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Teaching Language and Intercultural Communicative Competence in Higher Education

Issues, research and best practices

June 7th 2019



Universiteit
Leiden
Academic Language Centre

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LEIDEN UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS IN SOCIETY

09.00	Registration (Lipsius)	
09.20	Opening (Lipsius 0.03)	
09.30	Teaching intercultural communicative and monolingual competence through engagement with urban space: examples from the school exchange project Nachbarsprache & buurcultuur Sabine Jentges & Eva Knopp	
10.00	The development and validation of an intercultural competence evaluation instrument for upper secondary foreign language teaching. Esther Schat	
10.30	The University of Groningen Language and Culture Policy – Strategic Lessons Michaela Carrière	
11.00	Coffee & Tea break	
	Lipsius 0.03	Lipsius 0.28
11.30	Imposed native pronunciation norms and intercultural communicative competence Anne-Mieke Thieme	Language teaching in the plurilingual classroom – a practical approach Caroline Emery
12.00	Intercultural exchange with a twist: lobbying for another culture Szilvia Szita	-
12.30	Lunch (Lipsius) (ALV Anéla 12.50 – 13.50: Reuvenplaats 4, 1.22)	

14.00	INVITED KEYNOTE (Lipsius 0.03)		
	Education through Language Teaching for Intercultural Competence and Citizenship: Principles and Practices Michael Byram		
15.00	Coffee and tea break		
15.30	Presentations (Lipsius 0.03)	Workshop (Reuvenplaats 4, 2.01a)	
	15.30	Multilingual classrooms and monolingual mindsets Erkam Ekinci, Frank Fuchshuber, Ramona Baumgartner, Svenja Kornher, Janet Grijzenhout, & Tanja Rinker	Linguistic and Cultural Identity Portfolio – A hands-on approach to ICC, based on the Council of Europe’s framework Mari Varsányi
	16.00	Intercultural competence in the Chinese language classroom Gwendolyn Tates & Judith Zoetelief	
	16.30	ICC throughout the curriculum Wander Lowie, Helena Houvenaghel, Marjon Tammenga-Helmantel, Jeanette den Toonder, & Bert Le Bruyn	
17.00	Closing (Lipsius 0.03)		
17.15	Reception (Lipsius)		

Teaching intercultural communicative and monolingual competence through engagement with urban space: Good practice examples from the school exchange project Nachbarsprache & buurcultuur

Sabine Jentges, Eva Knopp (Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen)

In this good practice session we present how intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and, more specifically, the core competence of critical cultural awareness (Savoir s'engager, Byram) can be fostered through activities involving the guided exploration of urban space during real-life school exchanges. We will present materials and activities that were designed as part of the EU-funded German-Dutch Interregproject "Nachbarsprache & buurcultuur" (<https://www.ru.nl/nachbarsprache/>) and reflect on our experiences using them in actual exchange situations. We will focus on direct intercultural encounters as well as on instances of reflection on these encounters while taking into account experiences made by all parties involved in the exchange situations. This includes not only the high-school students and their teachers participating in the school exchanges but also the university students and researchers involved in monitoring these exchanges. We will show that linguistic and cultural landscaping are recently-developed theoretical approaches that can foster the development of ICC and, in particular, critical cultural awareness. The exploratory nature of these activities allows students and teachers alike to get to know and engage with the already familiar through the eyes of the unfamiliar. Particularly the fact that groups of students and teachers with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds work together allows authentic intercultural engagement and fosters the explicit reflection of cultural boundedness.

The development and validation of an intercultural competence (IC) evaluation instrument for upper secondary foreign language teaching (FLT)

Esther Schat (Utrecht University)

Intercultural competence (IC) is an important goal for foreign language (FL) education. However, it is argued that the multi-faceted nature of IC makes it a complex construct to assess. Although there are currently several tools to evaluate IC, research on their use in secondary schools settings is scarce. This study reports on the development and validation of an instrument specifically for use in the FL literature class. To this end, tangible learning objectives for intercultural literary pedagogy (ILP) were developed based on five dimensions of IC (Byram, 1997) and six indicators of literary competence (Witte, 2008). These

objectives were re-formulated for a student questionnaire consisting of 25 items. By means of exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) the construct validity of the instrument was investigated among a sample of 164 secondary school students. Subsequently, Pearson's correlation analyses and t-tests were performed to test the reliability of the instrument in a pilot study among 34 students from 2 secondary schools. The results of the CFA supported the hypothesized one second order factor structure. The instrument will be used in an intervention study that explores how an integrated approach to the teaching of literary texts can enhance language proficiency and IC.

The University of Groningen (UG) Language and culture policy – strategic lessons

Michaela Carrière (University of Groningen Language Centre)

In 2015 the UG implemented a 4,5 million euro Language and Culture policy to 1) promote efficiency in English, Dutch and any other relevant language among all staff (academic and support) and students (didactics/tasks), and to 2) create more intercultural awareness and to develop appropriate intercultural competences as necessary to address the issues arising in a truly international university. During this presentation, the strategic lessons and best practices emerging from the 4 years in which this policy has been implemented will be discussed. The presentation will explore these strategic lessons from the perspectives of a teacher, a manager, a researcher and a project manager, resulting in a strategic convergence of perspectives.

Imposed native pronunciation norms and intercultural communicative competence

Anne-Mieke Thieme (Leiden University)

Intercultural communicative competence can be a goal of pronunciation teaching, in which case there is a focus on cross-cultural intelligibility and sociolinguistic awareness about accents (Alptekin, 2002; Geeslin & Long, 2014; Jenkins, 2007). Learning intercultural communicative competence is arguably especially important when the second language has very diverse speakers and learners and is used as a language franca, like English (Alptekin, 2002; Geeslin & Long, 2014; Jenkins, 2007). Some approaches to pronunciation teaching pay a lot of attention to intercultural communicative competence. Their free, pluralistic pronunciation models emphasize the diversity of accents, allow students to adapt to the interlocutor and focus on intelligible cross-cultural or lingua franca communication (Baumgardner, 2006; Geeslin & Long, 2014; Jenkins, 2007; Kubota, 2018; Ortega, 2013). These models contrast with monolithic native pronunciation models, which tie (for example) British Received Pronunciation and culture to the English language (Baumgardner, 2006; Geeslin & Long, 2014; Jenkins, 2007; Kubota, 2018; Ortega, 2013).

To see how these two schools of thought are represented in the classroom, 75 secondary school teachers of English in the Netherlands filled out a detailed qualitative survey. On the one hand, 61% of the teachers impose a native pronunciation norm on their students (mostly Received Pronunciation and/or General American), often for practical reasons. Most teachers in this group note that this is a direct consequence of the accent they were taught during their teacher training programme. The remaining two fifths of teachers select more pluralistic models, mostly based on intelligibility. In their comments, the teachers in this group refer to the diverse, intercultural and lingua franca use of the English language. Two teachers in this pool also mention the influence of their teacher training programme, for example the focus on World English at the University of Groningen. This research shows the powerful role that teacher training programmes play in introducing intercultural communicative competence to future teachers' classrooms.

Intercultural exchange with a twist: lobbying for another culture

Szilvia Szita (LUCL, Leiden University)

This contribution presents a five-day-course for German and Dutch journalists which served as a preparation for their internship at German or Dutch newspapers. The course was organised by The Hague language school *Talen voor Talent*. The course concept drew on the natural curiosity of journalists to enhance their learning and it contained the following twist: both groups were invited to identify with the country, culture and language of the other group. During the five days, Dutch journalists were to promote the German language and culture and German journalists did the same for the Dutch language and culture. The two groups received separate language lessons in the morning and attended various activities together in the afternoon. During the five days, the two cultures and languages were explored, compared, discussed and analysed with the help of various activities. The methodology used by the instructors integrated cooperative teaching methods and elements of ‘suggestopedia.’

This programme provides a good example for a course where the instructor plays the role of a facilitator, creating opportunities for participants to share their knowledge and help one another with their language learning in an intercultural context. It also shows how to adapt existing pedagogical frameworks to a particular setting to create an opportunity for learning in every moment. The presentation will focus on activities that worked particularly well in this framework and are suitable for language courses at the university.

11.30 – 12.00 Lipsius 0.28

Language teaching in the plurilingual classroom – a practical approach

Caroline Emery (European School Centre for Linguistics, The Hague)

European Schools provide a framework, where, in accordance with EU language policy, pupils from EU member states are exposed to a multitude of co-existing languages and cultures on a daily basis. In the particular settings of such schools, future generations have an excellent opportunity to develop their understanding of a multicultural and multilingual democratic society – a growing reality outside the classroom. Pupils who are exposed to at least three languages and cultures at

school and at home (the curriculum prescribes the learning of a minimum of three languages) define their identity by establishing their special relationship to each one of these cultures and languages. Language lessons offer a number of opportunities for pupils to explore, analyse and evaluate their life experiences related to their cultures and languages in guided discussions and activities. Furthermore, these lessons are a unique laboratory where new teaching methods with a multicultural and plurilingual perspective can be created and tested.

This talk will present a book project containing activities carried out at the European School of The Hague in language lessons in upper secondary classes. The common trait of the activities presented is that they all gave space for plurilingual students to express their relationship to the languages and cultures in various ways (visually, verbally etc.). These activities provide valuable insights about the thinking process of the children as well as about their views on self-definition. This is all the more important as traditional criteria for identity do not seem to apply in this setting. The methodologies presented are adaptable to other educational contexts, e.g. language classes in higher education.

Education through language teaching for intercultural competence and citizenship. Principles and practices

Prof. Michael Byram (Durham University)

With this unwieldy title, I want to indicate that in this presentation I will emphasise that language teaching has both educational and instrumental purposes, that both purposes necessarily lead to teaching for intercultural (communicative) competence and that it is possible and perhaps desirable to give a political purpose to language learning too. My subtitle also promises that the presentation will include illustrative examples from practice.

The notion of ‘intercultural/transcultural competence’ is much debated and there are many models purporting to identify the elements. A model I suggested some 20 years ago can be and has been critiqued for its strengths and weaknesses but seems to work as a basis for practice in language teaching. It can also be located in a more complex educational practice of education for citizenship, a practice which introduces the principles of CLIL into the language classroom and promises the benefits of CLIL.

I shall try to steer a course between (re-)stating issues which may be familiar to some and not to others, and asking some questions about potential future developments.

Multilingual classrooms mindsets

Erkam Ekinci¹, Frank Fuchshuber¹, Ramona Baumgartner¹, Svenja Kornher¹, Janet Grijzenhout^{1,2}, & Tanja Rinker^{1,3}

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In Germany, virtually all teachers are teaching in multilingual classrooms. Yet, most teachers feel unprepared to respond to the challenge accordingly (Becker-Mrotzek et al., 2012). The mindset of the individual teachers is of utmost importance in the process – and in changing schools to operating in a “multilingual habitus” rather than in a “monolingual habitus” (Gogolin, 1994, 2008). Based on a study conducted in Belgium with secondary school teachers (Pulinx, Van Avermaet, & Agirdag, 2015) in which quite monolingual mindsets were observed in the Flanders region of Belgium, we investigate the attitudes towards multilingualism in schools (e.g. use of heritage languages, the role of German versus heritage language) in future secondary school teachers of different subjects at two universities in the south of Germany (n=296). Our data shows more multilingual attitudes than in the Belgian study. We can also demonstrate that the individual background of the teachers-to-be is very relevant (e.g. gender, language background) in forming their beliefs. In a follow-up study with a subset of the teachers in training (n=84), we examined potential changes after a three-month lecture on multilingualism in the classroom in the summer term 2018. Attitudes towards multilingualism were virtually unchanged, albeit with a small trend towards more multilingual attitudes. Implications for future research but also practical considerations for fostering multilingual mindsets in teachers will be discussed.

Intercultural competence in the Chinese language classroom

Gwendolyn Tates (Rijnlands Lyceum, Wassenaar, freelance teacher at Stenden University of Applied Science) & Judith Zoetelief (Windesheim University of Applied Science, Montfort Lyceum, Rijswijks Lyceum)

Becoming a fluent fool in Mandarin is far from easy for students learning Mandarin in higher education. However, intercultural competence can enhance even the most basic level of Mandarin Chinese and open doors that otherwise remain closed. Intercultural competence is an important subject in the Chinese

language classroom, which is sometimes overseen due to the difficulty of the language and time shortage, together with the ‘mountain’ of knowledge that can be taught about China and Chinese culture. Language and intercultural content integration therefore are essential – but how to do this in practice? Through research and teaching experience in middle and higher education we have developed good practices that will explain how understanding the symbolic nature of the language and most important aspects of Chinese culture create knowledge that is useful in any possible interaction with the Chinese speaking world. Examples of creative student driven assignments and activities for intercultural learning show how they help students practising cultural competence and prepare them for real-life communication in the context of Greater China.

ICC throughout the curriculum

Wander Lowie, Helena Houvenaghel, Marjon Tammenga-Helmantel, Jeanette den Toonder, Bert Le Bruyn (Meesterschapsteam Modern Languages)

We focus on the issue how intercultural communicative competence (ICC) should be integrated into a curriculum that does not start in higher education but in primary and secondary education. We reflect on current practice in the Netherlands, make a proposal on how we would like to see ICC integrated in the language curriculum and evaluate the proposals that are currently on the table in Curriculum.nu, the ongoing primary and secondary curriculum reform in the Netherlands. Special attention will be paid to (i) the relevance of the interaction between different subject matters, in particular the interaction between Dutch, English and the other modern languages, (ii) the challenge of how to entrench ICC in a primary and secondary school curriculum, and (iii) what we may expect the ICC of students to be when they enter higher education.

Linguistic and Cultural Identity Portfolio – A hands-on approach to ICC, based on the Council of Europe’s framework

Mari Varsányi (educational consultant and trainer at human-ed (www.human-ed.org); Intercultural Competence coordinator and English teacher at DENISE - De Nieuwe Internationale School Esprit)

When it comes to today’s increasingly diverse classrooms, we need to stop talking about challenges, and recognise the arising opportunities. Students bring with them a rich cultural and linguistic heritage, and it is their teachers’ task to tap into this, hereby helping their students feel at home, and creating inclusive schools. A Linguistic and Cultural Identity Portfolio can be a useful tool to showcase diversity in schools. Furthermore, it serves the purpose of helping migrant and expat students stay connected to their roots. The portfolio in question is currently being developed in a secondary and primary school setting, and is based on the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). During this hands-on and interactive workshop participants will get the opportunity to test activities from the portfolio, and reflect on their own cultural and linguistic identity. Furthermore, participants will be introduced to the Council of Europe’s RFCDC, a useful resource for developing their students’ intercultural competence.