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Pathways to Paradigm Change: Critical Examinations of Prevailing Discourses and Ideologies in Second Language Education

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Chapter 8

Languages for All: World Languages for Meaning-Making and Intercultural Citizenship

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Introduction

As world language (WL) instructors and program coordinators, one of our primary goals, if not the primary goal, is for our students to learn the target language (TL) in order to communicate with speakers of that language. Our students also should be able to use their newly acquired language skills in a variety of real-world contexts spanning across cultures in their own communities and beyond. With this acquisition, it is our further hope that students will develop richer, plurilingual¹ identities as part of their journey toward intercultural citizenship. Reflecting these goals, the U.S. Commission on Language Learning (2017), created in response to a bipartisan request from members of Congress in both chambers, recommends:

a national strategy to improve access to *as many languages as possible* for people of *every region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background*—that is, to value language education as *a persistent national need* similar to education in math or English, and to ensure that *a useful level of proficiency* is within every student's reach. (p. viii, our emphases)

Although these appear to be lofty goals, they are entirely feasible, with many resources available to help WL educators reach them. Yet, as our combined experience of over 30 years working with pre-service and in-service WL educators has shown, balancing linguistic and intercultural goals is not easy to do in everyday teaching practice. There are numerous reasons for this, as we will discuss in the

¹ “Plurilingualism should be understood in this dual sense: it constitutes a conception of the speaker as fundamentally plural and a value in that it is the basis of linguistic tolerance, an essential element of intercultural education” (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 18).

pages to follow. Our main goal in writing this chapter is to describe how we can bring intercultural contexts and the exploration of plurilingual, pluricultural identities more fully into the language classroom, while still supporting the goal of TL acquisition. By outlining strategies that have worked for us in achieving these goals, we call on WL educators and program coordinators alike to think deeply about how the strategies they use in daily classroom practice are connected to their overall beliefs and goals for language learning (see also Byram & Wagner, 2018).

The first part of our title, “Languages for all,” is a nod to the Commission on Language Learning’s (2017) recommendations, as well as work by Moeller and Abbott (2018), who urge all stakeholders to “build a ‘new normal’ in the United States where languages are valued as an integral part of education and are viewed as necessary to the well-being of all Americans” (p. 21). Viewing the “all” in “languages for all” as referring to all people and all purposes, this notion also references Kramsch’s (2011) work in symbolic competence, in which she visualizes languages not merely as codes that can be substituted for each other but as resources for meaning-making. Furthermore, a languages-for-all approach acknowledges work by Wei (2017) and others who perceive of language not only as linguistic but also as multimodal, multisemiotic, and multisensory. Finally, “languages for all” embraces work in social justice in both general (Nieto, 2000) and WL-specific (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014) educational contexts. These notions of what language is—and what it can be—can inspire WL educators and learners to pursue language learning in a way that fosters both the development of plurilingual selves and greater social responsibility.

In this chapter, we draw on theoretical frameworks in symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2009, 2011), intercultural competence and citizenship (Byram, 1997, 2008), translanguaging (Flores, 2016; García & Wei, 2014), and language education for social justice (e.g., Nieto, 2000; Osborn, 2006; Reagan & Osborn, 2001; Wesely, Glynn, & Wassell, 2016) to outline how WL educators can make informed decisions about classroom practices in ways that support the simultaneous development of TL proficiency, intercultural competence, and plurilingual identities, and build bridges between the TL/cultures and students’ existing languages and heritages. Findings from interventions we have conducted provide concrete strategies for situating a meaning-making approach within the current framework of WL education while still supporting the goals of TL acquisition and communication. Finally, we explore what information and skills are needed to promote teaching languages for intercultural dialogue and discuss implications for P-16 WL instructors and language program directors. Specifically, we outline how we can apply existing research and theory to classroom practices that draw upon a variety of linguistic and cultural resources to develop meaningful relationships and language proficiency grounded in relevant social action.

In the section that follows, we discuss research in TL use and meaningful communication, offering examples from our own and others' research to support our claim that WL instructors continue to struggle with integrating these two related aspects of language teaching. We continue with an exploration of four core theoretical frameworks that we view as essential to implementing a languages-for-all approach, highlighting each framework with brief summaries of pedagogical innovations in that area. Our third section focuses on what an integrated approach using the four frameworks could look like, as well as detailed explanations of several strategies and lessons that can be used by WL instructors and language program directors to integrate a languages-for-all framework into their own practices.

Integrating Target Language Use, Meaning, and Intercultural Citizenship: A Review of the Challenges

The argument for maximum TL use goes back decades to the onset of the direct and audiolingual methods for language teaching. These teaching methods emphasized exposure to the language through drills and repetition versus analysis of the language, which was a highlight of earlier grammar-translation methods (Meiring & Norman, 2002). More recent communicative language teaching (CLT) methods have also advocated for maximum TL use due to the desire to expose students to spontaneous, yet ostensibly meaningful authentic language. These methods recognized the WL classroom as the only environment in which most students experience the TL (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Thus, as the sole model of TL input, the teacher was tasked with not only modeling the language but also presenting it as a viable mode of communication for their students (Littlewood, 1981). Crawford (2004) stated, "Teachers must themselves be language users and make schools domains of language use if students are realistically to become language users in their turn" (p. 7). This modeling is assumed to motivate students to learn the language by presenting it as "fun" and "not to be feared" (Crawford, 2004, p. 7).

Besides providing a motivating model of the TL, researchers have argued that "more TL input results in more effective acquisition" for learners (Neil, 1997, p. 13). These beliefs stem mainly from Krashen's (1982, 1985) theory of comprehensible input (CI) as a necessary, albeit insufficient, component of language learning. In the words of Higgs (1985), CI makes the "unavailable available" in an unconstrained manner that facilitates guidance and feedback to students. The notion of sustained CI continues to play a key role in advocating for maximum TL use in the WL classroom at the levels of policy, teacher education, and research, as a TL input-rich environment has been shown to positively impact learner TL development (Kramer Moeller & Roberts, 2013; Larsen-Freeman, 1985). Because of this, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL)

guiding principles for language learning include a recommendation that “learning take place in the target language for 90% or more of classroom time” (actfl.org, n.d.). As program directors and educators, we support maximizing TL use in the classroom and beyond for a variety of reasons, including those outlined earlier.

On the other hand, as researchers and observers of many classroom interactions, we have noticed the need to carefully examine not only how much the TL is used, but above all, how and to what effects the TL is used. For example, a large body of research on CLT has suggested that *more* TL use may not necessarily translate into *meaningful* use of the language. Kumaravadivelu (2006), in a state-of-the-art review of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) methods, discussed several empirical studies in which researchers observed that “so-called communicative classrooms ... were anything but communicative” (p. 62). Noting an overwhelming emphasis on grammatical accuracy activities, these practices had the effect of reducing learner participation in the classroom. A particularly poignant quote from Legutke and Thomas (1991) noted that a language classroom heavy on grammatical accuracy tasks in the TL “does not seem to stimulate the wish of learners to say something, nor does it tap what they might have to say” (pp. 8–9). More recent research in second language teaching and applied linguistics (e.g., Foster & Ohta, 2005; Gathbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Kramsch, 2009, 2011) has corroborated these early findings; these researchers have also observed a prevalence of discourse in WL classrooms that focused more on decontextualized form and “language as code” rather than authentic conversation.

We should note that these observations have generated significant responses, including calls for an increased focus on meaning (e.g., Glisan & Donato, 2017), contextualized instruction (Shrum & Glisan, 2015), and development of intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship in language instruction (Byram, 2008; Byram & Wagner, 2018). At the same time, Ennser-Kananen (2016) and others have called for WL teachers to take a more profound role in exploring global injustices through the lens of language education, even when these explorations might prove painful to both our students and ourselves. Yet, WL instructors continue to struggle with integrating meaning-based approaches while still using the TL, particularly at novice levels of instruction (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). The reasons for these difficulties are varied: Donato and Davin (2017) noted that teacher histories as learners may directly influence their own classroom discourses, and that meaning-based classroom practices “often bear little resemblance to the discursive conditions of the language classes in which many teachers participated as language learners” (p. 2). Similarly, despite being well-positioned to undertake discussions about significant global events, WL instructors’ concerns about their own and their learners’ TL proficiency (e.g., Hlas, 2016; Tum, 2012) often causes them to restrict themselves to shallower discussions of the target culture, focusing on what has been described as the “Four Fs” (food, fashion, folklore, and festivals; Ennser-Kananen, 2016, p. 557).

In exploring some of the reasons why WL instructors may have difficulty enacting meaningful discourse, we find particularly pertinent Debreli's (2016) conversations with non-native teachers of English working in Northern Cyprus, which revealed that many felt as though they were "pretending" or "playing a role" when using the TL in the classroom. Artificiality of discourse was also highlighted by Neil, Salters, and McEwan (1999) when they warned that "teacher input may fossilise as a kind of restricted code or classroom interlanguage," leading to student difficulty in processing more complex aspects of the language (p. 17; see also van Lier, 1995). In other words, when using the TL in classroom contexts, many teachers tend to use the same forms and phrases over and over, leading to input that is exclusively "classroom speak" rather than authentic, real-world use of the language. Meaningful communication, as the phrase implies, presupposes that students indeed use the TL to work toward doing something relevant in their interactions with interlocutors and texts. Examples of decontextualized "dialog" may be quite familiar to many WL teachers. The following exchange from Edmondson (2004, p. 163) in an EFL class in Germany demonstrates how repetitive practice inhibits meaningful exchange (see Figure 8.1):

3L:	[...] Gelnas, how old are you?
4S:	Nine.
5L:	Jacqueline, how are you?
6S:	Fine, thank you.
7L:	Anna-Sophia, have you got a brother?
8S:	No.
9L:	Milena, how old are you?
10S:	I'm fine, thank you <i>ach so</i> I'm nine
11L:	Nine. Saphira, g'morning
12:	Ss: morning.

Figure 8.1 Excerpt from Edmondson, 2004

As seen in 10S, the automatized nature of this "conversation" leads one learner to respond incorrectly to L's query, "How old are you?" Although the learner explicitly notices her error, as seen by the use of the German phrase "*ach so*" in 10S, and self-corrects, a dialog richer in context would enable students to think more about their responses rather than responding automatically.

Similar interactions were found in Back's (2019) video-recorded observations of Spanish classrooms. Back's study focused on teacher use of Spanish and English in three intermediate Spanish classrooms in the United States. While the objective of this research was to analyze the amount of teacher TL use, Back also made important discoveries about the function of language use among her participants. Among two of the three teachers observed, both Spanish and English were being used for similar functions: procedural talk, introducing content, classroom management, building rapport, and explicit grammar instruction. With the possible exception of building rapport, none of these language functions were particularly

meaningful for the students, and video recordings showed several instances in which students reacted through expressions of boredom or off-task behavior (see Figure 8.2).

In one recorded example, the teacher introduced health-related vocabulary by having students read along with an audio recording giving advice for healthy living, then turn and repeat sections of the recording to their partner. Two off-task interjections suggested the need to make this task more meaningful for students:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 124. | T: okay. sección C.
<i>section</i> |
| 125. | S1: I wanna go running with the bulls= |
| 126. | T: =sh sh. |
| 127. | Recording: C. el ejercicio también es importante. tal vez
<i>exercise is also important. perhaps</i> |
| 128. | te gusta el atletismo.
<i>you like being athletic.</i> |
| 129. | T: (3.0) go 'head, ¡vamos!
<i>let's go!</i> |
| 130. | ((Ss repeat phrase at various speeds, in monotone, to each other)) |
| 131. | T: eso, bien. ahora es sección D.
<i>that's it, good. now it's section D.</i> |
| 132. | Recording: D. a veces me entreno con mis amigos pero
<i>sometimes I train with my friends but</i> |
| 133. | a veces me entreno solo. siempre sudo mucho.
<i>sometimes I train alone. I always sweat a lot.</i> |
| 134. | T: okay. vamos.
<i>let's go.</i> |
| 135. | Ss: ((in monotone)) a veces me entreno con mis amigos pero
<i>sometimes I train with my friends but</i> |
| 136. | a veces me entreno solo. siempre sudo mucho
<i>sometimes I train alone. I always sweat a lot</i> |
| 137. | ((S2 yawns audibly)) |

Figure 8.2 Transcription of video data used for analysis in Back, 2019

In this example, we note the absence, and even discouragement, of meaningful dialog; the teacher limited herself to procedural vocabulary (“let’s go,” “section C,” etc.), discouraged one attempt to discuss off-task cultural information with a “sh-sh” (pp. 125–126), and continued the “listen and repeat” pattern of the exercise for several more turns, despite at least one audible expression of boredom (p. 137). Rather than probing students to ascertain the meaning of the recording, or even whether or not they agreed with the recommendations, the students were restricted to repeating the audio. The three-second pause in 129 suggests that students may have failed to understand what was being said in the recording; an exercise more focused on meaning could have alleviated some of this confusion.

A final, more general example comprises WL textbook activities, which often consist of interview situations in which students ask their partner a number of

standard questions. A common practice is for instructors to ask students to report what they found either in front of the class or to a new partner when they switch groups. In our observations, we have heard students ask, “Why do we need to do this? We already know the answers.” It is clear that through such activities, the instructor’s focus is on the practice of the form, perhaps hoping that students will also gain some information about their partners along the way. However, such a focus on partially prescribed conversations that are unrelated to students’ interests and communicative intentions does not reflect what we envision in a languages-for-all approach.

A languages-for-all approach includes meaning-focused classroom discourse, which should not only increase student interest in the subject but should also take important steps toward larger goals in WL education focused on social justice and intercultural citizenship. Far from blaming textbook authors for activities such as the one described earlier, creating the kinds of activities we promote here necessarily requires a deeper knowledge of the students learning the language. Therefore, a big part of the responsibility to create meaningful discourse in the classroom lies on the educator, and particularly on their ability to enlist students in actively participating in meaning-making. From our own implementations, we recognize that planning curriculum in this way is time-consuming and requires extensive background knowledge. In the following two sections, we draw upon research to suggest practical ways to redirect the focus of language educators to meaningful communication in WL education, in this way providing opportunities for students to see what they learn as immediately applicable outside the classroom.

Core Theoretical Frameworks for Enacting Languages for All

In order to more effectively integrate meaning-focused activities with TL use, WL instructors and language program directors must continue modifying our collective emphasis on what matters when teaching languages. In the previous section, we discussed the possible barriers to successful integration of these approaches and shared examples of how discourse is operationalized in the classroom. In this section, we draw from four core frameworks—intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship, social justice education, symbolic competence, and translanguaging—in the hope of providing ways to make this approach more accessible to WL instructors and program directors. What these frameworks have in common is that they view language teaching as an interdisciplinary endeavor that addresses students’ and teachers’ various identities and their environments. After a brief explanation of each framework, we note several pedagogical approaches that have already been developed around each theory. We provide further strategies in our discussion of the integrated approach in the following section.

Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Citizenship

As we stated in our introduction, language educators generally agree that they are tasked with teaching culture, cultural awareness, and/or intercultural competence as part of their curriculum. These goals emphasize a need for students to learn to understand behaviors, documents, situations, and thereby members of another culture, which would in turn enable them to mediate between and among cultures (Byram, 1997). Consequently, rather than presenting culture as isolated facts, theories of intercultural competence posit that we need to equip our students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage in meaningful dialog with people from cultures different from their own. Successful mediators have “knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country or region” (Byram, 1997, p. 231). They also need skills such as interpreting and relating, discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness, coupled with attitudes of openness, curiosity, and tolerance of ambiguity (Byram, 1997). Byram (2008) introduced the concept of intercultural citizenship, combining the skills of intercultural (communicative) competence with the application of said competences in local, national, or international contexts. This model introduces aspects of “active citizenship” or “political and civic engagement” (Barrett & Zani, 2015).

Although it is difficult to teach amorphous concepts such as “openness,” “civic engagement,” and “tolerance of ambiguity,” teaching for intercultural competence can help students consider an event from different perspectives by providing conflicting, yet still factual information. A class focused on intercultural competence and citizenship allows students to be challenged at any level of language instruction to think critically, compare data, and interpret it from a variety of perspectives. Students use critical cultural awareness to evaluate an event, document, or situation based on specific criteria, while applying their skills of discovery, interaction, interpreting, and relating (Byram, 1997).

These models have been successfully applied in a number of pedagogical and research contexts, which means that there are now numerous resources to assist educators in teaching languages for intercultural dialogue. In Wagner, Perugini, and Byram (2017), K-12 teachers collaborated with graduate students in a course on intercultural competence by modifying units to be taught in elementary school through higher education that integrated intercultural competence in meaningful ways. The collaborators then implemented the unit and reported upon it and their collaboration in the book’s chapters. Topics included modes of transportation in the Caribbean, houses around the world, and daily routines, among others. Some of the units have been modified and implemented in other contexts (for an example of a unit on immigration for intermediate high school Spanish, see Bohling, Wagner, Cardetti, & Byram, 2016). For implementations of intercultural citizenship, Byram, Golubeva, Han, and Wagner (2017) reported on a number

of transnational projects among colleagues who codesigned units that engaged students to apply their skills, attitudes, and knowledge comprising intercultural competence to an immediate problem. Educators reported on a number of transnational collaborative projects in which they combined the model of intercultural citizenship (2008) with a model of criticality (Barnett, 1997). Examples of topics include critical investigations about the environment, the Malvinas/Falkland War, and teacher education. Many of the projects dealt with topics related to social justice, which confirmed the notion that there are strong parallels between intercultural citizenship education and education for social justice, our next area of focus.

Social Justice Education

Social justice education takes a similarly critical approach to pedagogy, noting “how politics, ideologies, and power relations shape and transform the nature of language teaching and learning in the classroom and beyond” (Kubota & Austin, 2007). Social justice education’s chief advocate, Nieto (2009), outlined three components of this approach: (1) providing all students with the necessary resources to learn to their full potential; (2) drawing on the resources, strengths, and talents that students bring to their education; and (3) creating a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and agency for social change.

Integrating the critical, resource-oriented pedagogies of social justice education with the intercultural opportunities already available in the WL classroom can empower instructors to effectively access a wide variety of cultures, histories, and languages that students can use as resources to expand their acquisition of the TL. Working from Nieto’s (2009) definition, Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell (2014, 2018) published a persuasive and practical textbook for WL instructors, which provides tools for teachers to integrate a social justice approach in their teaching. In a subsequent work, the authors discussed how social justice education includes considering issues of access to WL education, including a lack of WL courses in urban districts and the disproportionate representation of White students in WL classes. As the authors of this later publication stated, “Language teachers have an obligation to meet their students at their individual starting points, carefully bringing students’ own complex and multifaceted identities into the curriculum” in order to begin to remedy these inequalities (Wesely, Glynn, & Wassell, 2016, p. 566). Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell’s (2014, 2018) textbook offers many different strategies for teachers to bring student identities into the classroom, including several introductory projects and questionnaires that can help instructors access these identities (2014, pp. 13–20). One of these activities is described in more detail in the following section. Of particular note is that all of these activities are closely intertwined with ACTFL’s policies and standards for language learning.

Integrating notions of social justice into the classroom implies embracing an expanded notion of language learning, moving from an exclusive goal of

communicative competence to something potentially richer and more rewarding. It enables students to understand the role of language(s) and culture(s) as part of their identities, which in turn necessitates a rethinking of WL teachers' identities as advocates for all language learners (see Byram & Wagner, 2018). A social justice stance in WL education also strives toward perceiving a language learner's goals not necessarily as becoming a native speaker or even native-like, but rather as becoming an individual who "can interact, negotiate meanings, and establish interpersonal relationships between languages and cultures" (Kramsch, 1999, as cited in Liddicoat, 2008, n.p.), which in turn enables students to become intercultural speakers or mediators (Byram, 1997). These perceptions lead to the next theoretical framework of our integrated languages-for-all approach: symbolic competence.

Symbolic Competence

The notion of symbolic competence was first developed by Kramsch (2009, 2011) and has been expanded upon and operationalized by several scholars in recent years (e.g., Back, 2013, 2016; Étienne & Vanbaelen, 2017; Vinall 2016). While not discounting the value of rich TL input and a communicative approach, Kramsch (2009) noted that the emphasis on "language as reference and representation rather than on language as symbolic power" in today's WL courses leads precisely to the decontextualized classroom discourse that we have described previously (p. 10). To incorporate symbolic knowledge into language learning, a new framework is needed that perceives language as "a meaning-making system" that "constructs the historical sedimentation of meanings that we call our 'selves'" (p. 2). This framework places a greater emphasis on the creative, polysemous aspects of meaning-making. Learners are encouraged to play with language and develop multifaceted, multilingual identities within the safe space of the WL classroom. These activities generate a profound reflection upon learners' personal histories vis-à-vis the histories of persons in the target culture, corresponding to the U.S. ACTFL standard of Comparisons, in which a learner compares her home language and culture with that of the TL (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

One of the many pedagogical applications of this framework include Back (2016), who outlined a pedagogy of symbolic competence using an example in which learners reflect upon and compare different portrayals of superheroes in a variety of cultures. Taking as a point of departure a discussion between a tutor and learner about a popular Mexican comic superhero, *El Chapulín Colorado*, Back outlined how incorporating a comparative approach to superheroes in the United States and Mexico into the learner's Spanish classroom would have allowed for a richer, more productive conversation between the tutor and learner. By allowing the learner to bring in her own knowledge of superheroes, she might have been

more engaged in making connections and expanding her knowledge of how superheroes are perceived in other countries.

Other innovative pedagogical responses to the notion of symbolic competence include Vinall's (2016) lesson on multiple representations of the Mexican mythical character *La Llorona*. Combining classic representations of this figure with images from popular culture, including a variation on the popular U.S. "Got Milk?" advertising campaign, allowed students to have some contact with the familiar in order to adequately reflect upon and process a relatively unfamiliar concept. The title of Vinall's article "Got Llorona?" reflects the multiple languages and cultures that learners of Spanish both bring to the classroom (e.g., a U.S. milk advertisement, California Milk Advisory Board, 2002) and are exposed to therein (e.g., the Mexican mythical figure of *La Llorona*).

From this brief explanation of symbolic competence, it appears that strategic use of students' L1 through reflections on their home culture and language would be a crucial, if not inevitable, component in the construction of learners' multilingual selves. In the following section, we discuss how L1 use has been incorporated in mainstream classroom contexts to enrich meaningful acquisition of content and language.

Translanguaging

Translanguaging, first noted as a practice in Welsh schools by Cen Williams (1994) and developed as a pedagogy for K-12 contexts by Ofelia García and collaborators (e.g., García, 2013; García & Li Wei, 2014; García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017), encourages educators to use students' entire linguistic repertoire in order to teach content and academic language. Teachers can encourage students' use of their home languages in and outside of the classroom by using a variety of resources, including those from family, community members, and peers; the school's WL teachers; and authentic texts and digital translation programs. These strategies highlight that the successful education of emergent bilinguals requires viewing student linguistic and cultural diversity "as an asset that [students and teachers] can capitalize on" (Sánchez, Espinet, & Seltzer, 2014, p. 13), rather than a deficit. Furthermore, using student home languages not only helps emergent bilinguals with their acquisition of English but also "builds a bilingual repertoire to stimulate students' thinking" (Sánchez, Espinet, & Seltzer, 2014, p. 20).

Translanguaging pedagogies counter popular approaches to educating bilinguals in the United States and elsewhere that focus on either an English-only curriculum, using methods such as sheltered instruction, or dual-immersion programs, in which the two languages are handled as separate entities. García (2013) argued that these approaches "have had the effect of negating the fluidity of bilingual language practices and furthering inequalities in the education of language

minorities” (p. 101). Similarly, the strategic use of student home languages in the WL classroom could allow all students to take full advantage of their multiple linguistic and cultural resources so that they might develop meaningful cognitive and affective relationships with the TL and culture. This type of language use allows students not only to connect with the TL but also to reflect upon their own linguistic and cultural histories. It permits language learners to partake in what Flores (2016) termed “language exploration,” a process in which students reflect on how they use language, as well as other ways language is used, through metalinguistic conversations. In this way, students become “language architects” who are able to “take what they know about general principles of language use in order to create their own unique voice in both their speaking and writing” (Flores, 2016, p. 2).

For example, students in a Spanish class could examine a common phonetic occurrence in the language, final -s elision or aspiration (e.g., “tú veh” for the traditionally taught “tú ves” [you see]), and compare it to final -g elision in some variants of African American Vernacular English (e.g., “goin” for “going”). Students could listen to songs or spoken word performances in both languages containing this element and discuss both the phonetic and sociocultural reasons for this elision. This activity would allow students to gain a richer perspective on certain variants of Spanish and allow them to recognize and notice this phenomenon when it occurs in natural speech. Moreover, a comparison of these and other linguistic phenomena with variants of the L1 could address a crucial issue of bi-dialecticism in the WL classroom, which, if not addressed, often leads to difficulty in processing certain TL forms (Yiakoumetti & Mina, 2011).

It is important to take into account the contextual differences of ESL and WL classes, most notably the relationship of languages, identities, and linguistic hierarchies in these two contexts. Yet evidence has been found that many WL students already conceive of the classroom as a bilingual or multilingual space and translanguage not only during troublesome sequences but also “for discourse-related functions that contextualize the interactional meaning of their utterances” (Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain, 2005, p. 234). While not discounting the particular context of García’s and other scholars’ work in combating English-dominant ideologies, we argue that strategic home language use in the WL classroom, even in a context where the students’ L1 is a dominant language, could achieve the same goal of allowing students to “make sense of their worlds.” This approach based in symbolic competence and translanguage pedagogies closely parallels Warner and Dupuy’s (2018) outline of trends in literacy education, in which learners “attempt to understand new information ... by first trying to fit it into what they already know about the world,” and in which languages are seen not as codes but as “dynamic resources for meaning making” (pp. 118–119).

The theoretical frameworks outlined in this section share a philosophy of approaching learners and languages from a holistic perspective and taking advantage of learner resources to ensure meaningful, critical communication and reflection. They emphasize the importance of considering the complexities of learner identities and recognizing the many power issues and inequalities inherent in today's educational systems and societies. Through a meaning-making approach to WL education, WL teachers can educate students to become critical thinkers in today's world by challenging them to draw from their previous knowledge, giving learners "the agency towards cultural transformation" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 166). Apart from the obvious advantage that students will feel less infantilized, this approach also helps them understand that all languages can open the world to them in previously unexplored ways and demonstrates that language education can prepare them for the "real world" now rather than asking them to apply what they learn at a later point in time. Figure 8.3 visually represents how these frameworks interact to enact a languages-for-all approach.

In the following section, we offer examples of how this approach allows us to engage in more complex linguistic and cultural issues in the WL class and what this approach might look like in practice for WL educators, as well as how language program directors might give their instructors the tools to more fully pursue this approach.

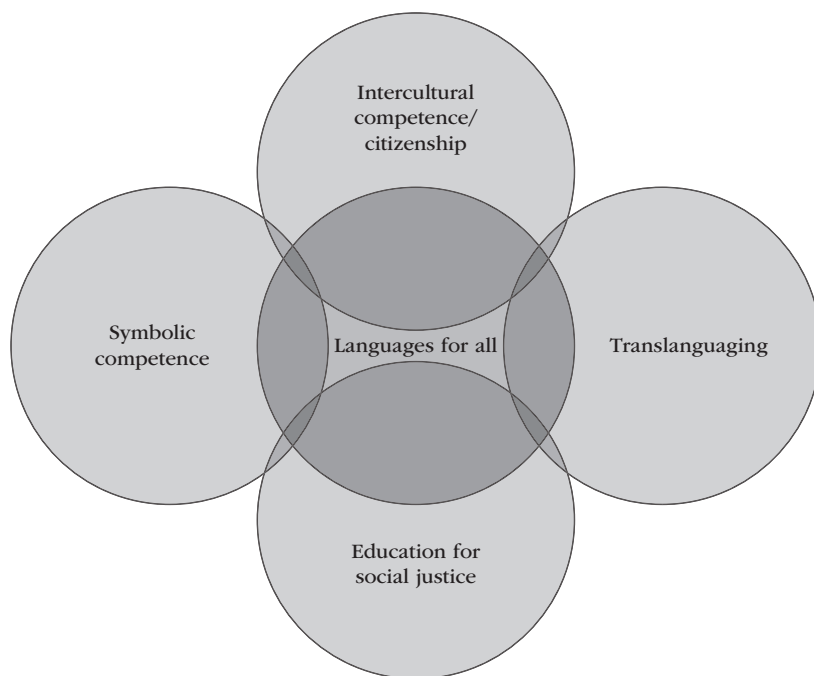


Figure 8.3 Interaction of theoretical frameworks

Strategies for Implementing a Languages-for-All Approach

As outlined previously, recent work on intercultural competence and social justice education has called for WL teachers to take a more profound role in exploring global injustices through the lens of language education, even if these explorations might prove painful to both our students and ourselves. Although Ennser-Kananen (2016) suggests scaffolding in the TL to facilitate these discussions, judicious use of the L1 could not only aid in promoting more complex discussions of painful issues but is in itself an act of social justice by making these discussions accessible to all. An approach that nudges students to think about topics they discussed in the WL classroom outside of the classroom (by providing assignments and materials partly in the TL and partly in L1) piques students' curiosity and shows the richness of WL education by breaking down classroom walls. The students' findings can then be used as the basis for scaffolded TL activities in which the students develop vocabulary and communicative tools, which will in turn facilitate a more profound conversation about the topic in the TL. Similarly, students appreciate the opportunity to show how much more they know about a topic by using the L1 for a brief, agreed-upon portion of the class meeting time. Consequently, the focus of the remaining class time in the TL can be on negotiating meaning of issues of substance.

Wagner and Tracksdorf (2017) used this approach to give students an opportunity to reflect upon gender stereotypes during an online course in the summer of 2014, right after an Austrian singer and drag persona, Conchita Wurst, had won the Eurovision Song Contest. In one of the synchronous online meetings, students were asked to describe, in the TL, the appearance and clothes of ordinary people and celebrities they saw in pictures. Only one student was allowed to view the photo in each pair group. Students who saw the photo described it to their partner without using pronouns or other markers of gender and nationality. The partner then had to guess the gender and nationality of the person who had been described. The students were first shown pictures that showed presumably more traditional men and women. Women often had long hair and wore dresses. Men had short hair and a beard. Then the students were asked to describe women with short hair, men with long hair, and so on. The objective was not only to practice newly acquired vocabulary such as colors, clothes, body parts, and adjectives but also to discover and reflect on their stereotypes. Some of the photos showed (minor) celebrities, such as Heidi Klum, a supermodel and dual citizen of Germany and the United States, and Konny Reinmann, who was born in Hamburg, Germany, and moved to the United States in 2004, where he was part of a reality TV series. Because the students described the people without using personal pronouns or giving away the nationality of the personalities, their own conceptions and preconceptions were revealed to them. For example, students had to question the

appropriateness of certain characteristics (e.g., long or short hair) as gender identifiers and others as identifiers of nationality (e.g., a Texan hat).

The last photo the students were asked to describe to their partners was that of Conchita Wurst, who wore a beautiful dress, high heels, long hair, and a beard. At the end of the unit, the students discussed what Conchita Wurst could stand for, defined what stereotypes meant, and revisited their description of a typical man or woman in a German-speaking country. As illustrated in the following example, students were given the opportunity to reflect on their own values and views in a journal writing activity, in which they used both languages:

Guten Tag! ... The winner of the Eurovision Song Contest of 2014 that held place in Copenhagen, Denmark was "Conchita Wurst." Born as a "he" but now as a "Sie" geboren aus Gmunden, Österreich. Sie ist 25 Jahre alt (She [*sic*] born from [*sic*] Gmunden, Austria. She is 25 years old). She sang the song "Rise like a Phoenix" in the finals of this competition making her the only winner among the many European competitors from different countries. My reaction to this is that people should not judge by the appearances, as Conchita Wurst, I believe each person, each single one of us has a "virtue" that we must take into account and show it to the world if it's necessary. Like Frau Wurst [Ms. Wurst], I want to be a person who can be recognized by the society not only because of What I have/possess but because of the person I am. (Wagner & Tracksdorf, 2017, p. 153)

In this example, students not only displayed beginning critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997) but also used their L1 to (a) gain insight into a topic by conducting online research about a topic, (b) think more deeply about a topic, (c) use short periods of time in class to ask more complex questions and express complex concepts, and (d) write about a topic of interest related to German outside of synchronous class meeting times in journal entries in which they could use both languages. We argue that the strategic, limited use of the students' L1 contributed greatly to this achievement. If done so thoughtfully, students can become more interested in the subject matter at hand, use their own knowledge and skills in any language they have, and become invested emotionally. This approach can thereby reach students holistically, engaging them on multiple levels even at the very beginning of emergent bilingualism.

Meredith, Geyer, and Wagner (2018) showed that students could apply their critical cultural awareness after seven meetings in a beginning German course taught entirely online. By analyzing gender roles and stereotypes in the fairytale *Cinderella*, students drew conclusions about gender injustice after being exposed to the topic on only three occasions: via one homework assignment before the online session, one 75-minute online session, and a reflection after the online session. The students used their novice language skills in the TL during the

session but were allowed to read the fairytale in their L1 and use their L1 for parts of their reflections.

Here, we offer a glimpse into the online classroom interactions and homework of this short unit; Meredith, Geyer, and Wagner (2018) provided more detailed descriptions of these activities. In the pre-session homework, students were allowed to read a version of *Cinderella* in German provided to them by the instructors. They could also look up English versions to familiarize themselves with the different versions of the fairytale in the English-speaking literature and media. In a class warm-up session, the instructor showed different photos that depicted gender markers that could be considered more traditional and binary or characteristics that could point toward a specific nationality, as well as other photos where markers of gender or origin were not as obvious. During this activity, the instructor asked questions through which students could consider traditional gender norms, body images, appearances, and so on. The students also hypothesized about possible differences in gender expectations/roles in German-speaking countries versus the United States (or other places with which the students were familiar). In the next activity, using the same photos, students discussed in groups qualities and social values that are associated with a specific gender. The next step consisted of an analysis of the qualities and roles men and women had in *Cinderella* and what social values related to gender could have been present at the time *Cinderella* represents. The next step consisted of a comparison of the students' perceptions of ideals of gender roles and their view of the status quo as well as a comparison with historical gender roles. The goal here was to start applying critical cultural awareness to a topic they had investigated and about which they gained information so that they could discover and, it is hoped, begin to deconstruct stereotypes they might have held. The above-mentioned activities took place in an online synchronous meeting. In a post-session assignment, students reflected in their journals on injustices linked to their own gender, on whether gender equality is equally important for men and women, and similar questions. Students were asked to investigate these questions from perspectives that they found interesting (history, cultural comparisons, etc.). They were allowed to use the language of their choice in this activity.

This critical approach to culture and language differs greatly from the approaches used in more traditional WL classroom contexts, as we have already described. As seen in the examples earlier, if the L1 is used to engage students in what they learn in the TL, they will use the TL more in and outside the classroom because they become invested in learning more about the topic. To become advocates for all language learners, WL teachers must reflect not only on the *amount* of TL they are using but also on *how* they are using the TL meaningfully and in a way that is relevant for their students. We understand and know from our own teaching experience that this is not an easy task; however, efforts in this area will lead to a richer experience in the WL classroom for all students and to better-prepared world citizens.

From the perspective of language program direction, program directors would find it to their and their instructors' advantage to reflect on the power disparities inherent in current communicative approaches, especially for populations of learners who have historically had limited access to WL instruction, such as heritage language learners, multilinguals, and individuals with interrupted or limited schooling. These learners are rarely served by traditional language learning approaches, which assume a monolingual group of learners being exposed to an "unknown 'other' language and culture" (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016, p. 119). These reflections could include careful reading and discussion of Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) as well as the articles outlined above in our section on social justice, including Ennsner-Kananen's (2016) discussion of pedagogy of pain and Wesely, Glynn, & Wassell's (2016) response. In line with earlier calls to educate preservice teachers of WLs and of emergent bilinguals together (Levine, Howard, & Moss, 2014; Osborn, 2006; Tedick & Walker, 1994), the authors of this chapter and other colleagues at the University of Connecticut have been equipping WL teachers with literature about emergent bilingualism, including translanguaging pedagogies and how WL teachers can be advocates for all language learners.

WL instructors must also be able to reflect upon their own histories and symbolic/intercultural knowledge as well as how they can negotiate this knowledge with the multiple languages and identities that their students bring to the classroom. Michele Back has already begun this work in her methods courses with pre-service WL teachers; candidates engage in a series of activities focused on their home cultures, including visually representing different aspects of their identity through the "Circles of My Multicultural Self" activity in Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell's (2014) textbook (p. 14) and creating a home culture poem and project (see Appendix 8.A). These projects allow for important "cultural excavation" (Ladson-Billings, 2017), empowering candidates to articulate the complexities of their own cultures, including possible privileges or barriers, and enabling them to further appreciate and advocate for the cultures of their learners.

Allowing WL instructors the time and space for these reflections, perhaps through a series of professional development sessions or integration with existing methods courses, enables them to more clearly enact their roles as facilitators of comparisons between the TL and culture's products, practices, and perspectives and those of their learners. In addition, language program directors could enhance how their instructors teach culture in context by incorporating the translanguaging strategies discussed previously, including ways to use the L1 and TL judiciously when using authentic texts such as literature, film clips, and excerpts from social media. For example, Glisan and Donato (2017) have outlined the importance of giving students the opportunity to interpret content presented

in authentic TL texts in their L1, as it is only through L1 use that a WL instructor can fully ascertain what students have comprehended about a particular text. For this reason, the authors suggest including comprehension questions in the students' L1 after reading or viewing authentic texts.

We understand that these suggestions can be tricky if graduate students or preservice teachers misunderstand this approach as *carte blanche* to use English in WL classrooms. However, we believe that raising awareness on this important issue can have a profound impact on the students' understanding of the language as well as on their attitudes toward their language use and the usefulness of language education. By engaging in a closer examination of how to teach students to use their L1 and other resources strategically, WL instructors would gain a greater understanding of how to more fully negotiate the value of these resources, resulting in a more substantive acquisition of TLs and cultures for their learners.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that, as WL educators, we are uniquely positioned to advocate for all language learners and to address topics that are of immediate relevance to our students and our society. Yet in order to do so, we must take a critical look at what meaningful discourse could look like in a WL setting. We have incorporated findings from empirical research spanning a variety of areas within WL education and applied linguistics to demonstrate the value of meaningful discourse in and outside the WL classroom and the value of an approach focused less on language as code and more on languages for all purposes and all people. As a tool for cultural comparisons and complicated conversations, meaningful TL and judicious L1 use allow WL teachers to reach their learners in a realistic, inclusive, and socially just manner. We hope that this chapter will encourage WL instructors and program directors to undertake a careful reflection of their own language use and how they might harness all the resources they have available to encourage meaningful communication. We also hope that this consideration can lead to a better understanding of the role of cultures and languages in the students' as well as the instructors' lives. A languages-for-all approach encourages the inclusion of complex topics so that students can contemplate issues of importance to them, situating them as problem solvers regardless of the language they employ.

We encourage future studies that critically examine the nature and functions of language used in the classroom. We hope researchers continue their close examination of WL classroom discourse to shed light on the types of languaging taking place as well as its role in developing not only communicative competence but also intercultural mediators and symbolically aware citizens. Making WL education meaningful at the individual, district, and global levels requires a careful analysis of what teachers, program directors, and policymakers are doing and

what works and what does not in the classroom to foster high-quality, holistic, and equitable language learning. Finally, we look forward to future research on how WL teachers can act as advocates for all learners, not just those in their own classrooms, through a shift toward languages for all.

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Appendix 8.A. Home Culture Poem and Project Lesson Description

(Adapted from Professor Sharon Brennan, University of Kentucky)

This project will prepare you to teach about your home culture and yourself as part of that culture when you are in international or cross-cultural contexts. You will examine your own “cultural embeddedness”: what/who are the ideas, events, places, and people that shape who you are? We are all part of the larger national culture of our home countries, but we also reflect regional, ethnic, or individual “takes” on that culture. For this assignment, you will explain the place you are from—city/town, state, or region—in a way that a stranger can understand it.

- The Home Culture Project consists of two parts: (1) a poem based on the model provided by George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From” and (2) a digital presentation that introduces your hometown or state.

Poem

Visit the website <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html> and read “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon, a Kentucky poet, playwright, and author (and the former Poet Laureate of Kentucky). In addition to reading Lyon’s poem, I encourage you to explore the other poems on the site that her work has inspired, as well as Lyon’s own suggestions for ways to write your own poem. Use Lyon’s poem as a model to write your own “Where I’m From” poem about your home. You will share your poem and incorporate it into your reflections on home culture and intercultural encounters. You may write your poem in English, your target language, or a combination of these languages if you so choose.

Presentation

You will create a digital presentation using an appropriate visual format (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, digital story) that will introduce a stranger to your home place (hometown, region, or state). What would you want them to know about what makes this place unique, interesting, and special to you? How is this place representative of the larger culture of your nation? How is it distinctive? For your presentation, you might consider including information on the following topics (note that not all are required—these are just to spark inspiration!):

- People & Population: Who lives there (including you)? Who are important current and historical figures?
- Historical Events: How did these events shape the place and its culture?
- Geography: How is the land and climate tied to the culture of the place?
- Economy: What kinds of work do people do here? What kinds of industry have shaped the place?
- Sports, Recreation, and Culture: What kinds of things do people like to do here?
- Media: Are there books (including children’s books), movies, TV shows, and so on about your place?

Your presentation should include visual elements (photos, graphs, etc.), in addition to spoken and written text. You may also include video/audio if you wish, but this is not required. Your presentation should take no more than 10 minutes.