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Crowdsourcing as CALL for Widening Participation and Learning Opportunities: A view from pre-service language teachers' window

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BACKGROUND-1

The online crowdsourcing sites and platforms that depend on the contributions and ideas of ordinary users for their development and growth have become really popular in recent years (e.g., Wikipedia, Bussu).

This popularity, in turn, has led to increase in the number of learners and teachers using them for language learning and teaching since it is believed that these sites enable learners to access engaging as well as culture and context-specific materials more easily and for free (i.e., they widen language learning and teaching opportunities).



BACKGROUND-2

Little is known, however, about the attitudes of pre-service language teachers and language learners towards such online crowdsourcing sites and sources.

Why study pre-service language teachers and learners?

The pre-service language teachers are an interesting group worth studying because, on the one hand, they are still trying to develop/improve their English (i.e., they are the present-day learners); while on the other hand, they are the practitioners who are going to determine what will happen in the language classrooms of the future.



AIMS

To identify/uncover whether or not English language learners with diverse cultural and language backgrounds in Turkey, Poland, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina make use of crowdsourcing websites and tools to learn languages.



METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION TOOL: A questionnaire with two sub-parts

To ensure parallelism among the data sets collected in Turkey, Poland, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina a cross-culturally appropriate questionnaire was designed specifically for this study. The data-gathering tool was in English and comprised two parts.

Part A:

Including 11 questions aiming to elicit data related to the crowdsourcing habits and practices of the LLs (i.e., how, when, where and why language learners/pre-service language teachers use various crowdsourcing sites)

Part B:

Including questions aiming to elicit background information related to the participants (e.g., age, gender)

DATA ANALYSIS

The analyses of the collected data were done keeping in mind country and context-specific variables.



RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS-PART 1

PARTICIPANTS



RESULTS-1.1-PARTICIPANTS-1

Table 1: Participants

	Turkey (TUR)	Poland (POL)	Macedonia (MAC)	Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H)	ALL
Total	43 (20.4%)	58 (27.5%)	41 (19.4%)	69 (32.7%)	211
Males (M)	12 (27.9%)	12 (20.7%)	27 (65.9%)	17 (24,6%)	69 (33%)
Females (F)	31 (72,1%)	45 (79.3%)	14 (34.1%)	52(75,4%)	142 (67%)
Age range	18-25	18-38	18-24	18-39	18-39
Age GR 1	18-21: 16 (37.2%)	18-21: 12 (20.7%)	18-21: 39 (95.1%)	18-21: 42 (60,1%)	109 (51.7%)
Age GR2	22-25: 27 (62.8%)	22-25: 45 (77.6%)	22-25: 2 (4.9%)	22-25: 24 (34.8%)	98 (46.4%)
Age GR3		26-39: 1 (1.7%)		26-39: 3 (4.3%)	4 (1.9)



RESULTS-1.2: PARTICIPANTS-2

Q17. How would you assess your proficiency level in English?

A1 (Basic level)

A2 (Elementary level)

B1 (Pre-intermediate level)

B2 (Intermediate level)

C1 (Upper intermediate level)

C2 (Advanced level)

If you cannot assess your level of proficiency, write "I do not know (IDNK)



RESULTS-1.3: PARTICIPANTS-3

Table 2: Self-reported level of proficiency of the participants

	TUR		POL		MAC		(B&H)		ALL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A1					4	9.8			4	1.9
A2					3	7.3			3	1.4
B1					4	9.8	2	2.9	6	2.8
B2	3	7.0	5	8.6	10	24.4	15	21.7	33	15.6
C1	8	18.6	31	53.4	13	31.7	27	39.1	79	37.4
C2	23	53.5	12	20.7	5	12.2	19	27.5	59	28.0
No answer	9	20.9	10	17.2	2	4.9	6	8.7	27	12.8
All	43	100.0	58	100.0	41	100.0	69	100.0	211	100.0

RESULTS-1.3: PARTICIPANTS-3

Table 2: Self-reported level of proficiency of the participants

	TUR		POL		MAC		(B&H)		ALL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A1					4	9.8			4	1.9
A2					3	7.3			3	1.4
B1					4	9.8	2	2.9	6	2.8
B2	3	7.0	5	8.6	10	24.4	15	21.7	33	15.6
C1	8	18.6	31	53.4	13	31.7	27	39.1	79	37.4
C2	23	53.5	12	20.7	5	12.2	19	27.5	59	28.0
No answer	9	20.9	10	17.2	2	4.9	6	8.7	27	12.8
All	43	100.0	58	100.0	41	100.0	69	100.0	211	100.0

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS-PART 2

QUESTIONNAIRE PART A



RESULTS

Research question:

Do English language learners/pre-service teachers with diverse cultural and language backgrounds in Turkey, Poland, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina make use of crowdsourcing websites and tools to learn English?



RESULTS-2.1-CROWDSOURCING (CRWS)-1

Table 3: If you see/hear the word "Crowdsourcing" what comes to your mind? (Q10)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Crowdsourcing tools	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	It divides work among participants to achieve a cumulative result	7	17.1	22	37.9	8	19.5	5	7.2	42	19.9
2	It is a model where information is gathered from different people	35	85.4	35	60.3	20	48.8	49	71.0	139	65.9
3	In crowdsourcing the group is open and can get bigger quickly	11	26.8	11	19.0	6	14.6	3	4.3	31	14.7
4	People contributing to the crowdsourcing activity might not be experts in the field	11	26.8	22	37.9	4	9.8	10	14.5	47	22.3
5	It might be a community where people from different backgrounds come together and share their feeds, knowledge on a specific area with each other.	1	2.4							1	0.5
6	I have never heard that word before					2	4.9	1	1.4	3	1.4
7	Crowdsourcing is a sourcing model in which individuals or organizations obtain goods and services, including ideas, voting, micro-tasks and finances, from a large, relatively open and often rapidly-evolving group of participants					1	2.4	1	1.4	2	0.9
	ALL	65		90		41		69		265	



RESULTS-2.2-CROWDSOURCING (CRWS)-1

The results presented in **Table 3** show the following:

- (i) **Almost all participants (98.6%)** know what CRWS is or at least have heard about it, despite the fact that it is a relatively recent concept (Estelles-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012). Only 3 people out of 211 stated that they "Have never heard that word".
- (ii) Despite certain differences (**TUR=85.4% > B&H=71% > POL=60.3% > MAC=48.8%**), **participants from all four countries selected Definition 2 most frequently**. Overall, **65.9%** of them thought that CRWS "is a model where information is gathered from different people".
- (iii) **Definition 4**, which focused on the fact that the "People contributing to the crowdsourcing activity **MIGHT NOT BE EXPERTS** in the field" was a **distant second choice** for the participants in the study (i.e., it was selected 3 times less than Definition 2, 22.3%).
- (iv) **Definition 1**, where division of labour "among the partisans to achieve a cumulative result" is emphasised was the second most popular choice for the participants from **Poland** and **Macedonia** but overall was selected 3.3 times less (19.9%) than Definition 2 and was the **4th choice** for the informants from TUR and B&H.



RESULTS-2.3-CROWDSOURCING (CRWS)-3

*One plausible explanation for the lack of consensus among our participants (i.e., TUR=85.4% > B&H=71% > POL=60.3% > MAC=48.8%) in choosing the definitions of CRWS comes from Estelles-Arolas and Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara (2012:189) who argue that the term CRWS "encompasses many practices. This diversity leads to the blurring of the limits of crowdsourcing that may be identified virtually with any type of internet-based collaborative activity, such as co-creation or user innovation."

***Why despite the differences among them, our participants mostly went for Definition 2:**

"the name crowdsourcing is formed from two words: crowd, making reference to the people who participate in the initiatives; and sourcing, which refers to a number of procurement practices aimed at finding, evaluating and engaging suppliers of goods and services." (Estelles-Arolas and Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012:89).

Our Definition 2, is general and only states that CRWS "is a model where information is gathered from different people". So, it looks as if the crowd from whom the data for the current study were collected used their knowledge of etymology to select the most plausible definition among the given options.



RESULTS-2.4-Use of CRWS sites-1

Table 4.1: Please put a tick next to all of the CRWS sites/tools you have used for any language learning (Q2)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Crowdsourcing tools	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Wikipedia	37	86	52	89.7	29	70.7	40	58	158	74.9
2	Kahoot	36	83.7	54	93.1	12	29.3	31	44.9	133	63.0
3	Duolingo	23	53.5	47	81.0	20	48.8	40	58	130	61.6
4	Memrise	10	23.3	23	39.7	3	7.3	7	10.1	43	20.4
5	Quizlet	0	0	19	32.8	0	0	0	0	19	9.0
6	Busuu	9	20.9	7	12.1	2	4.9	3	4.3	21	10.0
7	Khan Academy	9	20.9	9	15.5	23	56.1	8	11.6	49	23.2
8	Anki	0	0	6	10.3	0	0	0	0	6	2.8
9	Storybird	4	9.3	0	0	2	4.9	8	11.6	14	6.6
10	None of them	0	0	0	0	4	9.8	10	14.5	14	6.6

RESULTS-2.5-Use of CRWS sites-2

CRWS platforms that tap into concepts such as “collaborative consumption, community building, the sharing economy and social enterprise” (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Howcroft, 2014: 215) become popular with users and contributors.

In our study, Wikipedia is the one that ticks all the boxes in Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft's definition.

Khan academy is the second most popular choice among Macedonian students

One of the probable explanations might be related to the interests of the Macedonian respondents. Since these students are students of computer science that involve many math subjects and Khan Academy contains more than 3,100 free video tutorials, mostly on math and science, then it seems useful to the students i.e. the choice is context dependent and population specific.



RESULTS-2.6-Use of CRWS sites-3

Table 4.2: Please put a tick next to all of the tools you have used for any language learning and teaching purposes (Q2)-The sites mentioned only once

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H	
	Crowdsourcing tools	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Cambridge Dictionary	1	2.3			1	2.4		
2	Grammarly	1	2.3			0			
3	Movies and books	1	2.3			0			
4	Rosetta Stone	1	2.3			0			
5	Speakandimprove.com	1	2.3			0			
6	Voscreen	1	2.3			0			
7	Writeandimprove.com	1	2.3			2	4.9		
8	Drops			1	1.7	0			
9	Insta.ling			1	1.7	0			
10	Wordreference			1	1.7	0			
11	Fizskoteka			1	1.7	0			
12	Lingo Hut			1	1.7	0			
13	Kanji Study			1	1.7	0			
14	Tandem language app			1	1.7	0			
15	Flocabulary					0		1	1,4



RESULTS-2.7-Use of games

Table 5: Have you used any of the games listed below for LL and LT purposes? (Q3)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Games	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Guild Wars 2			2	3.4	3	7.3	2	2.9	7	3.3
2	Minecraft Education	3	7.0	1	1.7	6	14.6	5	7.2	15	7.1
3	Multi Theft Auto	1	2.3				0.0		0.0	1	0.5
4	Ragnarok: Online	1	2.3			2	4.9	1	1.4	4	1.9
5	Sims 2	2	4.7							2	0.9
6	The Sims Franchise (1, 2, 3, 4)	1	2.3							1	0.5
7	Vusual Novels	1	2.3					1	1.4	2	0.9
8	World Without Oil, (project closed)							1	1.4	1	0.5
9	Pokemon, Shakes and Fidgets			1	1.7					1	0.5
10	lumosity					1	2.4			1	0.5
11	CSGO Red Crucible Firestorm CS1.6					1	2.4			1	0.5
12	FIFA, PUBG, Pro Evlotuion Soccer, Grand Theft Auto, Assassin's Creed, Call of duty					1	2.4	5	7.2	6	2.8
13	None of them	36	83.7	50	86.2	29	70.7	55	79.7	170	80.6
	ALL	45		53		43		69	100	210	

RESULTS-2.8-Devices used for CWS sites and games

Table 6: What devices have you used for language learning activities? (Q4)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Device	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Smartphones	42	97.7	57	98.3	36	87.8	63	91.3	198	93.8
2	Laptop	41	95.3	55	94.8	32	78.0	53	76.8	181	85.8
3	Tablet	9	20.9	16	27.6	5	12.2	10	14.5	40	19.0
4	iPod/iPad	7	16.3	5	8.6	5	12.2	10	14.5	27	12.8
5	Standard/ Personal computer	7	16.3	20	34.5	14	34.1	18	26.1	59	28.0
	ALL	106		153		92		154		505	

The participants in all countries stated that they use **SMARTPHONES" (87.8% to 98.3%)** and **"LAPTOPS" (76.8% to 95.3%)** for language learning activities.

A much smaller number of the participants in all of the studied countries said that they used TABLETS, IPOD/IPADS or PERSONAL COMPUTERS



RESULTS-2.9-Where are the CRWS websits/games used?

Table 7: Where have you used the websites/games you listed for language learning purposes? (Q6)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Where	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Outside of class	35	81.4	55	94.8	30	73.2	58	84.1	178	63.5
2	In class	28	65.1	28	48.3	7	17.1	22	31.9	85	30.3
3	Other					9	22.0	8	11.6	17	6.1
	ALL	63		83		46		88		280	



RESULTS-2.10-Why are websites/games used?

Table 8: Why have you used the websites/games? (Q7)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Why	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	For having fun while learning the language	34	79.1	49	84.5	38	92.7	47	68.1	168	79.6
2	As a class activity	26	60.5	30	51.7	7	17.1	18	26.1	81	38.4
3	As a class assignment	23	53.5	8	13.8	6	14.6	4	5.8	41	19.4
4	For impressing my peers	2	4.7	3	5.2	3	7.3	1	1.4	9	4.3
5	For doing what my friends do	2	4.7	15	25.9	1	2.4			18	8.5
6	Just for fun	1	2.3			1	2.4			2	0.9
7	For passing time while doing something else	1	2.3			1	2.4			2	0.9
	ALL	89		105		57		70		321	



RESULTS-2.12-Languages learnt through CRWS sites and games-1

Table 9: Which languages have you learned while using the websites/games mentioned in the first section of the survey? (Q13)

		TUR		POL		MAC		B&H		ALL	
	Languages	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	English	37	86.0	50	86.2	38	92.7	53	76.8	178	84.4
2	German	13	30.2	27	46.6	19	46.3	27	39.1	86	40.8
3	Spanish	13	30.2	26	44.8	4	9.8	12	17.4	55	26.1
4	French	8	18.6	18	31.0	4	9.8	6	8.7	36	17.1
5	Italian	5	11.6	14	24.1	5	12.2	8	11.6	32	15.2
6	Turkish	4	9.3	3	5.2	10	24.4	14	20.3	31	14.7
7	Greek	1	2.3	1	1.7					2	0.9
8	Korean	2	4.7		0.0					2	0.9
9	Japanese	1	2.3	7	12.1					8	3.8
10	Russian	1	2.3	7	12.1					8	3.8
11	Arabic	1	2.3	1	1.7					2	0.9
12	Slovene			1	1.7	1	2.4	1	1.4	3	1.4
13	Polish			4	6.9	1	2.4			5	2.4
14	Macedonian					17	41.5			17	8.1
15	Bos/Serb/ Croat							13	18.8	13	6.2
16	Swedish			8	13.8					8	3.8
17	Other			9	15.5	7	17.1	8	11.6	24	11.4
18	None of them	1	2.3		0.0	1	2.4	8	11.6	10	4.7
	ALL	87		176		107		150		520	

CONCLUSIONS

(1) The results of the study show that there are more similarities than differences in the ways in which pre-service English language teachers and language learners in Turkey, Poland, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina perceive, evaluate and employ online crowdsourcing resources.

(2) The findings show that across the four different countries:

- **The majority of respondents have the same understanding regarding the concept of crowdsourcing**; 65.9% believe that *crowdsourcing is a model where information is gathered from different people*.
- Most respondents reported **C1 level of English proficiency** (79 out of 211 or 37.4%)
- **Wikipedia** is the most used CRWS tool (158 respondents or 74.9%)
- Contrary to the common perception of the pervasiveness of gaming among learners, **170 respondents (80.6%) stated that they do not use games**.
- 178 respondents (63.5%) use the **websites/tools as an outside of class activity for having fun while learning** (79.6%) foreign languages.

(3) It is hoped that the findings of this study can serve as guides for material developers, experts and teacher trainers who strive to achieve cross-culturally valid CALL platforms and tools.

