

Title: Finding, Adapting, and Creating Open Content: Videos for the Reality Czech Curriculum
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Abstract:

This talk will focus on the development of tools and practices to find, adapt, and create open video materials for language courses. It will specifically focus on strategies implemented in the Reality Czech curriculum, which is currently under development at the University of Texas at Austin. The goal of this project is to develop a complete textbook replacement for beginning Czech language courses. While the talk will use examples from work from the Reality Czech project, the approaches described will be applicable more generally to instructors and textbook authors of a wide range of languages.

One of the more imposing tasks for language instructors is finding video materials for classroom and home viewing. Feature films, television shows, documentaries, and commercials are all attractive options for foreign language classes. However, while instructors are often free to use any such materials in their classrooms, making materials available for student use at home is often hampered by copyright considerations. These issues are compounded for authors of textbooks, especially freely available open textbooks, and are an impediment to the successful deployment of such materials to a wider audience.

This talk takes as its starting point the widely accepted need for authentic video materials in learning a foreign language. It will survey some of the most commonly used open licenses under which videos are available. Additionally, it will focus on topics such as finding and utilizing open videos, adapting content, and creating video compilations from found materials. It will address some of the unique advantages of open resources available over the internet. It will argue that open materials can meet needs that typically used closed authentic materials cannot. Finally, the talk will briefly survey some of the video materials being authored for the Reality Czech project, which are also being released under an open license.

Title: Teaching BCS in the Distance Learning Classroom
Author: Aleksandar Boskovic, Columbia University

The field of distance learning for language education is rapidly evolving. The Shared Course Initiative between Columbia, Cornell and Yale universities uses videoconferencing as a technological mode for extending the less commonly taught language classroom beyond institutional boundaries. This model emphasizes highly interactive, small classes conducted synchronously across campuses. In this paper, I will identify the pedagogical challenges that arise in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian shared courses and offer strategies for addressing these challenges. Among the challenges I will explore are: how to integrate students in separate geographical locations into a shared classroom; how to effectively pair students in different classrooms for communicative activities; and how to successfully assess written and spoken output across distance. My paper will offer possible solutions based on my specific teaching practice and experience.