



palgrave▶pivot

Developing Intercultural Language Learning

Michelle Kohler

palgrave
macmillan

Developing Intercultural Language Learning

“Drawing thoughtfully on an elaborated understanding of languages learning within an intercultural orientation and a commitment to praxis, in this book Michelle Kohler addresses the compelling question of how to engender the development of learners as language learners, language users and as persons capable of interpreting, creating and exchanging meanings across languages and cultures. With her voice both as researcher and teacher she considers, in a fundamental and authentic way, the role of teachers in promoting such learning. Through her account of a sustained self-study, she traces insightfully the processes of planning and designing, enacting and mediating, and assessing and evidencing students’ language learning, foregrounding concepts, experiences and reflective processes in designing learning, and students’ interpretations, reactions and reflections, in time and over time, in response. She explains and illustrates amply her own theorising and practice in a way that exemplifies the intellectually rich and ethical, ecological stance towards languages learning and development that she is advocating.”

—Angela Scarino, *Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia*

Michelle Kohler

Developing Intercultural Language Learning

palgrave
macmillan

Michelle Kohler
UniSA Justice and Society
University of South Australia
ADELAIDE, South Australia, Australia

ISBN 978-3-030-59112-0 ISBN 978-3-030-59113-7 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59113-7>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer
Nature Switzerland AG 2020

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © Melisa Hasan

This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Figures created by Ari Bickley

For my boys

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
	<i>Changing and Challenges Times in Education</i>	2
	<i>Reconceptualising Language Teaching</i>	3
	<i>What Is Intercultural Language Learning?</i>	5
	<i>What Do We Know and Still Need to Know?</i>	6
	<i>About This Book</i>	8
	<i>References</i>	9
2	Why a Developmental Perspective Matters for Intercultural Language Learning	13
	<i>A Paradigm Shift in Second Language Learning</i>	14
	<i>Reframing the Goals of Language/s Education</i>	17
	<i>An Intercultural and Multilingual Orientation</i>	18
	<i>Curriculum Design</i>	19
	<i>Pedagogical Stance</i>	22
	<i>Understandings of Development</i>	33
	<i>SLA and Second Language Development</i>	33
	<i>The Bioecological Model of Human Development</i>	35
	<i>Experiential Learning</i>	37
	<i>Development Within an Intercultural Language Teaching Orientation</i>	40
	<i>Conclusion</i>	45
	<i>References</i>	46

3	Designing Programs for Developing Intercultural Language Learning	53
	<i>The Educational Context</i>	54
	<i>Design of the Case Study</i>	55
	<i>Knowing the Learners</i>	58
	<i>Why Knowing Learners Matters</i>	58
	<i>Finding Out About Learners</i>	59
	<i>Using Profiling Information to Inform Practice</i>	60
	<i>Designing the Teaching and Learning Program</i>	62
	<i>Aims, Goals and Objectives</i>	63
	<i>Intermediate Indonesian</i>	65
	<i>Scoping the Program</i>	67
	<i>Sequencing the Program</i>	77
	<i>Conclusion</i>	86
	<i>References</i>	87
 4	 Enacting and Mediating the Development of Intercultural Language Learning	 89
	<i>Dimensions of Enactment</i>	90
	<i>Pedagogical Stance</i>	90
	<i>Mediating Through Instruction and Interactive Talk</i>	92
	<i>Mediating Through Texts and Resources</i>	94
	<i>Conclusion</i>	98
	<i>References</i>	99
 5	 Assessing and Evidencing the Development of Intercultural Language Learning	 101
	<i>Issues and Considerations in Assessing Intercultural Language Learning</i>	102
	<i>Designing Assessment for Intercultural Language Learning</i>	104
	<i>Evidencing development of intercultural language learning</i>	112
	<i>Example 1: Justin</i>	112
	<i>Example 2: Emma</i>	117
	<i>Example 3: Jim</i>	122
	<i>Conclusion</i>	129
	<i>References</i>	129

6 Insights and Conclusion	131
<i>Insights About Developing Intercultural Language Learning</i>	132
<i>Implications for Developing Intercultural Language Learning</i>	135
<i>The Future</i>	137
<i>References</i>	137
References	139
Index	149

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1	Student profile questionnaire	61
Fig. 3.2	Considerations in designing programs for intercultural language learning	72
Fig. 3.3	Interrelated layers of programming over time	79
Fig. 5.1	The translating/mediating and think aloud assessment	107
Fig. 5.2	The excursion recount assessment	109
Fig. 5.3	The bilingual/intercultural resource and reflection assessment	111
Fig. 6.1	Characteristics for complexifying intercultural language learning	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	The set of strands and sub-strands of the <i>Australian Curriculum: Languages</i>	21
Table 3.1	The teaching and learning program—Intermediate Indonesian	68
Table 3.2	Overview of experiences and learning demands	83



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract The introductory chapter establishes the rationale and focus of the book against the backdrop of a dramatically changing global context. It also situates the book in relation to emergent issues and understandings in the field of languages education, particularly the reconceptualisation of the goals and an intercultural orientation towards language teaching and learning. The chapter presents the central argument that a developmental view is crucial for interculturally oriented language teaching and learning as it is through a sustained engagement with substantive content and experiences, and reflection on these, that language learning becomes transformative for learners. The introduction outlines the key question that guides this book of how the work of language teachers might enable learners to develop their own intercultural outlook such that it becomes part of who they are, how they see the world and how they interact with diverse others in their lives.

Keywords Rationale · Globalisation · Intercultural orientation

This book springs from the questions about language learning that have recurred for me since my early teaching career. In those early years I found myself asking what my students were learning, and how my teaching could most effectively promote their learning. Over time, my concerns

for learning have been broadened to an interest in learners' development as people.

These questions are situated within what I consider to be a humanistic view of education; one that perceives the contribution and value of education as leading to the betterment of society and of particular interest to me, how we can learn to live and flourish together in diversity. In my pursuit of answers to my questions or at least ways forward over many years, I have been drawn towards an intercultural orientation as a means of considering the relational and transformational power of communicating and engaging with others, across diverse languages and cultures. The key question that this book attempts to address is how language teachers might enable learners to develop their own intercultural outlook such that it becomes part of who they are, how they see the world and how they interact with diverse others in their lives. In writing this book, I am assuming that teachers of languages share similar questions and concerns, and will appreciate the attempt to articulate how one might grapple with the notion of development within an intercultural orientation in language teaching. In doing so, I hope this expands our understandings and enables us to attend to learners' development with greater insight and self-awareness.

CHANGING AND CHALLENGES TIMES IN EDUCATION

The first two decades of the twenty-first century have been tumultuous with global shifts in geopolitics and economic power, unprecedented mobility of people, ideas and artifacts, technological development and mass communication practices, within the context of climate change and most recently a global pandemic. These shifts are not novel but what is striking is the intensity, speed and scale of these changes, creating more extensive and intensive pressures and challenges on people and communities. The fluidity, mobility and multi-dimensional nature of communities, and of their peoples, knowledges, communication practices, and technologies, are reflected in notions such as 'superdiversity' (Blommaert, 2013).

Changing and challenging times require adaptation and response, and education will be crucial in considering what current and future societies need in order to meet these challenges. The recently released OECD 2030 goals for education (OECD, 2019) represent an attempt to outline how a future citizenry might be prepared for times that are likely to be

more volatile, dynamic, and uncertain. The goals outline a set of knowledge, skills, understandings and dispositions intended to enable young people to not only survive but to flourish in the future. Similar policy and curricula initiatives in education settings around the world recognize that education in this century will need to respond to, and embrace diversity, indeed diversities, as both a characteristic of students, and also as constitutive of learning itself. These ideas are typically referred to in terms such as internationalization, international mindedness, global citizenship, intercultural understandings and values based education. A central concern in these notions is how to enable young people to participate effectively in increasingly diverse communities, particularly through developing attributes such as empathy, solidarity, and appreciation of otherness. Being able to deftly navigate diversity with sophisticated communication repertoires is likely to be a decisive feature in whether individuals and communities can learn to live together and continue to grow in their knowledge and understandings.

Developing multilingual capabilities will be integral to not only communicative deftness but also to the kind of mutual insights and attunement to otherness required to genuinely bring about greater respect, social cohesion and equality. This requires both a multilingual and an intercultural orientation in education and in languages education.

Within languages education, an intercultural orientation assumes diversity as its starting point, as it views teaching and learning as acts of meaning creation and exchange that are fundamentally linguistically and culturally situated. Language teaching therefore has the potential to make a significant and distinctive contribution to goals furthering how we learn to live together in diversity. Claims such as the value of language learning for enhancing social cohesion and mutual respect have often been made yet seldom realized with evidence of how such learning is actually achieved. In addition, understandings of what it means to teach and learn a language, have undergone substantial shifts in recent decades, and there is a need to reconsider the goals of language teaching and learning for contemporary times, and what this means for understanding how such learning develops.

RECONCEPTUALISING LANGUAGE TEACHING

Accompanying the global changes outlined earlier, have also been changes in theories of how language(s) are learned and used. For the latter part

of the previous century, second language learning theories were dominated by cognitivism that focussed on information processing models of language learning that were understood as taking place within the minds of individuals (Atkinson, 2011). In more recent decades, the field has expanded substantially in response to insights from emergentist approaches (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006), and the social turn (Block, 2003) that has drawn on psychology based theories of human consciousness in developing a sociocultural theory of learning that foregrounds language learning as a social achievement (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In addition, there has been increased recognition of the role of culture in language socialization, use and learning (Byram & Feng, 2004; Kramsch, 1993) as well as insights from studies of multilingualism that show complex capabilities or a kind of ‘multicompetence’ (Cook, 1992) that differs significantly from the language learning of monolinguals. These seismic shifts have challenged the long-standing reference point for language learning of the ‘native speaker’, and have led to a review of the goals for language/s learning that are more aligned to bilingual and multilingual learners. Most recently attempts have been made to bring together contemporary understandings in order to conceptualise a holistic framework for second language teaching and learning (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016) and a reorientation of the goals of language learning (Leung & Scarino, 2016) towards a functional multilingual as the norm.

Concurrently there have been major shifts in understandings of the foundational concepts of language and culture that underpin theories of language learning and use. In relation to language, understandings have essentially expanded from a view of language as code to language as a dynamic social semiotic, a shared and embodied resource for making meaning (Halliday, 1978; Shohamy, 2006). In a similar vein, understandings of culture have changed from ‘high culture’ associated with reified artifacts and knowledge, to culture as everyday practices and ‘webs of significance’ (Geertz, 1973) that are shared by groups, to the discursive practices, meanings and interpretive frames associated with particular communities (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2011). Furthermore, culture is no longer considered as peripheral in conceptualisations of language learning but is positioned as core to it (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 2003), inseparable (in the main) from language (Risager, 2006).

When language and culture are considered as interrelated symbolic systems, they both come into play in the learning of a language, and in the learning of a language and culture in addition to one's own, there is necessarily an interface between both 'sets' of languages and cultures. Learning an additional language involves learning how to navigate the whole linguistic and cultural resource available to an individual. Language learning becomes a process of drawing on and choosing from semiotic resources, those already known to the learner and those that are in the process of becoming known, to meet the communicative demands of a given context. This process is not just an exchange of words but an exchange of symbols that are historically and ideologically situated, and embodied. Thus learning an additional language and communicating with others across linguistic and cultural worlds necessitates the ability to read situatedness, that is 'symbolic competence' (Kramsch, 2006). It is these understandings about the process of learning to *move between* familiar and new linguistic and cultural worlds that underpin interest in and the development of theories and practices of *inter-cultural* language learning.

WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Intercultural language learning is an orientation to language learning that has at its core, an integrative view of the foundational concepts of language, culture and learning that come together in a pedagogical stance that aims to transform language learners through their language learning experiences (Byram & Wagner, 2018; Kramsch, 2012; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This orientation has as its starting point the diversity of learners, teachers, contexts and languages, recognizing that this process of learner development is situated historically and temporally. It is fundamentally concerned with learning; of the student, and also of the teacher and wider community.

Within an intercultural orientation, teaching and learning are understood as both cognitive and social acts, occurring on both intrapersonal and interpersonal planes. Learners are not viewed solely as performers of language but rather they are participants in it, and this requires them to develop awareness of the nature of language, culture and communication. They have multiple roles, as performers, as analysers, and as themselves (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). That is, through their language learning students are learning to know, understand and 'be' in new ways, linguistically and culturally speaking. They are learning to understand the nature

of interacting with diverse others across languages and cultures and how effective communication requires a mutual exchange and interpretation of meaning. This process does not just occur automatically but rather learners need to participate in intercultural encounters and engage in reflection on these in order to develop the meta-understandings about interculturality, and their language learning and identity development.

WHAT DO WE KNOW AND STILL NEED TO KNOW?

Over several decades, work related to interculturally oriented language teaching and learning has focused on conceptualising the orientation and identifying implications for practice (Byram & Zarate, 1994; Kramsch, 2011; Lo Bianco, Crozet, & Liddicoat, 1999; Risager, 2007), as well as developing guidelines and frameworks to support aspects of teaching practice (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Byram, Holmes, & Savvides, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Liddicoat, Scarino, Papademetre, & Kohler, 2003). More recent work has focused on enactment dimensions, exploring language teachers' pedagogical stance and mediation practices (Kohler, 2015) and their role as semiotic workers in classroom interaction (Kearney, 2016).

There has also been growing interest in the political and ethical dimensions of interculturally oriented languages teaching that has led to the notion of intercultural citizenship education (Byram, 2008, 2012; Guilherme, 2002; Houghton, 2013; Levine & Phipps, 2012; Porto, Houghton, & Byram, 2017). Much of this work has focused on establishing a rationale for this framing, however there is a growing body of practice-oriented studies. This work has been largely collaborative in nature, researchers working with language teachers to develop programs of study based on citizenship oriented projects that require students to engage in 'action in the community' including through study abroad, community projects and materials evaluation (Byram, Golubeva, Han, & Wagner, 2017). These projects have been largely short-term or one-off experiences that tend to focus on processes of collaboration, and the immediate impact on learners such as raising their awareness of inequality. In a recent study, following up on a project conducted across multiple countries, Porto (2019) investigated the long-term impact of the project on a group of Argentinian students. She found that the students typically recalled their emotional engagement with the content and their peers in the partner country, and they had developed some awareness and personal