

Towards a Culture-Inclusive Language Pedagogy in Multilingual Social Contexts

Lane IGOUDIN
Los Angeles City College

"I feel like I was in Mexico when I was there because I could see all these Latino names. I asked Diana, 'Why are all these Latino names?' She said, 'Oh, you know it's because it's Latin [art museum]!' [Juana laughs.] I didn't know. When you told us about the museum, I thought it was some American museum. I didn't know there were a lot of Mexican artists."
(Juana's Interview)

Abstract

The traditional monolingual and monocultural paradigm in second language (L2) teaching has been increasingly seen as ideologically disempowering, unreflective of the learner's sociocultural identity, economically limiting in a globalized world, and, one whose pedagogical success is questionable. Meanwhile, contemporary education research in the U.S. has called for instructional methodologies that support language learners as multilingual and multicultural citizens. This paper focuses on one such model used in an advanced college ESL course in California. Student interviews and the analysis of their writing output point to the following advantages of L1 culture-inclusive second language education: engaging L2 learners with their L1 cultures empowers them to re-evaluate their social roots, selves, and identities in an L2 society, arouses a sense of pride in their heritage, and teaches interculturality. From the pedagogical standpoint, topics related to students' cultural experience can engage language learners in the development of higher-level critical thinking skills and produce a richer L2 output.

Résumé

Le paradigme traditionnel monolingue et monoculturel dans l'enseignement de langue seconde (L2) est de plus en plus considéré comme dévalorisant l'apprenant idéologiquement, le limitant économiquement dans un monde globalisé et ne reflétant pas son identité socioculturelle. Son succès pédagogique est donc discutable. Par ailleurs, la recherche contemporaine en éducation aux États-Unis fait appel aux méthodologies pédagogiques qui considèrent les apprenants de langue comme étant multilingues et multiculturels. C'est une de ces méthodes qui est utilisée dans un cours d'anglais comme langue seconde dans un *community college* (un institut d'enseignement supérieur de deux ans) en Californie qui est l'objet de cette étude. Des entretiens avec des étudiants et une analyse de leurs essais écrits à la fin du projet montrent les avantages suivants d'une pédagogie de langue prenant en compte la culture de la L1: impliquer les apprenants de L2 par leurs cultures L1 leur permet de réévaluer leurs racines et leurs identités sociales dans une société L2, en suscitant en eux un sentiment de fierté de leur patrimoine, et en leur enseignant l'interculturalité. Du point de vue pédagogique, les thèmes liés aux

expériences culturelles des étudiants peuvent engager les apprenants de langue dans le développement de compétences de haut niveau de réflexion critique et produire des résultats plus riches dans la L2 que les programmes qui n'utilisent pas ces moyens.

The traditional monolingual and monocultural paradigm in teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) has recently come under attack. The English-only pedagogy which ignores the learner's first language (L1) has been increasingly seen as ideologically disempowering (Ryan, 1998; Kubota, 2003), unreflective of the learner's sociocultural identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004), economically limiting in a globalized world (Cummins, 2003; Banks, 2004), and, whose success, from a pedagogical standpoint, is questionable (Cummins, 2009; TESOL Quarterly, 2009a). Meanwhile, advances in multilingual education research have conceptualised the language teaching principles that seek to develop second language (L2) learners as multilinguals, and proposed innovative instructional methodologies to support their language learning. This study makes a case for extending this debate beyond the presence of L1 in L2 classrooms, and into the use of the students' cultural heritage, which their first language embodies, as a pedagogical tool in teaching second language.

Monolingual vs. multilingual education principles

Teaching of a second language in the contexts where it is dominant has traditionally been done through immersion in the target language and culture. The *monolingual teaching principle* which limits the language instruction to target language only has been the most persistent and often sole method of L2 instruction. This principle assumes that only the target language should be used for instruction, L1/L2 translation should be prohibited, and that L1 and L2 should be kept separate in education systems (Cummins, 2007). Though there is little evidence that the monolingual approach is more effective in language teaching, it continues to dominate TESOL to the present day, with a lip service paid to other teaching paradigms (Cummins, 2009; Taylor, 2009).

Advances in multicultural education have challenged monolingual pedagogy on both empirical and theoretical grounds. Summarising current research in bilingual education, Cummins (2009: 320), in particular, included the following two principles relevant to the current study into his rationale for the use of bilingual instructional strategies (i.e., instructional strategies that use rather than exclude students' home languages):

- Because English language learners' prior knowledge is encoded in their L1, activation and building on prior knowledge requires the linking of English concepts and knowledge with the learner's L1 cognitive schemata.
- Legitimizing students' L1 as a cognitive tool within the classroom challenges the subordinate status of many minority groups and affirms students' identities.

Cultural representation in second language teaching

What is the place of the students' native culture in a second language classroom? Available research and the author's own experience as an American community college instructor indicate that students' native cultures, much like their first languages, are often ignored, consciously or not, by language instructors. As Kramsch (1993: 12) points out, "[L2] instructors, who teach immigrants or visitors in their country, [...] have tended to transmit, with the language, a view of the world that reflects only the values and cultural assumptions of the native speaker's society." Traditionally, L2 culture is taught along with L2 (TESOL Quarterly, 2009b: 563), positioning learners as either culture-free or L2-culture-oriented, and correcting them when they fall back on their traditional ways. As one EFL instructor observed:

Constantly reprimanding a student for his/her native language sends the message that L1, and by extension, L1 culture, is not welcomed in the class. Languages have strong, inseparable, and complex ties to culture and insisting on monolingualism essentially means I am asking my students to check their identities and life experiences at the door (Jenkins, 2010: 1).

In this paper, *culture* is defined as "a shared and learned pattern of beliefs and perceptions that are mutually intelligible and widely accessible" within a group of people (Banks, 2004: 90). Furthermore, cultures are dynamic, complex, and changing; they also vary at the macro, micro, and contextual levels (*ibid*). A language instructor's behavior based, for an example, on a stereotyped assumption of students' 'Asian' cultural background may overlook a multitude of constituent elements of those students' cultures and lead to crosscultural misunderstanding and tension in the classroom.

Bicultural and multilingual instructional strategies are certainly nothing new in the primary education systems in the United States. Since the 1960s, American schools in both urban and suburban settings have had to adapt to the multiracial, multi-ethnic, and multilingual student bodies. In this process, *cultural pluralist* ideologies have emerged that value the diversity of cultural and ethnic identities of the students. The social context of language learning sets the background for the development of language, lifestyles, values, and experiences, and it includes the learner's first language (L1) community. To an immigrant, the L1 community usually provides a supportive environment, especially if the cultural group is in some way oppressed by more powerful groups. The pluralist instructor thus views cultural background and affiliation as assets in socialisation of the individual in the contemporary society.

The contemporary *multicultural ideology* of education attempts to combine cultural pluralism with the nation's common culture. This culture, which uses the majority language, is shared across all classes and ethnicities present in the nation. A multicultural approach assumes that in order to successfully function in today's society, all individuals should have equal access to its opportunities and rewards, while retaining their distinct ethnic and cultural traits (Banks, 2004: 117). However, it also demands of educational institutions to respect the learner's cultural background and use it in educational policies and practices. The goal of a multicultural curriculum should be "to help students learn how to function effectively within the common culture, their ethnic culture, and other ethnic cultures" (Banks, 2004: 118).

Compared to primary education, multicultural methodologies in higher education and language teaching programs in particular have been scarce. Still, some recent studies have explored the place of adult students' L1 cultures in L2 teaching. Menard-Warwick (2009), for instance, compared the co-construction of culture by language teachers and learners in college-level EFL and ESL classrooms. She found that even when teachers did not teach the L2 culture explicitly, the observed courses provided space for students to problematise cultural issues and differences. Those discourses, however, did not always lead to interculturality, *"an awareness and a respect of difference, as well as the socioaffective capacity to see oneself through the eyes of others"* (Kramsch, 2005: 553). Furthermore, the discussion of L1 cultures occurred even less in the ESL, as opposed to, EFL courses. Menard-Warwick concluded her study with three recommendations for cultural pedagogies for the L2 classrooms: problematizing cultural representations, encouraging dialogue, and promoting interculturality. The present study capitalises on these recommendations and explores new ways to engage students in examining their multicultural experience while supporting their language learning.

Art as part of the English learner's culture and identity

Of the many aspects and elements of culture, this study focuses on the use of visual arts in language teaching. One study of the use of art in the classroom (Craig and Paraiso, 2008) illustrated how due to art's deep connection to students' backgrounds, it can serve as an important asset in teaching. The researchers' examination of artwork created by English-learning Hispanic middle schoolers during unstructured art periods revealed themes connected to their Mexican and Mexican-American (Chicano) heritages such as Aztec heritage, muralist traditions, Chola/o imagery, and the Low-Rider subculture. The use of art in the classroom *"lowered the affective filter and contributed to a greater degree of comfort and proficiency with the use of oral English skills"* (Craig and Paraiso, 2008: 23). From the pedagogical standpoint, it led to improvement in student vocabulary, communication skills, and an increased proficiency in written English. Similarly, Spina (2006) found significant advantages in using an arts-based curriculum in teaching ESL when comparing two 5th-grade ESL classes, one taught with an art-based approach, and the other by using traditional ESL methods.

While the research inquiry in the use of the arts for teaching language is still in the emerging stages, some art institutions have been stepping forward to assist language instructors, notably The Getty Center in Los Angeles, and the First Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee (The Getty Center, 2011; Henderson and Adler, 2005), offering art-based language teaching curriculum to second language learners.

An art collection tour can be an effective pedagogical tool in language teaching (Preece, 1996), providing students with a wider variety of *"experiences to reflect upon, to share, and to exploit the cultural and linguistic environment"* (Preece, 1996: 115). The writer further proposed several models for bringing the arts into ESL curriculum:

- University-level art appreciation courses (for advanced students)
- Sheltered, ESL-only elective courses, including studio art classes (for all levels)

- Content-based courses, preparatory for a credit-earning required non-ESL art course (advanced level)
- Art-based curricular units as part of existing ESL classes at all levels

Research question

As outlined above, second language teaching programs in higher education have been slow to adopt multicultural learning strategies. Language socialisation of L2 learners continues to be directed towards a full acculturation and assimilation into the L2 community (Judd, 1992; Kramsch, 2002). This poses multiple questions to language education ideology in multilingual and multicultural settings which become particularly problematic in the contexts in which an L1 community represents the largest segment of population as is the case in the Los Angeles County (U.S. Census 2009). Relating this tension to language pedagogy, what would be the implications of reversing the traditional socialisation paradigm and actually incorporating elements of the adult learners' L1 cultural heritage into teaching L2? Is it a viable educational philosophy?

Study description

The present study was conducted in 2009 in an advanced ESL writing class taught by the researcher at Long Beach City College, a community college in Southern California.¹ Transferable to universities, this semester-long course served as the first essay-writing course in the ESL writing curriculum and was 2 levels below English 100. The class met twice a week for a total of 6 hours, one session in a regular classroom, the other in the lab. Of the 21 students enrolled in the class, 9² were immigrant native Spanish speakers who became the subjects of the present study. Coming originally from Mexico (7), El Salvador (1), and Dominican Republic (1), these eight women and one man had lived in the United States for 3-17 years.

The instructor developed an original 8-lesson curriculum to fulfill the pedagogical objective of teaching students how to write an L2 essay in the contrast/comparison rhetorical mode, while using modern art from the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America as its thematic content. The curriculum included a 1.5-hour tour of the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach (MOLAA) which took place during the class time and prior to which the students had been given the essay assignment. During the tour, the class was split into two docent-led groups. The tour covered two temporary exhibits on display and available pieces from the museum's permanent collection, inside the building and outside in the sculpture garden.

Student L2 writing output consisted of three one-page typed summaries and a practice artwork analysis completed prior to the museum tour, and one essay written after it.

¹ A U.S./Canadian community or junior college provides an education equivalent to the first 2 years (lower division of undergraduate studies) of a typical 4-year university.

² One student dropped from the course after completing the tour and the evaluation, but before writing the essay.

The instructional goal was to produce a complete, well-researched and supported essay of, at least, 2 pages of text (500 or more words) developing a minimum of 3 points of comparison. Essay writing followed a 5-step process (outline → first draft → 2 peer reviews → final draft → revised draft). To minimise potential outside help, all writing took place during class time and was stored on a hard drive inaccessible from outside the lab. The following four research methods were used to study the impact of the unit on the Hispanic students in the class: student surveys containing a background questionnaire and a survey rating the effectiveness of the unit, student evaluations which included three paragraph-long answers to specific questions, the instructor's analysis of the final draft's of the essays, and semi-structured interviews with individual students.

Findings and discussion

I. Student response to art-based language learning

Even though for the majority of these Hispanic students (7 out of 9) this project offered the first opportunity to visit MOLAA (and for two, their first experience of going to any museum), the pedagogical use of the tour received an overwhelmingly positive response from them. The quantitative results from the survey (86-94% satisfaction ratings) were further corroborated by students' enthusiastic responses in written evaluations such as one below.

I have visited some museums, but I have never felt what I felt. This tour changed my ideas about art; I was astonished about all the beauty that I have never visualized. Also, I did not know anything about some Latin American artists that from whom the paintings belong, and I was amazed about them and their art. I liked how our teacher had an interest to take us to know more about Latin American heritage, and yes I could connect with my Mexican traditions. To me, the art never will be the same; it had transformed my way of see art. (Laura)

Carmen, Diana, Laura, and Linda attributed much of the benefit they received from the tour to the docents who guided their groups. "Our tour guide was very helpful," wrote Linda. "She was willing to answer any question and was successful in explaining clearly all the information. She actually told us the differences and similarities between the two artists which made it very easy for me to develop those points in my essay." While some students, for example, Linda and Elena were disappointed that their guide did not cover all exhibits at the museum, or did not provide enough information on individual artists, another student (Laura) wanted the docents to focus in more depth on fewer pieces. In their interviews and evaluations, students also pointed out what they did not like about the curriculum. Several students (Carmen, Diana, and Omar) found the 1.5-hour tour to be too short, and that as a result, it went too fast (Linda). One student who had seen the museum's full permanent collection on display was disappointed to see it replaced by temporary installations, and another wished for more in-class preparation.

The writing assignment required extensive Internet research. The post-tour writing time was limited to six hours of instructor-supervised lab time to develop the first

draft of a two-page minimum essay and an additional 3 hours for peer reviews and final editing. With adequate development, 6 out of 8 students reached the 2-page minimum of text required by the assignment. Despite the effort it required, students rated the Internet research aspect of the project the highest (94 percent) of all unit components on the survey. Elena explained in her interview that research allowed her to learn more about the art that interested her. She added that the research aspect made the topic more interesting because "if you don't have something to search, you don't learn."

II. Discovering the meaning of art

Artworks are rich symbolic artifacts. Through focused classroom activities such as summarizing an artist's biography or a text about the history of an important Latin American art movement, studying an art vocabulary handout, and applying all this knowledge to a practice artwork analysis, students learned to analyse art for factual information and symbolic meaning as well as to examine their personal interpretations as viewers. Interaction with the contemporary painting and sculpture at the Museum of Latin American Art further engaged students in these evaluative processes and also in making connections with their personal histories. Only one student expressly denied a connection between the art that she saw and her personal background while all other students reported feeling moved by the artworks with which they could connect on a personal level. They would often tap into pre-immigration memories and cultural knowledge to identify and decipher the hidden meanings:

Interviewer: Was there something that really connected to your personal experience, brought memories?

Diana: Yeah, one painting, it's like animals, like an old guy on a cow, or donkey, and also the lake. If you want to ride a donkey or a horse, we used to go like that.

Interviewer: Riding a donkey, burro?

Diana: Uh-huh, burro... [laughs] You have to be standing or sitting straight, all the way, except lay down because people there are gonna think you're dead, or you're sick. So in that painting the guy is all lay down, he's not sitting dead, so that means he's dead. [...] So when I saw that, I knew he's dead. That's the painting that captured my attention.

Familiarity with the Hispanic, particularly Mexican symbolism and themes – which first became apparent during the class analysis of a Frida Kahlo's self-portrait – continued during the tour into a process of both identification and research. Cows and a lake in a painting seen at the museum, for instance, reminded Linda of her relatives who used to raise cows; while seeing a man wearing a sombrero hat brought her back the images of the Mexican Revolution. Juana, similarly, connected in her essay the art she saw during her (first ever) museum visit and her childhood.

I really liked Francisco Toledo's [art] much better because his paintings brought me a lot of memories when I was a child because the same as him, I grew up in a very poor family, but at the same time, I was really happy because I was very close with the nature and with animals as well. If I were an artist, I would paint the same type of images because animals and the nature make me remember my childhood.

Another student, Alicia, explored the meaning of an artwork by the Cuban artist Carlos Luna who also lived in Mexico. She interpreted his statue of a barefoot Cuban

farmer with his skeleton exposed on his back as the artist's statement showing his dislike for Cuba.

When I kind of researched little bit, I saw why he had this. He lived in Mexico, and he loved that [tradition of celebrating the dead]. That was why he put the calavera on the back of his sculpture: because that's the tradition he got from Mexico and he still practices, so he love it.

Similar to Alicia and Linda, Diana told of how she discovered of the meaning of art through additional research.

When we see the picture, we're like, 'Oh, that's a simple or common picture,' but as soon as we start searching on the Internet, or something like that, we start know that picture is something, it has important meaning. Like sometimes they want to represent all their [unclerk] that are in Mexico, proverbs that they want to show in the picture, legends, myths, all that stuff.

Armed with the Internet research, students also examined the complex roots of the Latin American art. Carmen and Laura, for example, who compared the same two Mexican artists, Francisco Toledo and Jose Luis Cuevas, pointed to the traces of Ohacian and pre-Columbian heritage in the works of the former, and the influence of Spanish masters like Goya and Picasso and Mexican muralists on the latter.

As the types of art on display moved from representative to abstract, divisions between student responses sharpened. One temporary exhibit, in particular, a retrospective of contemporary kinetic art from Latin America, met with exasperated response from some students, but was welcomed by others. Carmen and Elena, two students who had taken art classes, examined the choice of materials, techniques, and colors used by the artists. Carmen, in particular, thought of that as the central piece of her learning experience. In her essay, in particular, she focused on the production aspects of making serigraphs and etchings used by the artists she researched. Linda, who had never taken an art class but considered herself 'a good drawer', specifically related the colors and subjects used by the artists to the themes of their works. Note the sophisticated vocabulary she used in her essay excerpt below:

*Cuevas has expressed that his art symbolize the loneliness and seclusion of the contemporary human condition, and the incapacity of humans to communicate. Maybe that is why in his works, he deforms and alters the human shape, to make each of the figures incomparable {unique}. In addition, Cuevas's art work focuses in ink, wash, and pencil illustration, exemplifies out of the ordinary creatures and polluted humanity. Cuevas likes to use variations of grey colors to illustrate the sadness and degradation of life. For instance, in one of his paintings called *The Grabador/The Engraver*, he uses pencil, ink, and wash on paper, and he illustrates deforms people, and where it is easy to see the realism of life with humor but ironic message.*

III. Examining learners' multilingual and multicultural identities

Analysing a writing assignment centered on Hispanic artists and based on a museum tour of a Hispanic art museum inevitably leads to the question of how these learning activities might have interacted with Hispanic learners' social identities. The question of identity is particularly complex here as no other community in the United States has apparently been subject to as many identity labels as Spanish-speaking immigrants and

their descendants (Tanno, 2000). Hispanic students who participated in this study projected a strong, and at times contradictory, sense of identity, which shows advanced language learners' identities as both multi-faceted and dynamic:

Interviewer: *You seem very passionate about it, about things in Mexico.*

Alicia: *I know!*

Interviewer: *But you are here –*

Alicia: *know!*

Interviewer: *– so where is your home?*

Alicia: *My home is in Mexico. All my family is there, and I love Mexico to death. I always will. But I recognize, you know [if] I have to choose [where] to live, I'd go back to Mexico today! [laughs]*

Interviewer: *You've been here 4 years, do you think your identity is changing?*

Alicia: *No, I wouldn't say, no. I think I have learned a lot of things, and I have valued a lot more being here, and you know there are things I like it, and there are things I don't like it being here, but nothing has changed who I am.*

Yet despite her strong sense of connection to Mexico, the tour made apparent to Alicia the influence of her four years of living in the United States. 'A Mexican living in America', as she defines herself, has not been entirely unaffected by her experiences in her new homeland.

I never knew how many Latino artists there were. I hardly knew their pieces, or their paintings or their sculptures. [...] Being in the United States, it kind of made more interest of arts, and it's kind of more, I wouldn't say educated, I mean it has more opportunities, but it kind of value small things more. [...] In Mexico, it's not that important. [...] All that I have learned since coming to the United States, not when I was there. So all this movement of arts, and enjoying it, I kind of developed after I was in the United States.

Linda, on the other hand, replied negatively during the interview to the question if the project made her think about her own move to the United States or her identity. However, her written evaluation contradicts it, to some degree, and shows that this writing assignment, in fact, brought her in touch with her heritage:

Some of the paintings I saw made a great impression on me. I particularly liked Francisco Toledo's paintings because they make me think about my culture and my traditions. I felt quite comfortable with this unit content because as a Hispanic I was familiar with many of the artist and topics covered.

Clarifying identities of Hispanic students is also problematic in that on one hand, grouping them together by their common language ignores their widely differentiating regional cultures and histories. But, on the other hand, viewing a particular strand of the Hispanic population separately from others in a homogenising environment of their L1 diaspora in their new home country can be just as limiting. It is emblematic of the latter trend that a Mexican student, Alicia, chose to write about two sculptors from Cuba and Venezuela (Carlos Luna and GeGo, respectively) while Omar, a student born in the Dominican Republic, compared two Mexican artists, Rufino Tamayo and Francisco Toledo.

Though never solicited directly from students, a contemplation of their identity as a result of engagement with Hispanic art came through both their interviews and essays. Alicia, for example, commented on this experience as follows:

Being at the museum made me feel connected because there is a lot of Latino culture. I am from Mexico, and I had no idea that there were so many artists from Mexico, and other countries of Latin America, and that they were so important. I learned a lot, and [it] woke up the interest on me to learn little bit more about Latin American artists.

This curriculum also made Omar contemplate the group identity of Hispanics in America and the world at large:

I felt proud because I know that there are people that are trying to show the other face of our country because sometimes international people have an idea about a country. And the way that change their mind is doing right thing and they have done that. Show people that Latin America we have a lot of wars, a lot of things that happened, but there are a lot of people that are interested in other things like arts. (Omar's interview)

In fact, the sense of pride for their countrymen and heritage which arose from seeing and learning about Latin American art came to the fore in student interviews. Here is, for example, how Diana explained this sentiment:

Because I saw many paintings, they were from artists from Mexico, so I start thinking, "This is from Mexico, this one is from Mexico." That made me feel happy and proud of my country that even here in the United States, they have their paintings here. I thought they had only in Mexico, or when they go to other countries, like United States, they take their paintings, and when they go back, they take their paintings with them. [laughs]

In some students, this evaluative experience went beyond a simple acknowledgment of personal responses and moved towards a reflection on the relationship between what they have learned and their native cultures and themselves. In Alicia, for example, visiting the museum stirred strong feelings about her native land. Confronted with a rich display of contemporary Latin American art at MOLAA, she felt, in an eloquent example below, that her native country provided inadequate amount of exposure to its contemporary artists and arts in smaller towns.

In Mexico I don't think we give that much value or importance to the paintings or to the artists. Only maybe in the major cities, like Mexico City, that they kinda of sounds obligated to have entertainment, that's how they see it, to have museums, theaters and everything. Where I live, Manzanillo, it's not that big, but we don't have any museums, we don't have any major theaters, or anything. We have to go 4 hours to Guadalajara, and they do it because theirs is a big city. So far I don't think they have a museum like MOLAA in Mexico City, that big, with many Latino artists. [...] It's sad, but it's like we don't really value that.

In at least one interview, a student made parallels between the artists' lives and his own life history, explaining that Latin American artists "try to go on and be better everyday: better artists, better citizens, for that you have to work hard and do the right thing. [...] The best that I can say is I am a person, I'm trying to do better these days. I'm trying to know myself, my weaknesses, in order to change, in order to improve, make it better" (Omar).

IV. Contemplating the ideological content of art

Artists' political ideologies were also noted and examined by students. Omar specifically pointed to the tour as a place that made him realize that art carries multiple

meanings: *"The visit to the museum [...] changed the way I look at an art piece now. Now I know that some of them, somewhere behind, above, next to lines and colors really exists a whole philosophical, political, customary, and so on message."* Meanwhile, the humanitarian message of certain art works of Fernando Botero drew the attention of Linda: *"One of the things that is interesting to me about Botero is that he tries to speak out through his paintings, to make justice. That's a good way to speak out [...] in a non-violent way. He is very controversial when he does that."* Linda expanded her thoughts further in her essay:

Fernando Botero subject and theme were inspired by real-world tragic events. In his painting, Botero showed torture and brutality committed by Americans at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. What gives Botero's painting a truly emotional intensity are the atrocities it depicts. By showing reality Botero attempted to speak out against injustice and give massive publicity to these atrocities. In contrast with Francisco Toledo's piece, this {Botero's} painting made me feel the agonies of the victims, the pain they underwent, and the need of justice of the artist.

Here we see a young student from Mexico, relatively new to the United States (immigrated 3 years earlier), engaged in the analysis of the work of a Colombian artist critical of the American occupation of Iraq. Linda's response to his work, her interpretation of the artists' symbolic language and her particular choice of words ('atrocities', 'injustice', 'brutality', 'agonies of the victims') show her empathy to the victims, ironically, of the very country she had moved to. Her analysis also suggests her multicultural engagement with the world around her through the lens of art.

Similarly, Omar noticed a subversive political message – hinting at class division in an allegedly classless society – conveyed by a sculpture by Carlos Luna, a Cuban artist: *"That one I loved because it's a sculpture that express something that may be people cannot express. The artist is giving you a story that maybe the people cannot give you. [...] Basically, the one he has a leg without shoes, the other one.... That means the difference in the society. Some people have the way, and others have nothing. That describes the difference between people."* In his written evaluation of the tour, Omar also criticized the class ideologies of museums as public cultural institutions whose unequal access to modern art leads to exclusivity.

I think that since work of art, according to most artists, is a medium to transmit ideas, customs and beliefs, [it] should be more accessible to common people. In that way, art piece could be better understood by student and general people. I perfectly understand the need of an artist to make a living through his art, but there should be a way that the big public get access to that work or maybe the artist goes to the big public. It seem to be that art is exclusive to people that can pay for it.

In addition, one student, Laura, reported being moved to help her community by what she discovered about the artists.

Toledo [...] loved his country. Even if he went to different parts of the world, he's still Mexican, he still liked to help people, other people, his people. I didn't know nothing about [these artists], or what they think, what they do, so just how they love their country. And I had to think about how I can help my people. [...] For example, Toledo, you say something good about his culture and about his painting to say to other people that Mexicans have a good tradition.

V. Evaluating pedagogical effectiveness of an L1-based L2-teaching curriculum

As the ESL instructor of the course, I was deeply pleased with the pedagogical results of this writing project. First of all, engaged in contrastive, comparative, causative, evaluative, persuasive, and other advanced types of writing – in their second language – students demonstrated a variety of critical thinking skills. Having to decipher and interpret highly abstract imagery of contemporary art works also encouraged students' thinking. From the writing perspective, they met a special challenge of working within a complex and somewhat rigid structure of a contrast/comparison essay where each point had to be addressed on both sides, in the same sequence, and using mode-specific transitions. Individual success, of course, depended on students' command of English grammar and vocabulary, but it was the consistent and genuine attempts at abstract thinking that were particularly noticeable. Consider for example, the following two excerpts from two borderline failing students. In the first, the student (Carmen) struggles with grammar deficiencies, and yet delivers a well-supported causative chain of ideas.

Cuevas is telling a principal story of his life using expressions to express emotions. For instance, the ways Cuevas disfigure the faces of humans reveal the dangerous life he faced when he was growing up. Cuevas perceive the meat marketing (prostitution of women and men) and alcohol, and that is what he exposes in his artwork with pale colors. Consequently, Cuevas characteristic his works by drawings of misshapen creatures and misery in the contemporary world.

In the next example, redundant passages and grammatical errors make evident the writer's (Juana's) limited command of L2. Yet her ideas, as in the comparative relationship between the points and their subpoints (themes and colors), are outlined quite clearly. What we see here is how a challenging task at hand is pushing the development of Juana's emergent language.

Francisco Toledo grew up in a very poor family, but he was very close with animals. That is why on his paintings you can see people related with animals, and it also has bright colors. For example, on his painting titled "Mujer Igwana" you can see a woman, but at the same time she is related with an igwana and it also has bright colors. [...] Jose Luis Cuevas do not paint animals on his paintings, what you see on his paintings are people sick and deformed bodies.

Students too found this pedagogical model relevant to their learning, as noted in four student evaluations of the project. Diana, for example, wrote: "Regarding with the contrast and comparison, this tour fits perfect because it gives the student an opportunity to practice the concepts that are being thought in this unit." Another student observed how her analytical skills grew throughout this writing project: both the tour and the class assignments that had led up to it.

I had never stopped to actually analyze a piece of art because I didn't even know how to. This unit I learned how to analyze the basic characteristics of a painting and also to interpret some implicit messages that the artists hide in their paintings. [...] The tour, the summary assignments and specially the handouts were very helpful to me. (Linda's evaluation).

Carmen appreciated the opportunity to participate in the real-life, interactive learning activities that are not possible in a traditional classroom setting.

I think it was a nice experience because I learned a lot. It was more seeing the pictures, not just doing the research. [...] It was more helpful looking at their pictures, than just looking for information on the computer. And listen to the lady [docent] because she helped us a lot.

As an instructor, I also found the quality of student research to be quite impressive. Few sources about contemporary artists, especially on those from developing countries, exist on the Internet; consequently, students had to put in a considerable amount of effort to find supporting information. Knowing that their essays would be checked for originality on *Turnitin.com*, students had to be creative in incorporating their findings into their essays. Only one student (Omar) severely plagiarized his text and had to rewrite it.

Finally, students had to learn and utilize advanced vocabulary related to historical, philosophical, and technical aspects of art. As an excerpt below from Alicia's essay shows below, this vocabulary was far removed from colloquial English and went beyond what a typical ESL contrast/comparison assignment would have required.

'War-Giro' sculpture reflects the artist emotions, experience, and discontent with his country. On the other hand, the "Sphere" sculpture reflects the artist interest to interact and entertain her audience by manipulating the visual language of art with geometrical shapes.

Moving from a culture-subtractive to a culture-inclusive language pedagogy

The data collected in this study suggests that the exposure to contemporary Latin American painting and sculpture engaged Hispanic ESL students' with their heritage in dual ways: some students reconnected with their first language culture, while in those less familiar with it, it aroused interest to learn more about it. Through the medium of the second language, adult language learners explored connections between the themes and subjects of the artwork they examined and their personal backgrounds. In this process, the link to their first language cultures helped to raise their affective filter towards the pedagogical task at hand. Hispanic students who participated in this study projected a strong, though at times contradictory, sense of identity, which shows advanced language learners' identities as both multi-cultural and dynamic. Seeing and learning about contemporary Latin American painting and sculpture, both during the museum tour and through the subsequent research, touched off in these minority students a sense of pride in their L1 backgrounds. In some instances, this experience led to the contemplation of their own relationship to their native cultures and the artists' life histories. Artists' political ideologies (for example, speaking against oppression or socioeconomic divisions) were also noted by students.

From the instructional standpoint, the instructor was pleased with the learning outcomes of this writing project (contrast/comparison essays), specifically with the well-organized and developed compositional structures, extensive research conducted by

the students, and their advanced vocabulary usage. The apparent strength and richness of the student writing produced as a result of an L1 culture-inclusive language curriculum points its instructional relevance in an advanced writing course and stresses the importance of including real-life, interactive learning activities into L2 pedagogy. Thus, the presented study suggests the following benefits of pluricultural or culture-inclusive second language education:

- Incorporating elements of students' L1 cultural heritage into L2 curriculum signals respect for their backgrounds and validates their identities.
- Bringing L2 learners into a deeper engagement with their native language cultures, this educational philosophy empowers students to re-evaluate their social roots, selves, and identities in an L2 society and arouses a sense of pride in their L1 communities.
- Critical examination of diverse L1 cultures present in L2 learning contexts facilitates student development into multilingual world citizens who are multiculturally aware.
- Topics related to students' cultural experience, such as those modeled in this study, may elicit more interest among students and produce a richer L2 output than those that don't.
- Interaction with the L1 culture can engage advanced language learners in the development of higher-level critical thinking skills.
- Multicultural pedagogical activities can teach interculturality, be instructionally meaningful, but also remain enjoyable to students.

Bibliography

- Banks, J. (2004). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching*. 4th ed., Boston, Allyn & Bacon.
- Craig, D., and Paraiso J. (2008). "Dual diaspora and barrio art: Art as an avenue for learning English." *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, n° 4 (1).
- Cummins, J. (2003). "Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education?" *ESL and Second Language Learning Web*. Downloaded June 4, 2010, from <http://www.teachlearn.com/cummins/mother.htm>.
- Cummins, J. (2007). "Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms." *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, n° 10 (2), pp. 221-240.
- Cummins, J. (2009). "Multilingualism in the English-language classroom: Pedagogical considerations." *TESOL Quarterly*, n° 43 (2), pp. 317-321.
- The Getty Center. (2010). "Language through art: An ESL enrichment curriculum." Downloaded March 14, 2011, from http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/esl/index.html.
- Henderson, A., & E. Adler. (2005). "Project Access for adult English-language learners." *First Monday*, n° 10 (6).
- Igoudin, L. (2009). "An inspirational palette: English learners' cultural heritage as a resource for teaching ESL." *CATESOL News*, n° 41 (2), pp. 1-3.
- Jenkins, S. (2010). "Monolingualism: an uncongenial policy for Saudi Arabia's low-level learners." *ELT Journal*, n° 64.
- Judd, E. (1992). "Language-in-education policy and planning." In R. Kaplan and W. Grabe (eds.), *Introduction to applied linguistics*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, pp. 169-188.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*, Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2002). "Introduction." In C. Kramsch (ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives*, London, Continuum, pp. 1-30.
- Kramsch, C. (2005). "Post 9/11: Foreign languages between knowledge and power." *Applied Linguistics*, n° 26 (4), pp. 545-567.
- Kubota, R. (2003). "Unfinished knowledge: The story of Barbara." *College ESL*, n° 10 (1/2), pp. 11-21.
- Menard-Warwick, J. (2009). "Co-constructing representations of culture in ESL and EFL classrooms: Discursive faultlines in Chile and California." *Modern Language Journal*, n° 93 (1), pp. 30-45.
- Pavlenko, A., & A. Blackledge. (2004). "Introduction." In A. Pavlenko and A. Blackledge (eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, pp. 1-33.
- Preece, R. (1996). "Visual arts learning opportunities for study abroad students in American ESL programs: Focus on tours." *HKPU Working Papers in ELT & Applied Linguistics*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University, n° 2 (1), pp. 115-129.
- Ryan, P.M. (1998). "Cultural knowledge and foreign language teachers: A case study of a native speaker of English and a native speaker of Spanish." *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, n° 11 (2), pp. 135-153.
- Spina, S. (2006). "Worlds together ... words apart: An assessment of the effectiveness of arts-based curriculum for second language learners." *Journal of Latinos and education*, n° 5 (2), pp. 99-122.
- Tanno, D. (2000). "Names, narratives, and the evolution of ethnic identity." In A. Gonzalez, M. Houston, & V. Chen (Eds.), *Our voices: Essays in ethnicity, culture, and communication*, pp. 22-25, 3rd ed., Los Angeles, Roxbury.
- Taylor, S. (2009). "Paving the way to a more multilingual TESOL." *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(2), 309-312.
- TESOL Quarterly. (2009a). "In this issue." n° 43 (2), pp. 173-176.
- TESOL Quarterly. (2009b). "In this issue." n° 43 (4), pp. 563-566.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). "Los Angeles County, California." Downloaded November 20, 2009, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>.

Didactique plurilingue et pluriculturelle :

L'acteur en contexte mondialisé

Sous la direction de :

George Alao,
Martine Derivry-Plard,
Elli Suzuki,
Soyoung Yun-Roger

Suite au *Précis du Plurilinguisme et du Pluriculturalisme* (2008), le débat didactique se poursuit et continue de déconstruire et de revisiter les catégories habituelles de l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues et des cultures. De nouvelles notions émergent et des trames se tissent. Cet ouvrage centre son attention sur la figure de l'acteur en contexte mondialisé, sous un angle large et éclaté, celui de l'apprenant de langue(s) dans et hors les murs d'un système d'enseignement, celui de l'étudiant international dans et hors les frontières, celui de l'enseignant créateur de dispositifs dans et hors de la classe, celui du concepteur de manuels et du traducteur, médiateurs au plus près des langues et des cultures mais surtout de leurs apprenants ou de leurs lecteurs. Si l'acteur apprendant/enseignant de langues et de cultures entre de plein pied dans un monde global, il le fait selon les prismes complexes d'apprentissage qu'il traverse, qu'il refuse ou qu'il franchit selon ses propres rythmes et les circonstances en présence. C'est ce que proposent les contributions de cet ouvrage.

George Alao est membre de l'EA 4514 PLIDAM, maître de conférences en yorubá et directeur du département Afrique à l'Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO) où il participe à l'animation du séminaire « Didactique des langues africaines » du département Afrique et est un des responsables du *Séminaire de PLIDAM*. Ses axes de recherche sont la valorisation et la diffusion des langues et des cultures ainsi que l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues africaines.

Martine Derivry-Plard est maître de conférences en anglais et didactique des langues à l'UPMC, Paris 6, où elle est secrétaire générale de l'EA 2288DILTEC « tâches et dispositifs », de Paris 3 et Paris 6. Associée à l'EA 4514 PLIDAM, elle est aussi chargée de cours à l'université du Luxembourg. Ses domaines de recherche portent sur les représentations concernant les langues, la problématique CLIL et plus particulièrement, les enseignants de langues et la notion de « natif/non natif ».

Elli Suzuki est maître de conférences en japonais et en didactique des langues dans la section d'études japonaises de l'Université Michel de Montaigne - Bordeaux 3 où elle est responsable de la section. Elle est également chargée de cours à l'Inalco et membre titulaire de l'EA 4514 PLIDAM. Ses domaines de recherche portent sur les représentations culturelles des étudiants en rapport avec la mobilité, conflits et médiations interculturels et la dimension affective des relations enseignants-étudiants.

Soyoung Yun-Roger est chargée de cours dans la filière de Français Langue Etrangère à l'INALCO et membre de l'équipe de l'EA 4514 PLIDAM. Elle est également formatrice de coréen au Ministère des affaires étrangères et européennes. Ses travaux de recherche portent principalement sur les pratiques innovantes en classe de langues-cultures étrangères et sur la problématique du développement d'une compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle chez les apprenants et les enseignants.

Prix public : 28 euros
ISBN : 9782813001092



éditions des
archives
contemporaines

Didactique plurilingue et pluriculturelle :

L'acteur en contexte mondialisé

Sous la direction de :

George Alao,
Martine Derivry-Plard,
Elli Suzuki,
Soyoung Yun-Roger

éditions des
archives
contemporaines