

EXPLORING THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CROSS-BORDER LANGUAGE LEARNING

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- ‘...the language profession has not been entirely successful at making a principled case for how language as a meaning-making system in and of itself is deeply implicated in ways of cultural knowing. By extension, it has also not considered the activity of learning a second language, including learning it in an instructed setting, as developing new forms of cross-cultural knowing.’

A dual legacy

- Structuralist emphasis on language as a system abstracted from use: Saussure's 'circle around language' (Lantolf, 2006)
 - Study abroad increases student access to high quality input.
- Utilitarian emphasis on the instrumental in language education
 - What can students do?

Meaning in contemporary applied linguistics research

- Systemic Functional Approaches (Byrnes, 2009)
- Cognitive Linguistics (Tyler, 2010)
- Concept-based Language Instruction (Lantolf, 2007)
 - Spanish grammar (Negueruela & Lantolf)
 - French grammar (Poehner, 2007)
 - English phrasal verbs (Lee, 2011)
 - French sociopragmatics (van Compernelle, 2011)

Research on language learning in study abroad (Kinginger, 2009)

- Outcomes
 - Proficiency
 - Fluency
 - Domains of communicative competence
- Communicative settings
 - The classroom
 - The homestay
 - Informal settings
- Language socialization and identity

How does study abroad contribute to language learning?

- Study abroad *can* have a positive impact in every domain of language competence.
 - research on development of linguistic, discourse, actional, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence
 - assessment of general proficiency, fluency, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension
- Study abroad holds significant potential for the development of **social/ interactive abilities** (e.g., sociolinguistic, discourse, pragmatic abilities).

Questions

- Where does *meaning* (and by extension, cultural knowing) make its way into the literature on language learning and study abroad?
- How might the profession expand its attention to language learning *as intercultural learning* in this setting?

Agar (1994) on 'languaculture'

- Ethnographic 'rich points' : loci of conflict presenting opportunities for learning about relationships between language and culture
- Du versus Sie in German
 - Grammar books are 'clear as freshly washed crystal.' (p. 18)
 - Du is for children, friends, relatives.
 - Sie is for everybody else.
 - Gaffes, misunderstandings (e.g., unnoticed flirtation)
 - 'Social acrobatics' (p.19) needed to restore harmony to interactions

Pragmatics

- Pragmalinguistics
 - resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or personal meanings
- Sociopragmatics
 - ‘the sociological interface of pragmatics,’ (Leech, 1983, p. 10) referring to the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action
 - ‘sociopragmatics is very much about proper social behavior, making it a far more thorny issue to deal with in the classroom – it is one thing to teach people what functions bits of language serve, but it is entirely different to teach people how to behave “properly.”’ (Kasper & Rose, 2001, p. 3)

Language and meaning in study abroad research

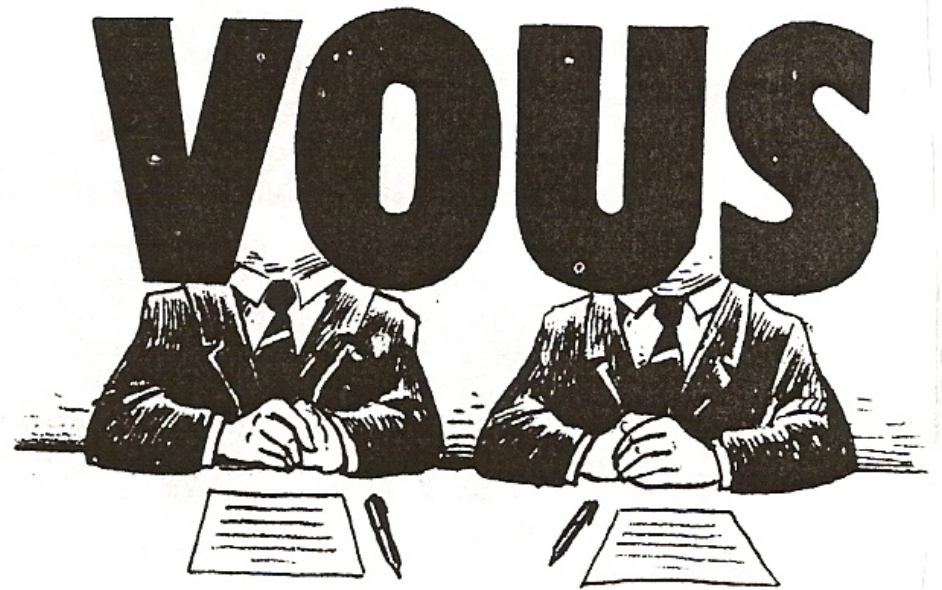
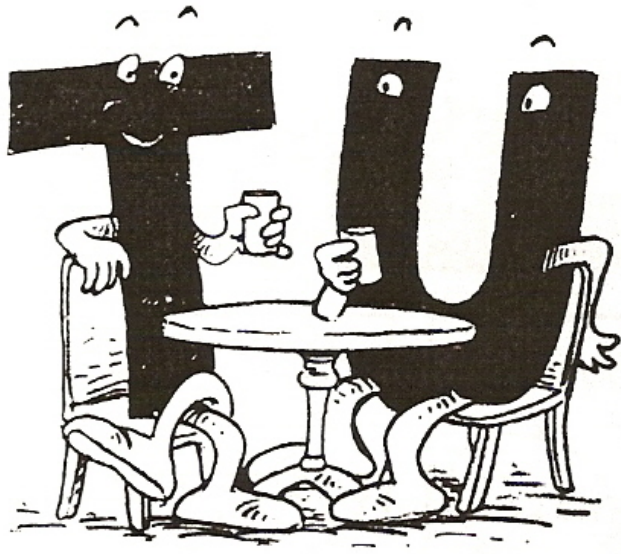
- Studies taking a sociopragmatic orientation to the outcomes of study abroad
 - Kinginger and Farrell (2004), Kinginger (2008)
 - Shardakova (2005)
 - Brown (forthcoming)
- ...or to the process of language socialization
 - Hashimoto (1993)
 - DuFon (2006)
 - Hassall (2006)
 - Bacon (2002)

Address forms in French

- Tu and Vous are double indexicals (pointing both to the interactive context AND to the desired social identity of speakers). Their use is inherently ambiguous.
- Perceived difficulty *increases* with proficiency.
- All speakers of French are acrobats on a “sociolinguistic tightrope” (Dewaele, 2004).
- ‘La longue marche vers une francophonie moyenne passe sous les fourches caudines du tu et du vous.’
- *... the long march toward appropriate use of French passes through the Caudine Forks of tu and of vous.* (Calvet, 1976, p. 188)

Social interactive abilities: Deixis

Tu and vous (from <http://grammaire-fle.wikispaces.com/Les+pronoms+personnels>)



(Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004)

- Pre- and post-study abroad Language Awareness Interview
- 23 participants studying in France for one semester
- Results show that
 - Participants became significantly better at matching their use of these forms to informal and formal contexts.
 - **Participants became less certain about how to use these forms.**
 - **Advanced speakers learned that they might choose their address forms according to their desired social identity.**

Apologizing in Russian (Shardakova, 2005)

- It is winter and you are in Moscow. You have a meeting with your advisor at the university at noon and you are a half-hour late because of the traffic delays caused by the snowstorm. Your bus that was taking you to the metro station was cancelled. Since you couldn't get a taxi, you had to walk and it took you thirty minutes longer to get to the metro station. When you arrived to the office your professor greeted you with the phrase: “You are 30 minutes late.”

You: _____

(from Shardakova, 2005)

Shardakova (2005)

- Participants included
 - NSs of Russian
 - Advanced learners with and without a prior sojourn in Russia
 - Intermediate learners with and without a prior sojourn in Russia
- *Only* study abroad (as compared with domestic immersion) allows students to ‘see things from the point of view of a Russian’ and choose to craft apologies accordingly.

Honorifics in Korean (Brown, forthcoming)

- What does it mean to negotiate a Korean-speaking identity as an L2 user?
- How do the 5 male participants manipulate and understand the use of honorifics: *contaymal* (‘respect-speech’) and *panmal* (‘half-speech’)?
- All participants displayed command of these forms on a DCT task, in interview data, and in naturally-occurring talk.
- Foreigner status conveyed disadvantage in opportunities to learn native-like patterns of *contaymal* use, and learners were exposed to use of *panmal* that differs from expert talk.
- Different responses, Richard vs. Patrick

Register in Japanese (Hashimoto, 1993)

- Descriptive case study of an Australian high school student on a year-long homestay in Japan
- The student was explicitly counseled by the host family on matters of correct use, e.g. of polite style in a formal speech.
- The student was also ‘a participant observer of the corrective practices which pertain to first language acquisition by the children in the host family.’ (p. 170)

The socialization of taste in Indonesia (DuFon, 2006)

- From DuFon (2006)
- Bruce: *Saya senang. Apa namanya?*
- I like this. What is it called?
- HM: *Jagung*
- Corn.
- Bruce: *Jagung saya?*
- Just corn?
- HM: *Dadar jagung.*
- Corn pancake.
- Bruce: *Dadar.*
- Pancake
- HM: *Dadar jagung.*
- Corn pancake

From DuFon (2006)

- Bruce: (*Dadar jagung*)
- (Corn pancake)
- HM: *Ada dadar telur.*
- There is egg pancake.
- Bruce: *Hm*
- HM: *Tapi ini jagunglni ja.*
- *Itu jagung dicampur telur.*
- But this is corn- This is co- that is corn mixed with egg.
- (DuFon, 2006, p. 98)

DuFon (2006)

- The socialization of taste included
 - Orientation to the food
 - Food as pleasure
 - Food as identity marker
 - Food as gifts
 - Food as a material good
 - Food as health (see also Jackson, 2008)

Leave-taking in Indonesian (Hassall, 2006)

- Hassall's (2006) diary study on saying goodbye in Indonesian (*permisi* vs. *dulu* statement):
- Acquiring knowledge can be a major challenge for the adult learner.
- 'My acquisition of leave-taking formulas and of pre-closings is primarily a tale of acquiring knowledge itself. I repeatedly revise and firm up my knowledge of both these aspects of leave-taking as well as learning new forms' (p. 53).

Leave-taking in Indonesian (Hassall, 2006)

- ‘As I was trudging home on the final stretch after a long hot walk, I was called over to chat by two women in the yard of a house nearby... We chatted amiably enough, but I suddenly got the impression that I’d overstayed my welcome – one of them seemed to be casting around rather awkwardly for further questions to ask me. So I rather hastily took my leave, with a *dulu* statement: ‘*Pulang dulu ya*’ ‘I’m going home for now, okay’ (literally, ‘Go-home for-now, yes’). I said it a bit tensely and unsmilingly and it felt a bit abrupt as I said it. As I then turned to go, one of them said softly, in English, ‘Excuse me’. I turned around in puzzlement. She then repeated in Indonesian: ‘*Permisi*’, and laughed. So her ‘excuse me’ had been a gentle correction; a supplying of what I’d omitted to say.’ (Hassall 2006, p. 39)

Learning the rules in Mexican Spanish (Bacon, 2002)

- Case study of ‘Lily,’ a British student in a private university in Mexico
- Initially Lily disparaged Mexican academic culture and practices.
- Eventually, through classroom and informal interactions, she gained awareness of the value and meaning of ‘respect’ in Mexican culture and its linguistic correlates.
- She learned that the *usted* form would index her deference toward the social status of her interlocutors and allow her to display respect and knowledge of social class distinctions in Mexican society.

Missed opportunities

- The qualitative research offers many useful perspectives on the study abroad experience, particularly in relation to ‘individual differences’ in learning outcomes (Kinging, 2008).
- However,
 - Few studies address students’ *understanding* of the language they are acquiring and its cultural meaning.
 - Most studies seek the perspective of students only.
 - The perspectives of host families, educators, and community members are missing.

The role of program design

Levin (2001)

- After passing through the main course aisle, the student diners had to choose a certain number of plates from different areas. Instead of venturing into a new culinary experience with a salad such as *celeriac remoulade*, or a dish of fresh beets, sometimes students found it easier to substitute a Coke or an extra cookie for a salad. If they did not select all the courses, the clerk would stop them and point out that they needed to take more...In these first meals in France, students tried to figure out what they were eating, and what they might buy during the day that they could keep in their dorm rooms so they would not need to come back to the cafeteria.

From: iutp.univ-poitiers.fr



Language proficiency

- De Keyser (2010)
- Intermediate level learners of Spanish in Argentina
- Monitoring, the process of drawing on explicit conscious knowledge of grammar and vocabulary during communicative events
- Limited knowledge of grammar, little prior opportunity for practice:
 - Portrays students in a ‘valiant struggle in a battle for which they were ill-equipped’ (p. 81)
 - They spent their time ‘reinventing the elementary grammar wheel in their classes and avoiding practice opportunities with native speakers because they were too painful’ (p. 89).

Language proficiency

- Magnan & Back (2007)
- Students arriving with intermediate proficiency for a semester-long sojourn go home just as they are beginning to overcome the problems cited in DeKeyser (2010).

The construction of the self

- Pellegrino-Aveni (2005) on factors influencing students' choice to speak out or to withdraw from foreign language speaking in the context of second language 'self-construction' while studying in Russia
- Self-construction is 'the overarching experience of self-presentation in a second language and the maintenance of security (i.e., status, validation, safety, and control) in a second culture' (2005: 7).
- Grounded theory, ethnographic observation and learner diaries: Analysis rests primarily on the perspectives of novices.

Bad caretaking: Rebecca's harsh teacher

- The first day of class:
 - Later in the lesson, I didn't understand some words (she had asked us to please say something if we didn't understand). So I asked what the words meant, and she turned to me & said (basically), "you're a bad student, you finished college already and you should be ashamed for not knowing!" I replied sarcastically and hurtfully in English, "Thank you." I really felt like crying! She completely cut me down in front of the class. (Pellegrino-Aveni 2005: 58)

Rebecca's sense of security

Rebecca:

Never regained a sense of security in this class

Cut class

Criticized the teacher's domineering style

Complained about the teacher's comment on US students' political apathy

Blamed the teacher for the state of her Russian, which 'sucked'

What is really going on here?

- Was this an inept and intentionally hurtful teacher?
- Was this a mismatch in expectations about classroom interaction?
- Was the teacher's understanding of the public/ private dimension of social life fundamentally different from the corresponding cultural and codified legal concepts guiding interpretation by Rebecca and her American classmates (Pavlenko 1999)?

'Alice' (Kinging, 2004)

- *Here in France everyone just fucking talks during class and you can't even hear or understand the prof. I'm so sick of it already. How am I ever going to survive a fucking year here? It's a good thing that I don't have enough \$ to go home for X-mas cause I wouldn't come back. Hate France, Hate French, Hate Life. I can't believe that this was my fucking life's dream! (Alice' s Journal – Lille 10/15/98)*
- *I would sit around with all my fellow students and we would sit around with our coffee and our cigarettes and we'd have these long philosophical conversations using big long French words and I was so French (Interview 10/2000)*

Ethnographic studies: The role of gender

- Wherever they go, American female students are harassed:
 - Russia (Polanyi, 1995)
 - Argentina (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006)
 - France (Kline, 1998; Kinginger, 2008)
 - Spain (Talbert & Stewart, 1999)
 - Costa Rica (Twombly, 1995)
- The young men accompanying them celebrate their own heterosexual identities as defenders of women, enlightened by an upbringing in a country defending gender equity (Kinger, 2008).

Another perspective

- Patron's (2007) qualitative study of French students on a year-long sojourn in Australia:
 - *La drague, j' ai trouvé ça vraiment bizarre. Parce que c' est presque politiquement incorrect de draguer. Au bout d' un moment je me suis dit: 'Bon, il doit y avoir un problème avec ma personne. Voilà je dois pas être belle ou je dois avoir pris du poids, ou ya quelque chose parce que ya jamais personne qui me drague. Personne me fait des compliments' [...] les gens ne se regardent pas en fait [...] C' est désagréable parce qu' on se sent moins bien et en meme temps on se sent plus en sécurité. (Arlette)*

Wish list

- Collaborative, dialogic, and intercultural *research design*
- ...with a focus on the meanings in addition to the forms students are learning.
- True longitudinal studies tracing language development in interactive contexts (e.g. Cook, 2006; 2008; Iino, 2006)
- More studies examining both pragmalinguistic performance and sociopragmatic awareness
- Research on ‘pro-active learning interventions’ (Van de Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009, p. 2) including as concept-based instruction of various kinds

In progress...

- Language socialization of high school students in Chinese and American Homestays
- In collaboration with Dali Tan, Landon-in-China
- Data include interviews of all parties (students and host families), recorded everyday interactions, notes from participant observation.
- What are the challenges and affordances of homestay experiences in China (for American students) and in the United States (for Chinese students)?

Further reading

- Kinginger, C. (2008). *Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France*. Modern Language Journal Monograph Series.
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