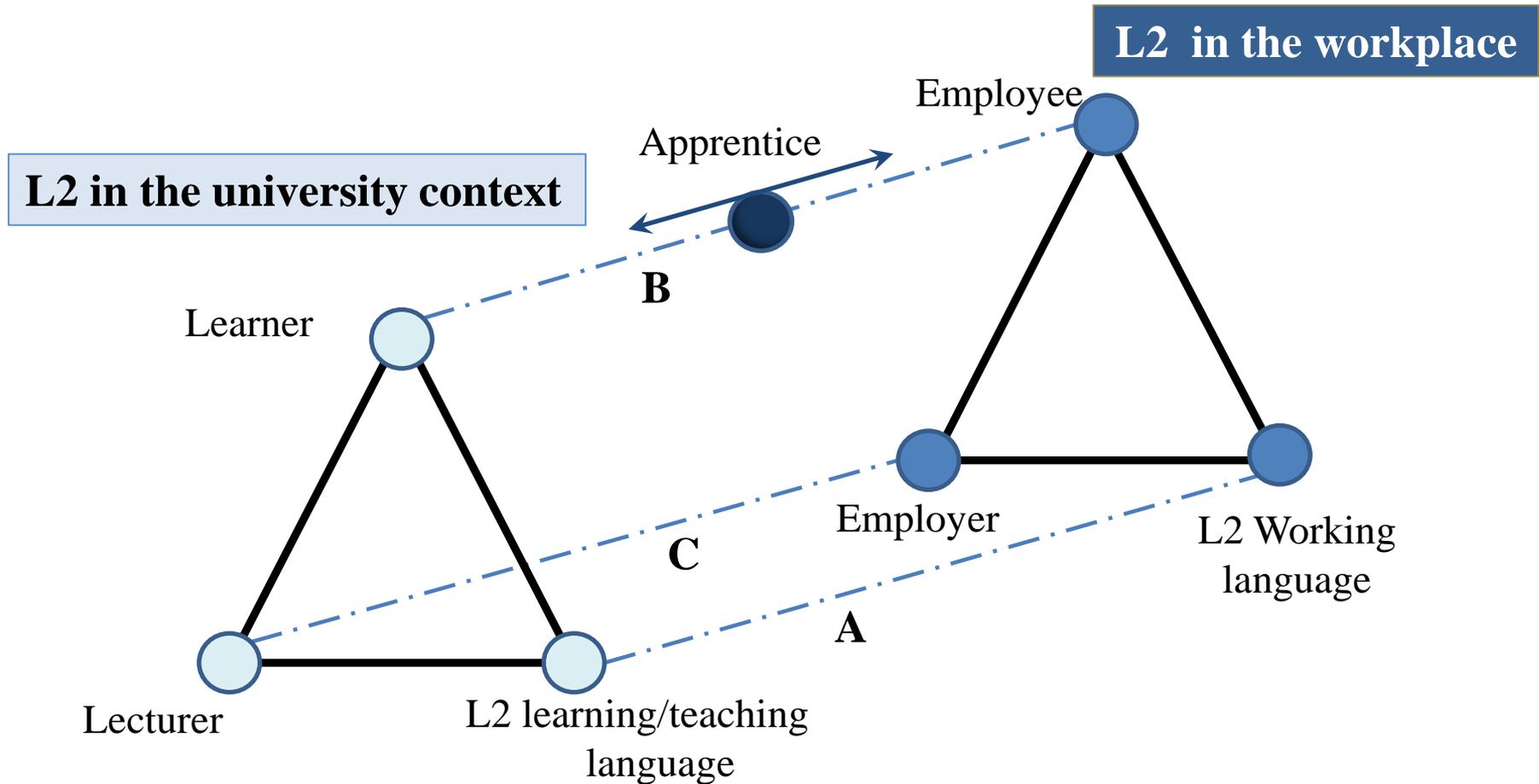
- 2 a situation or structure commanding a wide view

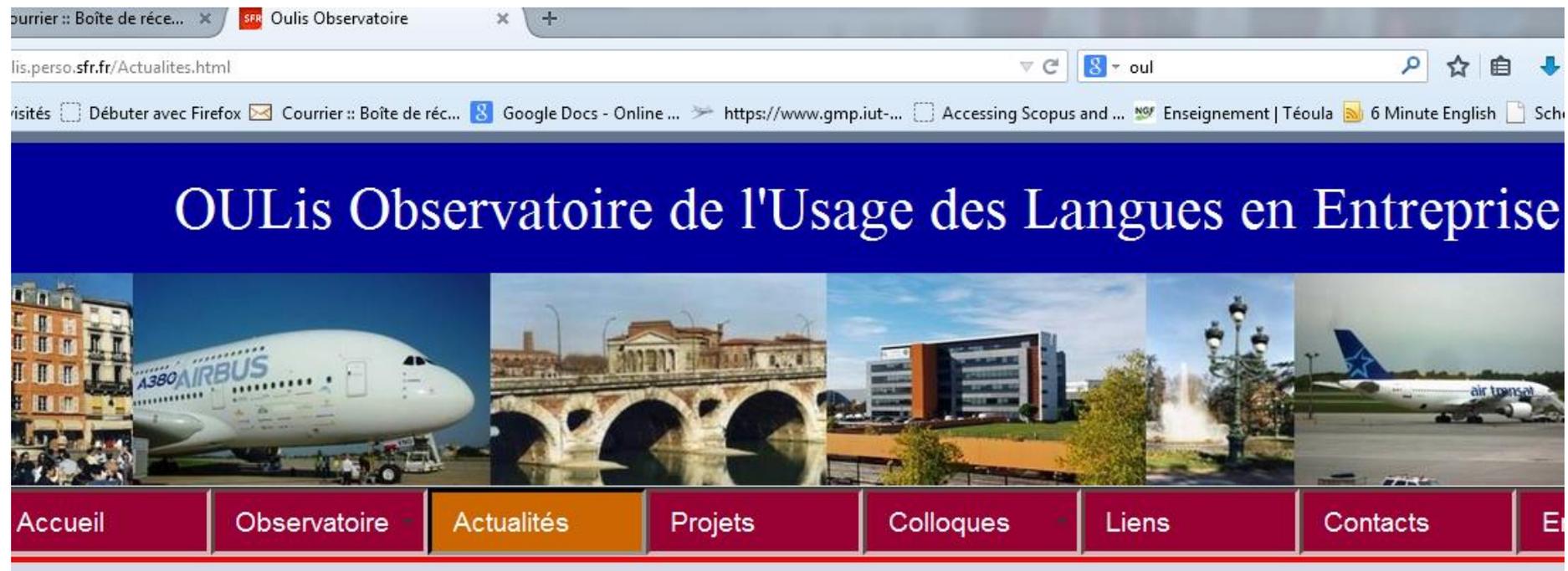


The Observatory for Foreign Language Usage in the Workplace

- **Objective:** this system aims to **promote exchanges and to establish cooperation** between university and various industrial and economic branches in the field of foreign languages.
- **Its main missions** are both to contribute to research and the teaching of foreign languages at university and help address business problems related to foreign languages. It may participate in prospective studies.

The University/ Workplace Use Prism





Planned actions

- Events (seminars, workshops, conferences) hosting speakers from the business world and academia
- Information, co – training
- Research projects
- Relations Research / Education: doctoral theses and dissertations

Scope of the project

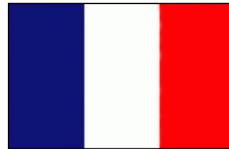
Various foreign languages

WHERE?

- Various French regions (South, East...)
- Cooperation expected from other countries
- Slovakia very welcome!

WHO?

- Universities and higher education
- Various industrial and business sectors



Conclusion

Where there is an observatory and a telescope, we expect that any eyes will see new worlds at once. Henry David Thoreau

The existence of the Observatory will create a **durable link** between research and the workplace to provide mutual improved knowledge of both environments.

<http://oulis.perso.sfr.fr>

Thank you

Any questions?

