

Focus on language

When preparing for presentations as a student for whom English is not your first language, it may be helpful to take some time to focus on your language learning.

You had to reach a minimum acceptable level of expertise to gain a place on your current course, but few of us would ever claim that our use of language was perfect.

Practicing English language is an investment which will pay off throughout your degree. In COMPI205 it will be relevant in your technical report coursework. At later stages of your study it will be relevant to other assessed presentations, in the exams where you have to write extended written answers, and of course in your third year project report and viva examination. A number of tools and approaches which you might find useful discussed below.

Pronunciation training

There are strong arguments why using a pronunciation trainer might be useful. One accessible book which explains the underlying principles is *Fluent Forever* by Gabriel Wyner.

Parts of the book are available online,¹ and like many authors much of the content appears to be rehearsed in his blog posts. *Fluent forever* has been published in a number of different languages besides English, and he has used Kickstarter funding to produce a range of customised pronunciation trainers advertised on his site, as well as making a number of YouTube pronunciation tutorial videos on the topic which are available free of charge.²

The pronunciation trainers work via Anki flashcards and use a spaced repetition algorithm to assist in learning. Although installing the system and getting used to its working has a small overhead, it may be just what you need for long term improvement.

If you are interested in mastering specific pronunciations, then *Forvo.com*³ is a website which allows you to search for words in a particular language and uses crowd sourcing to provide a number of example pronunciations. There may be specific words which you stumble to pronounce - if they are already in that's great, however if not, why not ask your fellow speakers who have English as their first language to make a contribution.

Another option is to find a language partner for 'tandem' learning, receiving coaching in English, in exchange for coaching in your own first language. You might be able to arrange this via contacts within ECS or with language students (typically based on the Avenue Campus) or by one of the many online exchanges which exist.

References

Wyner, G. (2014). *Fluent Forever: How to Learn Any Language Fast and Never Forget it*. Harmony.

Webliography

Fluent Forever resources associated with the book and learning language in general <https://fluent-forever.com/>

Forvo - crowd sourced pronunciation and dictionary in many languages, see particularly <http://forvo.com/languages/en/>

¹ *Fluent Forever*: <https://fluent-forever.com/>

² <https://youtu.be/-e66ByetpDY>

³ <http://forvo.com/languages/en/>