Teaching languages from an intercultural perspective: Rethinking the nature of learning

Anthony J. Liddicoat

The movement towards an intercultural understanding of languages education has had many consequences for how languages are taught that involve more than an attempt to introduce additional elements in language education and involves a true integration of language, culture and the intercultural in language pedagogy. This has promoted a rethinking of fundamental ideas about languages, cultures and the ways these are taught. This chapter will examine some of the core assumptions that lie behind adopting an intercultural perspective in language teaching and learning and discuss how these influence the practice of language teaching. In particular it will concentrate on how teaching languages from an intercultural perspective has involved a rethinking of the nature of learning. The chapter will examine how learning has been understood in theories in applied linguistics and language education and argue that such theories have narrowed the focus of languages learning and have narrowed also what is meant by language for learning. The chapter will then examine some alternative views of learning drawn from outside the applied linguistics field to consider more complex ways to consider what learning might be. It will argue for a hermeneutic understanding of the nature of learning and exemplify what this might look like in practice by examining examples of students' work that reflect an interpretative understanding of language learning.

Introduction

The ways that teaching is designed and practiced are guided by teachers' theories of learning, whether these theories are explicit or implicit (Dann & Haag, 2017; Kreber & Cranton, 2000; López-Vargas & Basto-Torrado, 2010; Marland, 1998). Innovations in teaching practice contain at least "an implicit theory of how people learn. This theory is embedded in the design of lessons, in their duration and structure, in their sequence over years, and in the way in which staff training and support are designed" (Elias et al., 2003, p. 310). When an innovation in education represents as significant change in the practice, therefore it is likely that this will also involve a significant rethinking of theories of learning. This chapter will examine one particular recent innovation in language education, the teaching and learning of languages from an intercultural perspective, or intercultural language teaching and learning, to consider the consequences of this innovation for how learning is theorised in language education.

Intercultural language teaching and learning is a loose description of proposals for language education that place the development of intercultural capabilities at the centre of learning. Such proposals began to be articulated in the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Kramsch, 1993; Zarate, 1986) and ideas have evolved since that time. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) argue that intercultural language teaching and learning is not a method or approach to language education but rather argue that it is a perspective or stance taken in relation to language, culture and learning that sees meaning and the ways that language and culture shape processes of meaning-making and interpretation as central to educational thinking. This perspective means viewing language as more than a structural system and also as interdependent with other forms of meaning-making, including culture. It seeks to give culture a central part in language education, not as an additional component or dimension of language programs (e.g. Damen, 1987), but as an integral and integrated part of language use. It also challenges more traditional views of culture teaching in language education that focus on monolithic essentialised representations of national cultures, as it has been constructed in approaches such as *civilisation* in French, *Landeskunde* in German or *nihonjijou* in Japanese, and focuses instead on culture as something that is emergent, contingent, variable and contested

and as something that is both personal and collective (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Liddicoat, 2005). In fact, the emphasis on culture is not on learning about a culture itself but in coming to see the self as enculturated and how such enculturation is consequential for one's participation in diversity.

Intercultural language teaching and learning also challenges the separation of the languages and cultures of learners in the process of language learning. Some contemporary approaches to language education have adopted a monolingual approach to teaching in which languages are kept rigidly separated. Instead intercultural language teaching and learning works from the assumption that all of a learners' languages are always present in meaning-making and interpretation, regardless of which language is being used (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). As learners need to work with and between their multiple linguistic and cultural repertoires, these need to be acknowledged and developed through language learning. The learner is therefore the central focus of intercultural language learning and teaching aims to develop the learner as an interlinguistic and intercultural communicator by developing an understanding of the process of meaning making and interpretation through experiences of language in use.

The idea of perspective, proposed by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), like the idea of stance proposed by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999), is very much based in the ways that the teacher understands the nature of teaching, learning and what is taught. It is thus a view of teaching and learning in which the teachers' theories of learning are central to practice. This means that an understanding of theories of learning, and the ways that such theories have developed and are represented within the field of language education, are significant for understanding teaching as a form of praxis, in Freire's (1970) sense of directed reflection and action, in which theory and action are closely and reflectively integrated.

A historical overview of theories of learning in languages education

Contemporary language education takes place in a context that has been influenced by many theories of learning that have been developed and shaped over time. It has often been common in framing the history of language education to present these as a succession of theories or theoretical 'eras', each new theory eventually replacing preceding theories (Hilgendorf, 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, this is an oversimplification of the theoretical positions that shape contemporary practice. Instead, each theoretical position can be seen as leaving a residue of ideas and practices that still inform how languages are taught. In fact, learning theory has not received substantial critical attention in the language education field until recently and theories of learning held implicitly have often not been brought to conscious attention. The aim of this section is therefore to outline some of the influences on theories of learning, that exist implicitly or explicitly in practice to provide a context in which to consider a rethinking of theories of learning.

Theories of learning have not been unitary; there has been no grand theory that has shaped the field. Rather it is better to think in terms of families of theories (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) or various theoretical positions that share common features but which may diverge or may be weakly articulated as theoretical positions. It is possible over this period to discern four large families of theories that have shaped thinking: philosophical learning theories based on the idea of developing control over the self, behaviouralist theories, cognitivist theories of an innate language learning capacity and socio-cultural theories.

Until the late nineteenth century, learning theory was primarily a concern for philosophy and such philosophical theories form the backdrop against which the grammar-translation approach developed. The grammar-translation approach was based on a view of learning as a form of intellectual training: "intellectual discipline: the mind being trained" (Rivers, 1981, p.

104). It emphasised the development of intellectual abilities through linguistic analysis of target language texts:

> The goal was to be able to convert each language into the other, and the process was one of problem solving, the problem being that of puzzling out the correct forms assisted by the grammar rules and the dictionary (Chastain, 1976, p. 104).

Such training was considered appropriate for preparing the language learner to participate in his/her own society rather than preparing the learner for participation in interactions with linguistically and culturally diverse others. The intellectual training was further supported by the study of appropriate literary texts as an induction into cultured life. The focus on intellectual training meant that the grammar-translation approach focused strongly on developing declarative knowledge about the language and using this declarative knowledge for analysis and reproduction of texts using rules that had been memorised. In the act of learning, the learner was seen primarily as a passive receiver of information that was stored in memory (Puren, 1988). Because it focused on the development of declarative knowledge about language, grammar-translation used the first language of learners as the main medium of instruction, as it was only in that language that the complexities of language rules could be expressed, especially for beginner learners, and also used the first language as a tool for learning vocabulary and, through the use of translation, as a way of evaluating knowledge of the target language.

This understanding of the nature of learning as not specific to grammar-translation and reflected a view of learning that dated back to the work of Plato over 2000 years before. Plato saw education as fundamental to the development of the good and just person; the impact of education as thus fundamentally moral and ethical. For Plato, education (*paideia, παιδεία*) was wide ranging encapsulating physical, mental, and spiritual development, but these forms of development were not seen as ends in themselves but rather as ways of developing human beings as fit members of society. Plato believed that human soul was made up of three parts: intelligence (*logistikon,* λογιστικόν), passions (*thymoeides*, θυμοειδές) and appetite (*epithymetikon*, ἐπιθυμητικόν) and that these needed to be kept in balance and that passions and appetite needed to be subjected to control by reason (e.g. Republic 444B, Plato, 2013, pp. 436-437). Plato further believed that one way to develop the intellect was through exposure to appropriate texts and refined discourse and that these would provide appropriate stimulation for the development of the intellect and promote the use of reason in moderating passions and appetite (e.g. Laws 811, Plato, 2014, pp. 76-80).

The Platonic view of learning was further reinforced in European thinking about education, and especially language education, in the work of Jan Amos Komenský (a.k.a. Comenius, 1592-1670). Comenius believed in the centrality of human intellect and that knowledge had a regenerative capacity in human development. He believed that all human action, whether good or bad, originated from the intellect and that, if any change was to be made in human behaviour it must come as the result of a purification of the intellect (Comenius, 1970). Language had a central place in the purification of the intellect because language provided the meanings of understanding, which was indispensable for developing and communicating the knowledge needed for such purification to happen. In education, language itself was to be perfected through the study of grammar, rhetoric and poetics so that the learner could come to a precise command of language that would allow them to reason and to know the world correctly (Caravolas, 1980).

A parallel development of the idea that education is to form the human being comes through the work of Rousseau, who sees education as being the development of judgment and, through judgment, of virtue and goodness (Rousseau, 2009). Rousseau developed the idea that

learning comes through experience rather than instruction. This focus on experience was strengthened in the nineteenth century by work in psychology that emphasised the learner as an active assimilator of knowledge (Puren, 1988). Learning was understood to occur when the learner reacted to an experience and when knowing moved from the concrete to the abstract.

Theoretical positions derived Comenius and Rousseau favoured different ways of understanding the use of languages in language education. According to Comenius, second language learning, was essentially like first language learning except that the associations between words and their meaning was mediated by the learner's first language. This meant that the first language was accorded a significant role in the development of other languages as learners needed to understand meanings in terms of their first language. Thinking based on Rousseau's idea of learning from experience supported a view of language learning that happens through the target language itself, without reference to the first language, or with minimal use of it, such as is found in the direct method (Besse, 2012). Thus, philosophical theories of learning focused on intellectual development for the moral person could underlie radically quite different teaching approaches.

In the twentieth century, theories of learning moved from those developed by philosophers to those developed by psychologists and most influential for language education was the work of the behaviourist school. Behaviourism emphasized the role of environmental factors in influencing behaviour and learning is defined as a change in behaviour in the learner as the result of environmental factors, especially those of reward and punishment. Behaviour which is reinforced by some form of reward tends to be strengthened and will be repeated; behaviour which is not reinforced tends to die out-or be extinguished. Skinner (1951) argues that behaviour shaping comes through successive approximation to ideal targets and extremely complex behaviour, such as language, will be developed if reinforcement in the form of rewards and punishments are delivered in such a way as to encourage closer and closer approximation to the desired behaviour each time. Skinner (1957) argued that children learn language through reinforcement by associating words with meanings. Correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child realizes the communicative value of words and phrases and so these are reproduced and become part of the language repertoire.

Behaviouralist theories of learning made similar claims to ideas being developed in structuralist linguistics about the nature of language acquisition. For example, Bloomfield (1942) spoken of language patterns of syntax, phonology, etc. as habits that need to be developed through mimicry of target language models, memorisation and practice. Such ideas influenced the development of audiolingualism as a way of teaching languages. Audiolingualism viewed language use as a collection of behaviours or habits that were shaped through repetition and supported by reinforcement of correct behaviours. The students' first languages were considered as problems (inappropriate behaviours/habits) to be overcome and thus audiolingual classrooms in order to exclude as far as possible any use of the first language.

Behaviourist theories of language learning were strongly criticised by Chomsky (1959), who argued that the nature of language input available to children was inadequate to explain the acquisition of language and that language was more than a complex behaviour acquired through reinforcement. Chomsky proposed an innatist theory of language learning according to which children are born with an innate capacity for language and that language is neither taught nor learnt. Chomsky argued that children have a language acquisition device (LAD) that allows them to discover the rules of a language system. Experience of natural language activates this device and enables learners to discover the structure of the language by matching the structures of language in their environment with their innate knowledge of principles of Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar provides a series of hypotheses about the way a particular language works and by testing these hypotheses against actual language use, children come to develop the particular grammars of the languages they speak. This capability enables

children to develop their language ability beyond the actual input that they have received. While Chomsky essentially worked within first language, there has been subsequent consideration about whether his theory also pertains to second language acquisition and, if so, how exactly it is that Universal Grammar works in the learning of subsequent languages (for example, White, 2003).

A comprehensive innatist theory of SLA was proposed by Krashen (1982). Krashen draws a distinction between acquisition (the process of naturally and subconsciously acquiring language guided by innate ability) and learning (a conscious process of learning form, through instruction and correction). According to Krashen, acquisition leads to natural, spontaneous communication, while learning plays a less important role as a monitor of language production to ensure correctness. Krashen maintains that there is no interface between acquisition and learning and that acquisition is both necessary and sufficient for language development. Because acquisition operates by building and testing hypotheses about the target language based on the languages used in one's environment, Krashen argues that acquisition can only occur through receiving abundant comprehensible input that is designed to be linguistically just beyond the learner's level of competence (expressed as $i + 1$). Krashen's theory has been influential in language teaching and has been the principle theory of learning that has supported communicative language teaching.

Further developments of innatist, cognitive theory have argued for the importance of interaction in language learning. Building on Krashen's (1982) notion of comprehensible input, Long (1985, 1996) proposes an interactive view of input in which learners work at understanding meanings in interaction. The process of negotiating meanings in context involves speakers adjusting or modifying their language until input becomes comprehensible and learners show their understanding. Another important development in relation to interaction-based approaches to language learning is the recognition that output plays an important role in acquisition (Swain, 1995). In the process of producing language, learners identify gaps, make hypotheses about how language works, and obtain feedback towards extending their understanding of the language.

The innatist theories such as those of Chomsky and Krashen represent a cognitivist, language-specific theory of learning that presents language learning as a special case not associated with other forms of learning. In fact, learning, as a conscious process is sidelined as a relevant process for language development. In addition, it constructs language learning as a learner internal process in which language use is limited to opportunities for input and output against which the learner can test their hypotheses about grammar.

Purely cognitivist theories of language learning began to be criticised in the late 1990s (see for e.g. Firth & Wagner, 1997), with calls for a more socially oriented view of language learning. The main development in learning theory in the wake of this critique of cognitivism is the development of socio-cultural theories of language learning (e.g. Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), based on the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1934/2005, 1978). Within the sociocultural theory, the mental and the social are not seen as a dichotomy but rather as being in dialectic relationship where each is shaped by and shapes the other. Learning occurs through the learner's interaction with more knowledgeable others and this process of interaction is understood as a process of co-construction using symbolic systems, such as language, as mediational tools (посредники, intermediaries) to develop knowledge. It is through social and cultural processes that learners are socialised to act, communicate, and 'be' in ways that are culturally appropriate to the groups in which they participate as members, and through which their identities are formed. The goal is to become a knowing member of a particular community.

Vygotsky (1934/2005, 1978) had particular interest in the development in understanding both the current character and level of learning and the potential for further learning and

developed the notion of the *zone of proximal development* (Зона ближайшего развития), which refers to domains of performance that the learner cannot yet achieve independently but can achieve with scaffolded help from a more competent other. In the zone of proximal development learners participate socially in interaction with more knowledgeable interlocutors, thereby learning firstly on a social, interpersonal plane and then making the learning their own through internalisation on an individual, intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1978). Within sociocultural theory, language use in interaction involves complex activity on the part of the individual and "views language as a tool of the mind, a tool that contributes to cognitive development and is constitutive of thought... The act of producing spoken or written language is thinking in progress and is key to learners' understanding of complex concepts. These understandings are reached through interacting with others, ourselves, and social and cultural artifacts" (Swain & Deters, 2007, p. 822). Complex language learning emerges through the learner's engagement in human interaction in activity with artefacts and tools and in social, cultural and historical practices.

This history of theories of learning has often been presented as one of linear development towards better and improved theories. However, more recent thinking in the field of Second Language Acquisition has sought to bring cognitivist and socio-cultural theories of learning into relationship and have argued for the productivity of a more transdisciplinary approach to understanding learning (Han, 2016; Hulstijn et al., 2014; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2016; Seedhouse et al., 2010; The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Han (2016, p. 78) argues:

> It would be a mistake to think that one lens is superior to the other, and likewise, a fiction to presume that pivoting to one at the expense of all others would yield the most insights.

These discussions recognize that no singular theorization of learning can provide an adequate account of the complex phenomenon of second language learning. However, most of them focus on a very narrow range of theoretical perspectives developed within the context of SLA (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2016 is an exception) and focus primarily on the acquisition of language understood in terms of a structural system, although they also acknowledge that language interacts with non-linguistic phenomena such as identity. The reconceptualization of language learning as an intercultural endeavour, however, requires a more elaborated theory of learning that needs to understand language learning in the context of wider theories of learning.

Rethinking learning theories from a transdisciplinary perspective

As language learning involves more than just learning language structures, rethinking theories of learning in language education means adopting a transdisciplinary way of thinking about learning that goes beyond theories articulated for Second Language Acquisition to think about learning more broadly. This section will examine how ways of thinking about learning from disciplinary perspectives from outside language learning and Second Language Acquisition can inform a more elaborated understanding of the nature of learning that can inform an intercultural oriented view of language education.

Sfard (1998), in theorising mathematics learning, proposes the idea of metaphors for understanding the nature of learning theories and makes a distinction between viewing learning as *acquisition* or *participation*. For Sfard, these metaphors represent fundamentally different ways of approaching learning. Acquisition metaphors construct knowledge in terms of a commodity and learning is seen as the process of receiving, accumulating or gaining possession of that commodity. In language education, the term 'acquisition' is potentially problematic given the particular meaning that acquisition Krashen has given it. For Sfard, acquisition refers to an understanding of learning as transfer from someone who knows to someone who does

not, but does not refer to whether the processes involved are conscious or unconscious. In fact, a view of learning that distinguishes between conscious or unconscious processes is not evident in Sfard's work. Any of the families of theories discussed above could be included in the acquisition metaphor. The acquisition metaphor would apply to beliefs about language learning that see language as a body of knowledge (for example, lexical items, grammatical rules, usage rules) that is possessed by a teacher and which is transferred in some way to the learner and is then known as a body of knowledge about language. This transfer of knowledge could happen as the result of comprehensible input provided by the teacher or through conscious attention to the learning of rules. What is of central interest in the metaphor is the ways that it conceives the object of learning – as an autonomous system that constitutes in itself a body of knowledge. The same metaphor can also be applied to the learning of culture, again as a body of knowledge about a people, or of intercultural capabilities, as ways of understanding diverse others. Participation metaphors construct knowledge as an aspect of practice, activity and discourse. Learning involves a process of active construction of knowledge and becoming a participant in communities of shared practice and shared discourse, through a process of enculturation. In this case, learning is essentially a social process of developing action as the result of the assistance of another who is already a participant in the community of shared practice. In language learning, the participation metaphor would apply to a view of learning in which language capabilities are developed through processes of language use focusing on developing the ability to engage with a particular linguistic community. In this sense, socio-culturally oriented theories such as van Lier's (2002, 2004) ecological view, Levine and Phipps' (2012) critical pedagogy or Norton's (2000; Bonny Norton, 2013; Bonnie Norton & Toohey, 2002) focus on role of identity in language learning represent versions of a participation metaphor. Such views have conceptualised language in a personal and contingent way and have focused more on the development of shared language practices than the acquisition of a body of knowledge. However, Krashen's focus on communication as the mechanism of learning inherent in the idea of i+1 and in CLT would also entail aspects of participation and active construction of knowledge. The learning of intercultural capabilities can be conceptualised as a form of participation when the learner learns to act within a new cultural context engaging with linguistically and culturally diverse others. Culture itself does not seem to have been conceived as participation in most discussions of culture learning as the emphasis has usually been placed on learning about another culture rather than processes of socialisation into culture. Nonetheless, such a process view of culture is a possible way of understanding culture learning (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014).

Applying Sfard's metaphors of learning to language learning requires a reconstruction of the theoretical approaches within the field and reveals an alternative way to construct ways of understanding learning that are not based on a cognitivist–socio-cultural divide but on different ways of understanding what knowledge is and how learners come to know it. The difference between Sfard's two metaphors is that the acquisition metaphor assumes the objectification of knowledge while the participation metaphor highlights people in action where "being in action means being in constant flux" (Sfard, 1998, p. 8). Sfard's intention is establishing metaphors of learning is not to determine which is better than the other, but rather she argues that both are necessary for learning. This observation, taken in the context of the calls for transdisciplinarity in theories of language, such as that of the Douglas Fir Group (2016), points to a need for greater nuance in how language learning is understood by language educators.

Since Sfard's original article additional metaphors of learning have been proposed that further expand the view of learning. Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen (2004), in the field of science education, have proposed a third metaphor which they call the knowledge-creation metaphor. This metaphor represents learning as a mediated process of collective knowledge creation that develops new and shared knowledge. Learning is thus a creative process, which

they see as a dimension missing in Sfard's two metaphors. This metaphor reflects the idea that learning is just a form of passing on what is known but also a creating something new. In language learning, knowledge creation happens whenever learners make sense of themselves or of their experiences of language and develop personal understandings of the language system or its use. Such ways of knowing are particularly salient in language learning, as learners have to be able to fit new experiences of language and culture together with their existing experiences (Liddicoat, 2014). As each learner's experiences and starting points are unique, solutions will also be unique. This means that learners' understandings of culture and of ways of engaging with diverse others will also require the creation of new knowledge as a personalised adaptation to experiences rather than the transmission of existing knowledge. The value of the knowledge-creation metaphor resides in the fact that it goes beyond notions of situated cognition and social practices to emphasise communal, social, mediated activity to create new practices or artefacts.

Most recently, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) have argue that these three metaphors still do not include aspects of learning that are necessary for developing understanding of language learning with an intercultural perspective. They argue for a hermeneutic view of learning in which learning is understood as a process of coming to understand experiences of communication in another language (Ashworth, 2004; Gallagher, 1992). This idea is based on two key principles of interpretation. The first is that that all interpretation is governed by the interpreter's history and the second is that all interpretation is linguistic. Gadamer (1960, 2004) sees learning as something that grows out of dialogue as a fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*). These horizons are those reflected in the learner's initial presuppositions that are brought to the act of learning and the horizon of the other person or text with which the learner engages. When an individual engages with another person or with a text, she/he does so from a particular position established historically from his/her experiences of participation in a society, culture and language and these create a set of fore-understandings (*Vorverstehen*); that is pre-understandings of the phenomena they meet in interactions with people or texts. Learners use dialogue (language) to achieve a fusion of horizons between the fore-understandings and their emerging interpretations and each experience of doing so transforms their understanding of the subject matter, themselves and others. Learning involves fusing existing states of understanding with understandings brought by others through dialogue in order to enlarge their interpretative repertoire and to fuse their current understandings with new possibilities. Language is not then simply a tool for learning in the Vygotskyan sense but also part of a mutual process of making sense of each other's contribution (the subject matter) and at the same time each other (the person). Scarino and Liddicoat (2016) argue that language learners are interpreters in multiple senses as they are interpreters of a new linguistic and cultural meanings and also interpreters of the experience of learning itself.

A central part of the interpretative process involved in learning a new language, learners learn to decentre; to step back from their own ways of perceiving, understanding and being in the world and enter into other ways. This does not imply in any way that they leave behind their own language and culture as languages – it is a fusion of horizons not a replacement of one by another. This decentring is fundamentally predicated on reflection (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2016) and reflection applies at multiple points in learners' engagement with languages and cultures. Scarino and Liddicoat (2016) argue that this process of interpretation is reciprocal; in both communicating and learning, people exchange meanings and, at the same time, they exchange things about themselves. Any exchange therefore involves interpreting self (*intra*culturality) and others (*inter*culturality) in diverse contexts, between existing horizons and new.

These four metaphorical ways of thinking about learning (acquisition, participation, knowledge creation, interpretation) represent a significant expansion of learning theory beyond the cognitivist–socio-cultural dichotomy, but at the same time do not negate the relevance of theories developed within Second Language Acquisition for understanding language learning as a complex phenomenon. Rather than searching for a 'best' theory, it is important to recognise that as the basic constructs of language learning – language, culture, intercultural capability – are complex, theories of learning need to reflect that complexity and not limit or constrain practice in language teaching and learning. Intercultural language teaching and learning requires a transdisciplinary theory of learning, in which theories of learning constitute "multiple resources we use at different times and how we make certain ways of thinking and communicating possible" (Byrd Clark, 2016, p. 5). This is not to propose an amorphously eclectic theory of learning, but rather to propose a diverse body of understandings of learning as resources for reflexivity in understanding practice.

Exemplifying learning

The following example provides a way of examine the shape of language learning understood in this transdisciplinary way. It is taken from an interview between a researcher (R) and a student (S) discussing issues related to Japanese language learning. The student is a male, intermediate level Australian university student of Japanese in his late teens. The student had spent six months in Japan as an exchange student during his high school years, and he draws on this experience in constructing his discussion of his learning.

S: One thing that's really intriguing about Japanese is the way they say the same thing in different ways when they talk to different people.

R: What do you mean?

S: Well… there are things like verbs. Who you use plain form, who you use *masu* form. And even the super-polite stuff like um *keigo* [honorific speech] When you speak you show where you are with people, like above or below. (…) Um, one thing that really amazes me is the lots of words for 'I'.

R: What do you think is amazing?

S: Well like when I was learning at school, we learnt that 'I' is *watashi* and that was it. That's what we used always. Then later we learnt about *boku* for boys, but we were told not to use that. Just *watashi*. When I was on exchange in Japan the kids at school didn't do it that way. All the kids there used *boku*, the boys. Sometimes they used *watashi* but not talking to other kids. Just *boku*, like with guys and with girls too. Some kids used *ore* too. Not everyone. I had no idea about that. Like I didn't really hang out with those kids. I just heard them using it. I asked a friend and he said it wasn't good language. *Dame!* [no good]

R: So how do you understand these words? When to use them?

S: I got to know about them from manga and stuff. Like when I got some more Japanese I could read that stuff and watch videos. So now I think *boku* is what guys use. It's like how you show you're a guy, just being a guy. Not formal, just hanging. *Ore* that's different. In the manga and stuff, it's what the bad guys use. It's for toughs, gangsters, stuff like that. Well, so now, when I think of the kids in Japan… They were like saying 'I'm tough', 'we're the tough kids'. You know the *waru* (bad boys). They like had the hair and messy clothes. Like the sort of kids who smoke where the teachers can't see them. And it's all there in the word. It's got so much you like have to think about.

R: What about *watashi*? What's that?

S: When a guy uses *watashi* it's formal. I think it's sort of conforming to older people. Not for girls. It's what they say all the time. But for a guy, you wouldn't use it with you

friends, except to be a bit weird or something. Not one of the group. Then it's *boku*. Not *ore*. I don't use that. Like I'm not a *waru* or anything. I'm sort of *boku* not *ore*.

The extract begins with the student making a statement about something that he has found interesting in his experiences of communicating in Japanese. When the researcher asks him to expand on this, he begins by discussing some of the content of Japanese lessons that typically relate to the idea of "saying things in different ways": verb forms, lexical items (*keigo*) and rules of use. Here is talking from the perspective of the body of knowledge about Japanese that learners are introduced to in their formal learning of the language. He then moves to an observation that comes from his participation in communication in Japanese as both a language learner and a language user (Kern & Liddicoat, 2008) and contrasts the body of knowledge he was introduced to at school with his experience of participation and critiques the adequacy of the former to understand the latter. His teachers had established a translation equivalence between *watashi* and 'I' that functioned as the sole way for referring to oneself, even where variant pronouns had been introduced.

In his experience of participation in Japanese language interactions, he noticed his male peers' practices of self-reference using three pronominal forms: *watashi*, *boku* and *ore*. He notes differences in the use of *boku* and *watashi*: *boku* in informal interactions among peers and *watashi* in other contexts, with *ore* posing a problem for understanding. His account of his learning shows that he is coming to a more developed understanding of the pronouns he already knew, but he had not yet understood the third term. He therefore needs to construct his own understanding of the pronoun choices to express the concept 'I' to account for the various ways of use of *watashi*, *boku* and *ore*. He explicitly signals that faced with these choices he realises that he is in a position of not knowing or not understanding particular language practices. He also indicates that others were not particularly helpful in resolving this lack of understanding for him; *it wasn't good language. Dame!* is not a meaningful explanation for him. Instead he has developed his own personal understanding by interpreting his experiences of language in use as he encountered it in school and in various media texts.

Through reflecting on these experiences he develops a more elaborated interpretation of the pronouns as expressions of masculinity. *Boku* is a marker of masculine identity and of male sociality, associated with the performance of being a young man in informal social contexts and indexing male identity. *Ore* is an enactment of masculinity associated with rebelliousness (*waru*). In reaching this conclusion, he is bringing to his interpretation his assessment of the school boys he knew in Japan and what he has experienced from other sources to create a meaningful understanding of the Japanese pronoun system. His emerging state of knowing represents the pronouns as indexing social identities and making statements about self-identity that go beyond person deixis. In his interpretation of *watashi*, he moves from the idea of pronouns indexing a male identity and to an association with context (formality), but preserving his interpretation of pronouns as gendered.

His interpretations are not simply statements about the linguistic world of Japanese; he also understands the pronouns as resources that he can use to enact his own participation and construct is own identity in interaction. *Boku* represents for him an unmarked masculine identity, the identity he himself would claim as a male speaker of Japanese with other males. *Watashi* is suitable in some contexts or may have a ludic function with his male peers to achieve a specific interactional effect. *Ore* would claim an identity as a male with which he does not feel comfortable: "Like I'm not a *waru* or anything. I'm sort of *boku* not *ore*".

In understanding the learner's narrative as a statement of learning, it is necessary to keep revising the theoretical lens through which one examines the account. At times his learning is a form of acquisition; he has received knowledge form others, at others it needs to be viewed as participation. At times, he is creating new knowledge for himself about practices of self-

reference in Japanese and he engages in an extended interpretation of practices of language, identity and representation as he works towards understanding. A single view of learning would miss the complexity of what is being acquired here. For example, a purely cognitivist view of language structures would account for the learning as the acquisition of three lexical items from comprehensible input. Such an analysis would be a legitimate formulation of learning, but it is not a sufficient account of the learning process or of what needed to be learnt. A similar critique of a partial understanding of learning would apply to the application of any of the other ways of understanding learning discussed above. What this extract does show is that the fusion of approaches to understanding learning produces a rich construct for understanding what is learned and what needs to be learned through language education. It also shows that interpretation has a transversal role in understanding how such learning progresses; that is, the acts of interpretation allow the multiple different ways of understanding learning to be integrated to produce a more holistic understanding.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that intercultural language teaching and learning requires a significant rethinking of concepts of learning within the field of language education as a consequence of the elaborated understandings of language, culture and the intercultural that have emerged. The theories of learning that currently predominate in Second Language Acquisition, while providing useful insights into the processes of learning, are not in themselves adequate to support the educational goals of an intercultural perspective. The intercultural perspective has articulated a view of language learning that goes beyond questions of how language is acquired to consider how language learning is placed in an overall understanding of language learning as education for, and engagement within, linguistic and cultural diversity. What is needed in addition to theories of language acquisition are more educationally oriented ways of thinking about learning that support a more robust conceptualisation of processes of learning, the content of learning and the products of learning. Such educationally oriented theories need to be sensitive to the diverse different sorts of learning that are involved in and constitutive of the complex process of language learning and use and of the learning needs of language learners. Such theories of learning will be essentially transdisciplinary and will require a synthesizing of perspectives to understand the complex nature and processes of learning involved. A transdisciplinary approach allows both teachers and researchers to "engage with the diverse conditions of learning, the complexity and unpredictability of meanings and contexts, and the subjective dimension of language use, and to thereby reimagine language teaching and learning" (Byrd Clark, 2016, p. 14). The central concern is to recognise the complex and holistic nature of language learning by adopting a range of theoretical views so as to capture the phenomenon we wish to understand rather than dividing phenomena according to theoretical approaches (Carlo, 2015).

References

Ashworth, P. (2004). Understanding as the transfrmation of what is already known. *Teaching in Higher Education, 9*(2), 147-158.

Besse, H. (2012). Éléments pour une « archéologie » de la méthode directe. *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde, 49*, 11-30.

Bloomfield, L. (1942). *Outline guide for the practical study of foreign languages* Baltimore, MD: Wavebly Press.

Buttjes, D., & Byram, M. (Eds.). (1991). *Mediating languages and cultures: Towards an intercultural theory of foreign language education*. Clevedon: Multingual Matters.

Byrd Clark, J. (2016). Transdisciplinary approaches to language learning and teaching in transnational times: Introduction to the special issue. *L2 Journal, 8*(4), 3-19.

Byrd Clark, J., & Dervin, F. (Eds.). (2014). *Reflexivity in language and intercultural education: Rethinking multilingualism and interculturality*. New York & London: Routledge.

Caravolas, J. (1980). Janua Linguarum Reserata 350 ans après. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation, 6*(3), 511–521.

Carlo, C. (2015). Pluri-inter-transdisciplinarité des recherches impliquées dans la description de la langue en usage: Comment penser la porosité des champs de recherche ? *Recherches en didactique des langues et des cultures, 12*(3), 1-9. doi:10.4000/rdlc.959

Chastain, K. (1976). *Developing second language skills: Theory to practice*. Boston: Houghton Miflin.

Chomsky, N. (1959). Review of *Verbal Behaviour* by B.F. Skinner. *Language, 35*(1), 26-58.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 249-306.

Comenius, J. A. (1970). *Panaugia* (D. Tschižewskij Ed.). Munich: Fink.

Damen, L. (1987). *Culture learning : the fifth dimension in the language classroom*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Dann, H.-D., & Haag, L. (2017). Lehrerkognitionen und Handlungsentscheidungen. In M. K. W. Schweer (Ed.), *Lehrer-Schüler-Interaktion: Inhaltsfelder, Forschungsperspektiven und methodische Zugänge* (pp. 89-120). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Dervin, F., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2013). Introduction: Linguistics and intercultural education. In F. Dervin & A. J. Liddicoat (Eds.), *Linguistics and Intercultural Education in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 1-25). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Graczyk, P. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2003). Implementation, sustainability, and scaling up of social-emotional and academic innovations in public schools. *School Psychology Review, 32*(3), 303-319.

Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *The Modern Language Journal, 81*(3), 285-300.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogía do oprimido*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz a Terra.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1960). *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). *Truth and Method* (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans. 2nd ed.). New York: Continuum.

Gallagher, S. (1992). *Hermeneutics and Education*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Han, Z. (2016). A "reimagined SLA" or an expanded SLA?: A rejoinder to The Douglas Fir Group (2016). *The Modern Language Journal, 100*(4), 736-740. doi:10.1111/modl.12378

Hilgendorf, S. K. (2012). History of language teaching methods *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Hulstijn, J. H., Young, R. F., Ortega, L., Bigelow, M., DeKeyser, R., Ellis, N. C., Lantolf, J. P., Mackey, A., & Talmy, S. (2014). Bridging the gap: Cognitive and social approaches to research in second language learning and teaching. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 36*(3), 361-421. doi:10.1017/S0272263114000035

Kern, R., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2008). De l'apprenant au locuteur/acteur. In G. Zarate, D. Lévy, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Précis de plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme* (pp. 27-65). Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines.

Kramsch, C. J. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Hemel: Prentice-Hall.

Kreber, C., & Cranton, P. A. (2000). Exploring the scholarship of teaching. *The Journal of Higher Education, 71*(4), 476-495. doi:10.2307/2649149

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Sociocultural contributions to understanding the foreign and second language classroom. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Levine, G. S., & Phipps, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Critical intercultural theory and language pedagogy*. Boston, MA: Heinle ,Cengage Learning.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2005). Culture for language learning in Australian language-in-education policy. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 28*(2), 1-28.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2014). Pragmatics and intercultural mediation in intercultural language learning. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 11*(2), 259-277.

Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Long, M. H. (1985). Input and second language acquisition theory. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 413-468). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

López-Vargas, B. I., & Basto-Torrado, S. P. (2010). Desde las teorías implícitas a la docencia como práctica reflexiva. [[From implicit theories to teachign as reflexive practice]]. *Revista Educación y Educadores, 13*(1), 275-291.

Marland, P. W. (1998). Teachers' practical theories: Implications for preservice teacher education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education & Development, 1*(2), 15-23.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*. London: Longman.

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 113-123). New York: Oxford University Press.

Paavola, S., Lipponen, L., & Hakkarainen, K. (2004). Models of innovative knowledge and three metaphors of learning. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(4), 557-576.

Plato. (2013). *Plato Republic* (C. Emlyn-Jones & W. Preddy, Trans. Vol. 1: *Books I-V*). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Plato. (2014). *Laws* (R. G. Bury, Trans. Vol. 2: *Books 7-12*). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Puren, C. (1988). *Histoire des méthodologies de l'enseignement des langues*. Paris: Nathan-CLE International.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, W. M. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Rousseau, J.-J. (2009). *Émile ou de l'éducation* (A. Charrak Ed.). Paris: Flammrion.

Scarino, A., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2016). Reconceptualising learning in transdisciplinary languages education. *L2 Journal, 8*(4), 20-35.

Seedhouse, P., Walsh, S., & Jenks, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Conceptualising 'Learning' in Applied Linguistics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher, 27*, 4-13.

Skinner, B. F. (1951). *How to teach animals*. San Francisco, CA: Freeman.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principles and Practice in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 234-250). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M., & Deters, P. (2007). "New" mainstream SLA theory: Expanded and enriched. *Modern Language Journal, 91*, 820-836.

The Douglas Fir Group. (2016). A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world. *The Modern Language Journal, 100*(S1), 19-47. doi:10.1111/modl.12301

van Lier, L. (2002). An ecological-semiotic perspective on language and linguistics. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language Acquisition and Language Socialization. Ecological Perspectives* (pp. 140-164). London: Continuum.

van Lier, L. (2004). *The Ecology and Semiotics of Language Learning. A Sociocultural Perspective*. Boston: Kluwer.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/2005). *Мышление и речь*. Moskow: Smysl.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (M. Cole, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

White, L. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zarate, G. (1986). *Enseigner une culture étrangère*. Paris: Hachette.