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Integrating the Arts: Creative Thinking about FL Curricula and Language Program Direction

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Chapter 3

From Creative Adaptation to Critical Framing: Dramatic Transformations across the Foreign Language Curriculum

Lisa Parkes, Harvard University

Studies on graduate student beliefs about language and literature instruction reveal that much can be done to better articulate our approaches to teaching "texts," literary or other, at the lower and upper levels of the foreign language curriculum. The majority of graduate students generally continue to perceive their cultural-literary studies and instruction as distinct from language pedagogy and training, which in turn affects teaching assistants' self-perception as effective professors (see Mills, 2011). Rather than treating a text merely for comprehension and to support thematic and grammatical material in the lower-level language courses, for example, it is important to convey that all text types offer opportunities for interpretation, analysis, and literacy (Mills, 2011, p. 68). This chapter considers documented pedagogical initiatives, as well as research on genre-based approaches to curricular design, to demonstrate how a single dramatic text can be used and reused, adopted, and adapted at different levels of the curriculum, through intertextuality, linguistic creativity, and performance. It explores the cognitive and affective benefits, as well as the practical considerations, of integrating dramatic arts across the foreign language curriculum, and suggests how graduate student assistants can better connect the task of foreign language instruction to their background in literary and cultural studies.

As a language program director with a background in literary and cultural studies, foreign language pedagogy, and music, my own creative thinking about the curriculum has taken its cue from moments in literary history, and specifically, where linguistic and theatrical performances intersect. It is at this intersection that graduate students of literary studies can be better guided in making connections between the teaching of language and literature. The curricular perspective I present in what follows offers one step towards overcoming this challenge in TA development. And in the spirit of integrating the arts and of bridging the by-now-proverbial language-literature divide, I indulge here in such literary moments to ground my reflections on the role of aesthetics, creativity, and imagination in enriching the foreign language curriculum. The chapter is organized

in three main parts, each foregrounded with a brief literary excursion. The first establishes a theoretical framework for considering the relation of language and imagination to aesthetics and social identity. I then situate these considerations within the "reframing" of our curriculum through the arts, with reference to our specific institutional context and to graduate student preparation. Finally, I address the opening questions above on a practical level. In so doing, I argue that a genre-based approach to integrating the arts, in particular in the practice of cross-genre adaptation, enables us to connect creative language use to higher-level, self-reflexive learning in a liberal arts context.

Setting the Stage: Language and the Theater of Identity

The first of these literary moments, Tom Stoppard's play *Dogg's Hamlet* (1979), offers perhaps one of the most linguistically and theatrically innovative explorations of meaning in language and language acquisition. It is a two-part play,[1] the first part of which teaches its audience the language ("Dogg"), in which the play was written. The approach to language instruction within the play is primarily by way of substitution games, in which English language terms are used to denote something entirely different in "Dogg" language, so that "plank," "slab," "block," and "cube," for example, mean "ready," "okay," "next," and "thank you," respectively. It is, as Stoppard acknowledges in the Preface, a dramatization of one of the "language games" presented in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1958; and here, specifically, § 19). Preparations for a school production of *Hamlet* are under way, and the pupils, whose native language is "Dogg" (named after the school's headmaster), struggle through their Shakespearean lines as if written in a foreign language. When joined by a lorry driver, Easy, who enters to deliver the props necessary to construct the stage, it initially seems as though they are communicating in the same language as they unload the planks, slabs, blocks, and cubes. But the pupils' actions and intonation (and, for the reader, the glossed translation of "Dogg" language) betray something quite different from the lorry driver's understanding of these terms, so that he—and by extension, the audience—begins to grasp that they are engaged in double-talk:

EASY: Who are you then?
BAKER: (*Encouragingly*.) William Shakespeare.
EASY: (*To ABEL*.) Cretin is he? [*What time is it?*]
BAKER: (*Looking at his wrist watch*.) Trog-taxi. [*Three o'clock*.]

[1]The second part of this play is *Cahoot's Macbeth*, intended for joint performance and, as Stoppard notes in the Preface, whose significance is entirely dependent on the first. I acknowledge here Martin Puchner, whose lecture on "Wittgenstein's Heirs" at Harvard University in April 2013 reminded me of the significance of Stoppard's play for these theoretical considerations about second language acquisition.

EASY: I thought so. (*Looking at CHARLIE*.) Are you all a bit peculiar, then? Where's the guvnor?
[. . .]
EASY: Here, what's your game?
DOGG [Headmaster]: Cube. [*Thank you.*]
EASY: Eh?
DOGG: Cube. (*Then he calls out to ABEL*.) Cube! Abel!
(*A cube is thrown in to BAKER, passed to CHARLIE, passed to EASY who puts it in place. DOGG to CHARLIE and BAKER.*)

Slab?
EASY: Cube.
DOGG: Slab. [*Okay?*]
CHARLIE/BAKER: Cube, git! [*Thank you, sir.*]
EASY: (*With venom*.) Git!

(*DOGG is pleased and smiles. EASY is completely at a loss. DOGG leaves satisfied*.) (Stoppard, 1980, pp. 20, 26)

Besides providing a humorous introduction for instructors to some of the obstacles faced by foreign language learners, this play demonstrates how, gradually, and by way of observation and repeated action with concrete objects, the lorry driver and the audience are introduced to the perplexing language of "Dogg" as they construct the stage. In other words, through drama—words in action, language games, and language play within the aesthetic realm—the linguistic and theatrical building blocks are assembled for the ensuing production of a condensed adaptation of a "foreign" language play, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Within the aesthetic framework of the play-within-a-play, and to the extent that our lorry driver successfully acquires the coded "Dogg" language, Stoppard's linguistic drama is instructive on a number of levels, many of which establish the backdrop to my own approach to the foreign language curriculum. First, the "Sprachspiele" of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations,* the second primary source for Stoppard's adaptation of *Hamlet*, raise the all-important question about making meaning in language. When the two codes collide, often to farcical effect, Stoppard is pursuing Wittgenstein's notion that there

> *are* countless *kinds [. . .] of use of what we call "symbols," "words," "sentences." And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (Wittgenstein, 1958, p.11)*

Wittgenstein's understanding of language as a polysemic process, dependent on and negotiated through interaction in a given context or social situation, betrays a sociolinguistic and ecological impulse that is more at home in the current foreign language pedagogical landscape than that of his contemporaries, when language

existed in an one-to-one relation with reality, and instruction consisted largely of memorization, imitation, and translation of decontextualized, fixed grammatical paradigms. Hence Wittgenstein's use of the German term "Sprach*spiel*," itself a double-coded term: on the one hand, "Sprachspiel" denotes the largely rule-governed activity that its English translation "game" implies; on the other, it suggests the possibility and potential for other meanings indicated by "play," also denoted by the German "Spiel." Here, he continues, the term "'language-*game*' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (p. 11; emphasis in the original). "To *imagine* a language," he states, "means to *imagine* a form of life" (p. 8; emphasis mine).

It is these socially interactive, imaginative, indeed playful aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language as an imagined "form of life" that are of particular relevance here, and that assume an almost didactic dimension in Stoppard's play. The lorry driver, and by extension the audience, acquires the new linguistic input by participating in a language game that lends familiar words a new form of life. The process is cyclical and begins on an aesthetic level, through oral input enhanced by intonation, gesture, and action; it continues through social interaction and negotiation; and, finally, after a period of trial and error, towards eventual creative output. Of course, this is not truly a "foreign" language; rather, it is a re-encoded language that is wholly derivative of English vocabulary and structure. Nevertheless, the lorry driver is engaged in the kind of playful imaginative substitutions that are part of the social world of make-believe, which, according to Vygotsky, fosters the desire to learn and read the written word (Granelli, 2007, p. 96). Once the lorry driver finally manages to arrange the blocks facing the audience to spell the words "DOGGS HAM/LET," and becomes fully accepted into the new speech community, the stage is linguistically and physically set for the performance to begin (Stoppard, 1980, p. 31). In the process, the audience is invited to join the lorry driver in the linguistic experiment, to indulge in word play, to conceive of other linguistic possibilities, and to connect previously unrelated entities to create new meaning—to *imagine*, in other words, a *new language as a new form of life*.

This new, imagined form of life is one in which social and linguistic agency is mutually dependent, as is apparent in the socializing process of the lorry driver's language acquisition. Moreover, the successful acquisition of productive language skills is demonstrated when the lorry driver reappears in the ensuing companion piece, *Cahoot's Macbeth*, this time in order to instruct the new acting troupe in his newly acquired "Dogg" language as a code language that enables them to outwit officials and thereby circumvent censorship.[2] The lorry driver, then, enacts social agency through linguistic competence, which suggests that his willingness

[2]A fuller account of the background to both pieces is provided in Whitaker's (1983) full study of Stoppard.

to play with language affords him a more active social role. In other words, his subversion of linguistic convention wields symbolic power by acting upon reality, in the performative sense described by Judith Butler and Alexei Yurchak (Kramsch, 2009, pp. 8–9). Or, in the dialogic, Bakhtinian sense, his agency is a process of "assimilation—more or less creative—of others' words," the ability to appropriate, "rework, and re-accentuate" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89) the "words of others" and "adapting it to [one's] own semantic and expressive intention" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 115).

Interestingly, the reverse logic of social *isolation* through linguistic reassignment is explored by Swiss author Peter Bichsel in *A Table is a Table (Ein Tisch ist ein Tisch),* a text familiar to many a German language instructor. An old man, tired of his routine existence, decides one day to reimagine his life in a new language that, rather like Stoppard's "Dogg," simply reassigns existing nouns and verbs to other signifieds—a process that initially amuses him greatly, but with the eventual consequence that he, no longer comprehensible to others, estranges himself completely from society. Whichever direction our protagonists take, it is clear in both cases that language is intimately related to the notion of social identity and a sense of self, and that creatively reimagining conventional language effects a new subject position.

Language, Identity, and the Freedom of Masks

The construction of subjective realities and alternative worlds through language—the second aspect of Stoppard's play that relates to my curricular considerations—is an issue that Peter Bichsel revisits elsewhere. Commenting on his personal experiences learning French and English, Bichsel considers language acquisition an opportunity to enter a new world and play a different role, to engage in a new "Spielform"—a form of play—and to "become someone else."

He explains that "[in] this (foreign) language, I do not need to necessarily be a particular person, but rather I can play someone. (. . .) The foreign language—and this is its true value—frees me, or at least gives me . . . the illusion of freedom: a bit of emancipation" (cited in Huber, 2003, pp. 328–329; translation mine).[3] Bichsel's remarks about language learning recall, in turn, moments in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*), in which the protagonist, Hans Castorp, achieves a social breakthrough that is as much linguistic as it is embodied and theatrical. During the "Walpurgis Night" carnival celebrations, Hans Castorp exploits what he calls "Maskenfreiheit" ("freedom of masks"): carnival hats, costumes, and the French language enable Castorp to babble for "pages" a

[3]"Ich muss in dieser Sprache nicht vor allem jemand sein, sondern ich darf etwas spielen. [. . .] Die Fremdsprache—und das ist ihr Wert an und für sich—befreit mich oder gibt mir zum mindesten, und das ist schon viel, die Illusion von Befreiung: ein Stück Emanzipation."

declaration of love for Madame Chauchat. Speaking French at the carnival, Castorp is able to overcome the conventions of his own existence by way of a dramatic and linguistic transgression. He shows us how to slip into a foreign mask, to revel in speaking another language, and to speak, as he puts it, "sans responsabilité,"[4] and in doing so, rehearses the thoroughly Nietzschean principle of life as performance and theater.[5]

It is at this intersection of the aesthetic, embodied, and subjective orientations in foreign language pedagogy that my own curricular perspective derives its impulse. In general, and in my German theater courses in particular, I encourage instructors and students similarly to exploit their learning environment as theater in order to give them at least an illusion of liberation and likewise speak, as it were, "without responsibility." That is, by creating space to play with language, to develop their potential for literally playing with other dramatic roles, and by exploring the transformative potential of imaginative and creative linguistic performance, students can become language-game players, explore new "forms of life," and enter a place of alternative experience. As Claire Kramsch has recently argued in *The Multilingual Subject* (2009), there is much more to language than direct reference or denotation and, by the same token, much more to foreign language learning beyond acquiring a linguistic code for communicative exchanges. Rather, as a symbolic power that constructs subjective realities "such as perceptions, emotions, attitudes, and values" (p. 7), language is also an embodied experience that shapes our sense of self, and language learning "the construction of imagined identities" (p. 17). In the case of the multilingual subjects whose language learning journals Kramsch analyzes, subjective positions are maintained discursively, in interaction with each other and through different languages, which, in turn, index varying emotions, memories, and experiences. Learning a foreign language implies a kind of transformation—indeed, often an emotional and even physical upheaval. And for this reason, Kramsch continues, it is as equally important to enhance the predominantly instrumental approach to communicative language teaching through a deeper engagement, indeed indulgence, in the aesthetic and affective dimensions of language, in all its senses.

Despite the evidence of immense pleasure that can be derived from the appeal of aesthetic forms—by which I mean its sounds, tones, rhythms, and rhymes as well as the poetics of alliteration, repetition, pun, metaphor, and other creative language play—surprisingly little attention is paid to its cognitive as well as affective benefits in language instruction, where the imperative to perform informational exchanges has dominated. Only relatively recently have language

[4]"Pourtant, avec toi je préfère cette langue à la mienne, car pour moi, parler français, c'est parler sans parler, en quelque manière,—sans responsabilité" (Mann, 1991, p. 462).

[5]Mann, whose *oeuvre* is very much indebted to Friedrich Nietzsche, takes a leaf out of Nietzsche's book (in particular, *Morgenröte*) in his own literary and dramatic self-conception, and in his conception of life as "Vorstellung," which can mean presentation, performance, and imagination.

professionals explored its significant benefits. Drawing on Jakobson's contribution to style and the poetic function of language (1960), Blyth (2003) and, more extensively, Cook (2000), both provide refreshingly candid and persuasive arguments against predominantly functional and instrumentalist approaches to communicative language teaching. Both argue for the enrichment of language instruction and the enhancement of language acquisition precisely through those elements of language often deemed "useless," by way of an appreciation of language play, language games, and a closer focus on poetic (rather than merely grammatical) form. And Wittgenstein (1958) would certainly agree: "Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfill its purpose, in order to have such-and-such an effect on human beings. It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs" (§ 496). "Sprachspiel," understood as language *play*, encourages the speaker (and here, the language learner) to embrace such ambiguity and, furthermore, to imagine new forms of life for existing forms, as exemplified by Stoppard's lorry driver. In a similar vein, Kramsch's work on the "multilingual subject" promotes the aesthetics and poetics of language, and in particular the affective, subjective, embodied dimension of language learning. One way to achieve this goal, Kramsch concludes, is by engaging learners self-reflectively and imaginatively in the creative process itself—in and through the arts, in poetry, theater, and music.

I now turn in what follows to the more practical curricular considerations of integrating drama in my own departmental context within a liberal arts education. In particular, I argue for the transformative potential of the arts: in the development of reflexive, imaginative, creative agents of "the words of others," learners gain a "sense of [the] self as one who can go beyond the given meaning in any one discourse and forge something new" (Davies, 2000, p. 67, cited in Vitanova, 2005, p. 152).

(Re-)Framing the Foreign Language Curriculum through the Arts

Taking as a third and final cue from Stoppard's play, itself a two-part adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the principle of "forging something new" out of preexisting material—in transforming, reworking, or re-presenting any symbolic system—requires a reframing of one's understanding of how meaning is created, a framework that grounds ways of understanding in a critical awareness of its historical, cultural, and social construction. Such a framework removes language from a fixed representation of reality and repositions it in relation to its function within specific contexts, as Wittgenstein understood it, and as a social semiotic that constructs reality, as Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Halliday variously describe it (Byrnes & Kord, 2002, p. 40). By the same token, it is useful to conceive of the arts not as a direct representation of reality, but rather, as Fleming (2012) puts it, as "re-presenting, as transformational, as a process of making meaning, not as a simple process of making a copy" (p. 25). The implications for language pedagogy,

Fleming continues, in reference to visual art, are that "art helps us 'cultivate insight, understanding and ways of seeing the world'" (Fleming, 2012, p. 25, citing Kieran). This conception of language, language instruction, and the arts is particularly fitting when considered in the specific context of my own departmental program, as well as within the broader institutional context.

Situated within the "Division of Arts and Humanities," foreign language departments at my institution share the interdisciplinary mission of introducing students to "all the ways in which people have sought to express, define and understand themselves and the world."[6] Often in collaboration with faculty in other departments, faculty in foreign language departments develop courses that explore "how to communicate what we think; how to interpret what we read, see and hear; how to understand and respond to difference."[7] In particular, our curriculum begins with an introduction to "important cultural techniques of reading, listening, and looking" in our General Education and "Frameworks" courses, in order to demonstrate "how exactly they work and how they developed historically."[8] Abroad, our summer study programs focus on theoretical and practical aspects of filmmaking (in Berlin); intermediate German language in the context of cultural, political, and architectural history (in Munich); and advanced German language and the arts (based primarily in Vienna). These courses are particularly relevant for two reasons. First, taught by members of my own department, often in collaboration with professors and practitioners in allied fields, many of these courses count towards our requirements for the major in German. Thus, students are encouraged to begin exploring questions relating to the historical and cultural particularity of "ways of understanding" in and through the arts from the beginning. Second, and equally significant, these courses are conceived in collaboration with graduate students, who, as part of their professional development and in the context of a seminar, contribute in large part to the content, structure, teaching, and assessment of these courses. Such initiatives, alongside a number of funding opportunities that encourage and support the integration of the arts in all courses, provide a strong framework for arts integration as well as a focus on graduate student teacher development across the curriculum.

Within a German studies program with faculty expertise across other artistic domains—from literature, poetry, drama, and music, to film studies and art history—our curricular goals support the broader institutional framework and intellectual mission of a liberal arts education. Further, our curricular strengths support a broader concept of literacy, one that embraces interpretation and critical engagement in ways of understanding, reading, listening, and looking alongside the basic literacy of reading and writing, and where the notion of "text" may include "other

[6]http://artsandhumanities.fas.harvard.edu/
[7]http://artsandhumanities.fas.harvard.edu/humanities-project
[8]http://artsandhumanities.fas.harvard.edu/files/humanities/files/artoflistening_syllabus.pdf

modes of symbolic expression, such as music and art," as does Bakhtin (1986, p. 103). If we include in our definition of "text" other modes of symbolic expression, and if we engage language learners in a multimodal dialogue through and in the arts, it is possible to follow the call of the MLA Report (2007) to "situate language study in cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of humanistic learning"; further, we can "challenge students' imaginations and to help them consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding," and foster "critical language awareness, interpretation and translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception" (p. 4). Such a multimodal approach to foreign language instruction supports, in turn, evidence in SLA research that cognitive processing can be made more memorable when introduced through multiple modalities (Swaffar & Arens, 2005, p. 15).

An inclusive notion of literacy with attention to multimodality provides a suitable framework for an integrated interdisciplinary foreign language program, in which the critical inquiry of language is also applied to literature, film, art, and music. And if "all artists in all art forms use multiple modes of literacy," as Heath points out (2004, p. 339), then so too would language learners do well to exploit the rich resources that the arts provide. A number of language professionals, including Kern (2000), Byrnes and Kord (2002), Swaffar and Arens (2005), and Kramsch (1993, 2009, and elsewhere) have already paved various ways to a broader conception of the foreign language curriculum by bringing textual studies and cultural studies together through multiple literacies. Of these, Swaffar and Arens's focus on genre, understood as a set of communication conventions "in their material and cultural contexts" provides a useful approach to the integrated curriculum (Swaffar & Arens, 2005, p. 147). And, by working within and across these communication conventions, we encourage students to consider the relationship between them and think critically about how they are constructed.

On a practical level, one particularly productive approach involves what Kern refers to as "transformed practice." Rather like Stoppard's adaptation of Shakespeare and Wittgenstein, which still preserves the identity of its sources, "transformed" practices, such as rendering one genre, style, or medium in another, reveal the relationship between forms and meaning. This facilitates a critical framing—the "conscious attention to relationships between linguistic forms, and social contexts and purposes" (Kern, 2000, p. 204), uncovering, in turn, the ritualized patterns of communications. Moreover, this process enables learners to forge something new, or, to recall Wittgenstein, to imagine familiar forms of words in a new form of life. The "Frameworks" courses provide graduate instructors and students with an introduction to such a critical framing. The foreign-language curriculum, through a series of "transformed practices" across genres and media, continues to focus equal attention on higher-level, critical thought from the beginning in a way that reinforces existing departmental strengths and goals to the end.

Transformed Practice across the Integrated Curriculum

If Hans Castorp's "freedom of masks" gives us a sense of how to adopt a new subject position, and how to at least create the illusion of liberation, then Franz Kafka's ape, Rotpeter, in his *Report for an Academy* (*Bericht für eine Akademie*) goes further by also demonstrating the art of subverting existing forms of ritualized speech. Rotpeter's account of how he transformed from an ape into a successful variety artist, the painful process of which is visibly inscribed on his body, is also a linguistic maneuver that serves to satirize the traditional speech delivered to the honorable members of the Austrian Academy. While acknowledging the dubious political connotations of power and domination that the painful language learning process entails for an "aping" immigrant, I am primarily interested in the notion of identity as a linguistic performance, as well as the art of adopting, adapting, and even playfully subverting existing text types as a successful outcome of the language learning process. This forms the thrust of my course for advanced learners on German *Kabarett*, for which the art of "conning" and the semblance of authenticity is key. In another, dialogic, Bakhtinian sense, the idea of agency is a process of "assimilation—more or less creative—of others' words," the ability to appropriate, "rework, and re-accentuate" the words of others, "adapting it to [one's] own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89).

As McNally (2000) and others have pointed out, the brevity and linguistically rich content of *Kabarett* pieces facilitate intense language work (and language play) and sensitize students to the specific relation of language to society. For example, students learn how established text types and discursive patterns are exploited in new contexts in order to be controversial, ambiguous, subversive, deviant, or incongruent. In doing so, students focus on discrete aspects of language, such as lexis, syntax, phonetic, and nonverbal features. *Kabarett* texts from the German-speaking tradition serve, in turn, as stimuli for students' own creative work, as they also learn how to "play" with language, to appropriate, modify, repurpose, and work intertextually. Thus, discrete language functions and the art of communication play the central role in this course.

Moreover, by encouraging students in addition to adapt, and even subvert existing text types through creative exploitation, word play, and intertextuality, students do much more than reproduce empty rituals or fulfill a communicative informational task; the process animates them to move from the mimetic to the performative mode of learning. They are asked to take pleasure in owning the discourse, and in resembling *Kabarett* artists who do imaginative things with words that are unimaginable in the traditional classroom setting. They are asked to question and subvert the power of existing rituals by giving them new meaning—and to wield, in the words of Kramsch, symbolic power as "multilingual social actors." Furthermore, because *Kabarett* often also depends on audience interaction, students learn how to communicate purposefully with

an intended public audience of German language learners. Such a *Kabarett* performance provides an opportunity to prime beginning and intermediate language students with some of the original texts for the performance. By planting some of the students in our audience in order to elicit certain responses, we enable language learners across the curriculum to begin to participate in the authentic, creative process.

This form of "transformed practice," then, involves rendering one text genre in another style or genre and serves to highlight the former's constraints and patterns of communication. In my various drama-based courses, students have had success in adapting scenes from dramas or short prose texts to other (often more modern) contexts. Such an adaptation requires increased attention to the linguistic details and the subtext of the original; and the spirit of the original must be preserved in any imaginative adaptation for a new audience. The linguistic and motivational benefits of forging something new out of preexisting material have since prompted me to explore the technique of adaptation more systematically across the curriculum. I focus here in greater detail on how the adopted techniques of imaginative adaptation and repurposing of language can be integrated sequentially across all levels of the language curriculum.

Lessons in Theater: Choreographing a Cross-Genre Multi-Level Reading

To illustrate this integrative approach in practical terms across the different levels of the curriculum, I focus here on teaching Brecht's one-act dramatic adaptation of a German fairytale, *Hans im Glück*, as the most recent such example from my advanced "German Drama and Theater" course, and with a view to preparing beginning language learners for the production itself. I show how one text can serve at multiple points in the curriculum as a means for interactive, indeed dialogic, transformed practice in a way that not only deepens linguistic knowledge, but also engages students in the relationships between linguistic forms, genre, social contexts, and purposes. Because the elementary language course is taught in multiple sections by graduate teaching assistants, the following also includes guidelines on TA collaboration and preparation for such a project.

Bertolt Brecht's *Hans im Glück* (*Lucky Hans*) is a dramatic satire adapted (in 1920) from the original folktale recorded by the Grimm brothers and published in the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1812. The original folktale, which beginning German students read before attending the performance, is particularly suited to first-year learners not only because of its brevity (five pages of prose narrative compared to an otherwise unmanageable 40-page drama), but also because of student familiarity with the genre. Thus, some of the cognitive and linguistic challenges are alleviated, permitting more top-down reading strategies that in turn facilitate closer attention to the relationship between language and genre. Furthermore,

as Maxim (2006) has pointed out, it is essential in an integrative curriculum for students in lower-level instruction to practice "comprehending and expressing meaning in the imagined worlds of texts they will encounter at the upper level" (p. 21). This recommendation is particularly pertinent at my institution (as it is at many others), where the fairytales are subjected to a more systematic, cross-cultural investigation in an upper-level course, for which graduate students often serve as teaching assistants, thereby reinforcing teaching assistant mentorship in their approach to teaching literary texts.

In approaching this text in our elementary classes, it is important to connect tasks to genre in order to establish the generic constraints and patterns of communication. The Grimm version of *Hans im Glück* is perhaps not as well known among undergraduate students internationally as other, more conventional folktales; furthermore, it does not wholly conform to the conventional fairytale logic, but rather inverts the normal rags-to-riches narrative. In contrast, Hans's "luck" or "happiness" seems to reside in his seemingly unwitting loss of all material possessions, convinced as he is that every challenge or loss provides further proof of his good fortune. Thus, as a challenge to the conventional "fairytale ending," it is beneficial to introduce this text alongside other, more conventional examples of the fairytale genre, so that students may recognize genre-based conventions. Following the principle of connecting genres to student tasks, this text serves as a basis for the students' own creative work, as they also learn how to play with language, to appropriate, repurpose, and work intertextually. Students are subsequently sensitized to the differences between the narrative and dramatic genres by way of guided interactive reading exercises in class (see Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991.) These exercises take place over the period of three instructional days towards the end of the first semester, as follows:

Advanced Organizer

In a preparatory meeting, teaching assistants are asked to consider suitable questions and tasks to guide students in reviewing the expected conventions of the fairytale genre—in other words, to activate content schemata. Beginning with the title, it is important to consider the significance of "Glück" (which can mean luck, happiness, or fortune). To begin this conversation, students were guided through Brecht's poem "Vergnügungen" ("Pleasures") in class, and they appropriated the poem by substituting its nouns, adjectives, and verbs with their own "pleasures." This helped students anticipate the central theme and some essential vocabulary before approaching a similar topic in the fairytale genre. Their organizers are collected and discussed in class before students begin reading the fairytale itself.

In-Class Reading

An interactive reading of the text begins in the same first class period. In preparation, teaching assistants are encouraged to identify suitable stages in the story

that best facilitate critical reflection, interpretation, and active engagement with the text, while facilitating a basic understanding of the major events (or macrosemantics): the characters, setting, time, and topic. Once the important vocabulary has been established, the episodic and predictable formula of the fairytale facilitates relatively efficient comprehension of the important vocabulary and the rhetorical logic and enables instructors, in turn, to organize class activities that focus on building global reading processes rather than word-for-word (bottom-up) decoding. Similarly, certain linguistic markers need to be identified, such as those that indicate each new episode in the narrative, a change in fortune, or a moral. For example, in the case of *Hans im Glück*, it is beneficial to identify the (reverse) logic of the story after the first episode (paragraph)—once Hans has already proved himself gullible prey for others, who promise him better fortune in exchange for his possessions—and predict the continuation of the story. Initial predictions of the text can be revisited after reading the second paragraph (or episode) in class in an open-ended question format, either to confirm or contradict initial predictions. Furthermore, students can begin to attend to linguistic markers, such as those that indicate the beginning of a new episode ("Hans war seelenfroh, als er . . ." / "Hans was very happy, as he . . .") and when the narrative is developed through the introduction of new characters in dialogue. Since each episode repeats the essential dialogue of exchange, in which Hans is tricked into relinquishing his possessions for the promise of better fortune, students are asked to anticipate the exchange with the same formula, reworking it in new scenarios as they predict the rest of the story. In the process, students begin to work towards the kind of transformed practice that will follow the reading. Students can then exchange their versions in class, before reading the remaining four pages at home.

Individual Reading

To assist their reading of the tale at home, the text is also made available digitally, with an accompanying audio recording, so as to enhance input for better retention of the key linguistic features. While reading, students are encouraged to focus on the rhetorical organization of the story by way of short reconstruction exercises such as those outlined by Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes (1991). In the case of *Hans im Glück*, this means identifying the downward spiral sequence of the narrative in short, single-sentence summaries for each paragraph (or episode) that use language from the text itself in order to relate the cause and effect of Hans's misfortune: "Hans tauscht sein . . . gegen ein . . . , weil . . ." / "Hans exchanges his . . . for a . . . , because. . . ." This somewhat more mechanical approach nevertheless enables beginning learners to overcome linguistic deficiencies while creatively reworking more sophisticated language from the text, and paying attention to discrete syntactic and morphological features (as is set up by the subordinating conjunction "weil . . . "). This is consistent with Kern's (2000) recommendation that a "systematic, patterned restructuring" of the narrative forces "the student

to use different grammatical forms to paraphrase the same referential material" (p. 208, citing Pike, 1988). And, as Kramsch (1985) notes in working with other fairytales, "[t]he very reconstruction of the text by the students makes apparent to them better than any analysis by a teacher some of its stylistic features" (p. 363). This can stimulate comparison and discussion in the ensuing class session. And, time permitting, a screening of *Hans im Glück* adapted for German television can provide additional input as well as a further example of adaptation.

Structural Parallels

Returning to the second lesson with the text fully read, students can summarize the story's logic with reference to other typical fairytale sequences and archetypes. In preparation for such a discussion, it is helpful to connect graduate teaching assistants to their literary-cultural studies by reminding them of Propp's work on *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), alongside some guiding pedagogical principles provided by Kramsch (1985).

Transformed Practice

Since students are working towards an understanding of an adapted dramatic version of the story, it makes sense to begin sensitizing them early to some anticipated shifts in genre and purpose. One follow-up exercise, to be carried out in class, is an improvised dramatic reading (or pantomime). This would not only help students visualize and verbalize the narrative in an interactive format, but also begin focusing attention on the spoken dialogue and inner monologues that constitute the "drama" of the text. It also helps connect the "acoustic, visual, and kinesthetic memory" in a semi-spontaneous format (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991, p. 130). As a final step, students work in small groups with the text's dialogues and transform these into new, more modern contexts, substituting Hans and Hans's gold, horse, pig, and goose for other characters, objects, and situations. A condensed adaptation of the fairytale as a role-playing activity anticipates the loss of narrative cues (identified in the previous exercise) in the dramatic form. Furthermore, it prepares students for the dramatic adaptation by Bertolt Brecht—itself a kind of "transformed practice"—to be performed by more advanced students in the final week of classes. Finally, students return to their initial discussion of the meaning of the concept of "Glück" and compare it to the Grimm version of the fairytale.

Performance Attendance

To set the linguistic and cognitive stage for student audiences to appreciate the dramatic adaptation, some basic background information on Bertolt Brecht, his audience, and the cultural-historical context is necessary. In addition, all language students are provided with a program, compiled by advanced students in the drama course, detailing background information and important vocabulary from the play. During the performance, students are asked to make a mental note of the

sequence of exchanges in the drama and report to class. In addition, they communicate their impressions about the performance itself. Much linguistic support is needed for students to discuss in class, since parts of the dialogue are not easily comprehensible, and students rely largely on their knowledge of the Grimm version. Class time is devoted to summarizing the basic plot in simple sentences. Here, Brecht preserves the original focus on Hans's loss of possessions in a clear episodic, one-act structure, but he introduces Hans to characters from across the social spectrum—from his love interest, Hanna, to loutish business men, crooks, beggars, and prostitutes. Thus, Hans's first loss is not his earned gold, but rather, his love, Hanna, in exchange for her lover's property. This sets in motion a chain of exchanges, until Hans is stripped of his shirt and, finally, life itself.

Critical Framing and Higher-Level Cognitive Synthesis

The ensuing—and final—class discussion enables everyone to relate the chronology of events. These events can be summarized together in précis form that uses "different grammatical forms to paraphrase the same referential material," to refer again to Kern (2000, p. 208). In the process, any vocabulary or unclear moments or misunderstandings can be clarified before students rework the Brecht version. By engaging in the dramatic adaptation, and by recasting the dramatic dialogue in simplified third-person narrative form, students begin to pay attention to the relations among linguistic forms, genre, and the purpose of the fairytale (i.e., critical framing). As a final written exercise, students transform Brecht's dramatic version of the fairytale into a condensed narrative (of ca. 200 words), reworking as much formulaic language from the Grimm original as possible. In doing so, they need to pay attention to appropriate forms of narration (past-tense forms), the generic constraints (and here, its repetitive episodic structure), as well as register and tone in dialogue. Instructors need to assist students, however, in identifying suitable parts of the text for such repurposing, avoiding occasional archaic language. In so doing, even beginning students start paying attention to sentence structure, patterns of communication (e.g., opening and closing dialogues), and a much richer variation in syntax and vocabulary. Finally, the instructor needs to situate each text within its respective cultural-historical background, in order to highlight the oppressive bourgeois values of Grimm's Restoration Germany and Brecht's anti-bourgeois theater of the early 20th century.

By engaging beginning students self-reflectively and imaginatively in the creative process itself through adapting and reworking the words of others, we enable students to indulge in creative language play, within the constraints of the fairytale narrative genre, and without unrealistic cognitive or linguistic demands. By making texts their own through adaptation, they begin to analyze and interpret the patterns of communication and understand how texts and meaning are constructed. Students not only begin to work—and play—with more sophisticated

language in lengthier narrative form, but they also become attuned to the different ways in which other cultures tell stories about themselves, in narrative and dramatic genres—forms that they will revisit in all levels of the curriculum at increasing levels of sophistication.

To advance now to the upper level of the curriculum, the advanced "German Drama and Theater" course treats any dramatic text selected for production alongside a broader range of dramatic, theoretical, and historical texts. Texts are selected to establish a more complex theater-historical background for higher cognitive demands of the analytical essay, the review, as well as the necessary background for the dramatic production itself. At the same time, the advanced course continues to immerse students in interactive readings by way of drama workshops (such as those described elsewhere; see Parkes [2012]), and self-reflective biweekly journals (in which students respond informally to the readings as well as the theater workshops). Brecht's *Hans im Glück*, abandoned by Brecht in 1920 and published posthumously in 1997, is itself a fragment and thus fertile groundwork for further creative reworking, both with reference to his subsequent theoretical work and to other related texts. For example, Brecht's adaptation is put into dialogue with another adaptation by Erika Mann (1934), in which Hans's concept of "fortune" is recast ironically within the context of National Socialism.

Erika Mann's short (two-page) "Kabarett" adaptation, a biting resistance piece against National Socialism written for her ensemble, aptly named "Pfeffermühle" ("pepper mill"; Keiser-Hayne, 1990, p. 103), provides a rich source for creative adaptation for advanced language students. The approach to the text (within one class meeting) is essentially dialogical: information about the author, year, or context is withheld until students' attention is drawn to the verbal irony ("Then to complete my fortune / my passport is confiscated / [. . .] What a lucky Hans I am!") and other rhetorical devices that complicate the surface reading of the text. Such rhetorical devices are subsequently related to the context in order to understand the critical content and to highlight the importance of historical-cultural context in the construction of meaning. To complete the exercise, students are asked to (1) adopt the same rhetorical devices, some of the phrases, and the refrain in order; then to (2) rework the text into a new context, preferably an equally controversial issue from their own cultural context. One simple example involves the vocabulary and morphological manipulation necessitated by in each refrain "*Das* leidige *Geld/Die leidige Heimat/Die leidigen Rechte ist/sind* nun endlich dahin, / Was ich für ein Hans im Glück immer bin!" ("*The tiresome money/homeland/rights is/are* finally gone, / What a Lucky Hans I am!"; emphasis mine) in order to conform to the new context. In this way, students not only work with surface language by modifying vocabulary and manipulating forms, but also learn to work critically with language and reframe the content in a way that sheds light on the *Kabarett* poetry genre. Moreover, students are sensitized to rhetorical devices such as irony, which problematizes the notion of the referential in language, and

they begin to understand how meaning is constructed through language, how language assumes a different meaning in different (here, ideological) contexts, and how meaning is reconstructed through language in relation to other signs.

Working in particular with Brecht's *Hans im Glück*, the fragment chosen for the most recent performance, students were assigned the task of collaborating on an ending to this text. In doing so, they had to pay an equal amount of attention to language as well as to the play's content, its levels of register (including forms of address, vocabulary, and grammatical forms), linguistic idiosyncrasies of the different characters, the generic conventions of dramatic dialogue and monologue, and the logic of the drama itself.

Performance-related signs such as the voice, intonation, gestures, and stage(d) setting add another layer to the construction of meaning, and thus constitute an important part of the drama workshops. For the performance of satire in particular, intonation and delivery style demand close attention. As a result, students can get a sense of the illusion of freedom that Peter Bichsel enjoys when playing someone else, to perform a new kind of imagined, multilingual self (Kramsch, 2009) and, ultimately, to reflect critically on this process. Biweekly journal entries facilitate critical self-reflection in response to both the readings and to the theater workshops, to the physical and cognitive demands of "playing someone else," and to the process of character development in preparation for the performance. In this way, we encourage students not only to embody, but also to reflect on their encounter with the other in order to adopt a critical stance towards their own sense of self—a process that intensifies as the course progresses towards the final production.

Some Implications for Language Program Direction

The final production becomes a focal point for all the language levels at the end of the semester, an opportunity to foster interdepartmental collaboration, to bring everyone together from the German-speaking community on the university campus and beyond, and to raise the profile of German. The play also helps motivate beginning language learners to emulate the more advanced students, potentially to imagine another identity or "ideal self," and to aspire to further higher-level engagement in literary and dramatic texts. As the preceding instructional sequence aimed to indicate, the selection of texts, related assignments, and the instructional approach underscores a dialogic approach—one that in turn facilitates increasingly higher-level thinking at each stage of the curriculum. The repurposing of the same or similar material across the levels establishes a vertical program articulation, the kind defined by Lange (1982) as "the internal flow of a program from its beginning to its completion" (p. 115). Furthermore, a consistent engagement in theater and drama, as well as the relation of language to genre and literary history establishes an interdisciplinary articulation (p. 115; see also

Chapter 8 in this volume). Just as students benefit from this kind of consistent and coherent engagement in increasing levels of sophistication, so do the instructors, often graduate teaching assistants, who assess students' progress while collaborating with each other in and outside the classroom.

However, this kind of negotiation across the different levels of the curriculum also demands a considerable amount of careful choreography: in the coordination of syllabus and exam calendars, theater and support staff availability, the schedules of students and instructors themselves, as well as curricular coordination across the levels and instructor guidance. In terms of instruction, this initiative suggests not only a different kind of classroom choreography and increased space for language play, but also a reorientation of the instructors and learners themselves. For, while largely consonant with prevalent poststructuralist approaches to literary cultural studies, poststructuralist approaches to language instruction remain inconsistent with graduate and undergraduate student beliefs about (often formalist, instrumentalist approaches to) language learning. Institutional structures and graduate school demands are partly responsible for this dilemma: the poststructuralist perspective of language learning seems all too unstructured, assessment too messy, and instruction too risky (and possibly too time-consuming) amid increasing emphasis on quantifiable assessment and accountability. However, a reorientation of these beliefs helps resituate foreign language learning within the intellectual framework of literary and cultural studies (Byrnes, 2002); further, it connects language learning to curricular content and enhances literacy and higher-level and creative thinking from an earlier stage in the curriculum. The cross-curricular choreography that I have described suggests one practical outcome of this kind of creative thinking—one that, by its very structure, insists on sustained creative adaptation, reworking, and reimagining.

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