

TAKING ON NATIONALISM IN THE NAME OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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Nationalism presents significant challenges to intercultural competence instruction. On the one hand, nationalism promotes the compartmentalization of communities into mutually-exclusive and discretely-defined nationalist entities. In complementary fashion, nationalism also advocates the homogenization of cultural and linguistic practices within communities according to arbitrary standards. Language classrooms that do not address these dual complications do so at the expense of intercultural competence development. This is because nationalist borders and standards provide justification for the marginalization of the in-between, inter-connected third spaces that intercultural competence calls for. To facilitate critical classroom engagement with nationalism, this paper promotes the terms, *nationalist border practices* and *nationalist standard practices*, two terms that capture the dual constraints of nationalism on intercultural competence instruction. The terms offer terminology for students and teachers to perceive nationalism as a daily routine practice, to identify the challenges posed by nationalist commonsense, and to take agency over such practices in the interest of intercultural competence development. Classroom activities that lend themselves to the inclusion of these two terms are highlighted from the existing literature. To conclude, the paper takes the two terms as a launching pad for re-imagining language instruction as a true training ground for intercultural and inter-lingual individuals.

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism presents a particular dilemma for formal language classrooms. Generally understood, language classrooms are promoted as opportunities for individuals to develop their abilities to engage with others across borders of culture and language. However, the borders widely recognized in language classroom contexts are tied to nationalist principles of social organization (i.e., visions of humanity divided into discrete, mutually-exclusive nations). This poses a fatal complication because the nationalist agenda is entirely dedicated to the maintenance of nationalist borders inter-nationally and the homogenization of cultural and linguistic practices intra-nationally. Thus, when language classrooms do not critically engage with nationalism, they become complicit in reinforcing the very borders they aspire to transcend. Furthermore, they reproduce the

forces of nationalist homogenization that problematize the cultural and linguistic diversity classrooms aspire to celebrate.

The structure of the paper is the following. I will review the complications of nationalism as it pertains to language learning classrooms. Next I will introduce two terms that couch nationalism in social practice and thus provide analytical terminology in support of intercultural competence instruction. I will make reference to specific classroom activities that lend themselves to the incorporation of the two terms, and I will close with the suggestion that language classrooms must undergo a re-envisioning if they are to transcend nationalist constraints to develop intercultural individuals.

DEFINING NATIONALISM

Nation-states are understood here to be socially-constructed, imagined communities (Anderson, 1983/2006) that are reproduced in daily social interaction (Billig, 1995). These communities are bound by the central principle behind nationalism: the congruence of a national people (i.e., the Volk) and a political state (Gellner, 2006; McVeigh, 2003). Ideally, each nation shall be served by a state that faithfully reflects the national essence. Nationalism gives privilege to the one-nation, one-state arrangement (e.g., Japan). Multi-national states are acceptable (e.g., Canada) although they can be seen as problematic because they hold the potential for national fissure. A nation with no state is in the most peril. Without a state, a nation has little grounds on which to justify its own existence in the international world order (Billig, 1995).

The second central principle is that nationalism projects itself as a comprehensive organizational system. Any object, so conceived by humans, is subject to nationalist appropriation into the international order of discrete nationalist entities. Nationalism is both individual and universal at the same time (Billig, 1995), making possible an interconnected series of nation-states akin to franchises. For example, each nation-state must meet certain criteria in order to be recognized as a legitimate nation-state (e.g., a national flag, a national anthem, a national military). However, there is variation in the way that each nation-state meets these criteria much in the same way that franchise outlets are individualized manifestations of a centralized theme.

Nationalism and the “naturalness” of nation-states are social constructions. Rather than extending deep into primordial time, nations are products of modernity: “Nationalism engendered the rise of nations and not the other way around” (Gellner, 2006: 54). Billig (1995) introduces the term *banal nationalism* to refer to the way that nationalism is reproduced on a daily basis through social discourse. We reproduce nationalist social

worlds in our everyday participation in them. In a powerful analogy, Billig explains that nationalism circulates just below our conscious awareness, like a flag waving in a window unnoticed (Billig, 1995, p. 8). It is through a daily ritual of not noticing that nationalism becomes natural and self-evident (Billig, 1995; Gellner, 2006).

Nationalism as practice

To understand nationalism as socially-constructed schemas of organization that are reproduced in daily social interaction is to interpret nationalism through the lens of social practice theory (Bourdieu, 1977a; Bucholtz, 2000; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Giddens, 1979; Ortner, 1984; Wenger, 1998). Social practice theory came to prominence in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response to the confines of structuralism and as an extension of neo-Marxist thought. Social practice theory rectifies the overly-deterministic tendency of structuralism by conceiving of agency and structure as locked in a duality (Giddens, 1979; Ortner, 1984; see also Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 50-51). Agency acts on structure (to reproduce or transform it) while social structure acts on agency (to confine it or to make transformation a possibility). It is social practice--social activities that local actors imbue with meaning--that ties individuals to social structure and thus makes the local establishment of social order possible. For this reason, social practice theory pays close attention to local discourse activity to analyze exactly how the agency/structure duality is played out in various contexts.

Applied to the discussion of nationalism thus far, social practice theory renders nationalism as a set of particular practices that serves as a resource for local actors to organize their social worlds according to the two nationalist principles outlined above: (a) nation/state dyad, and (b) comprehensiveness as an organizational system. Nations, their borders, and their standards are all negotiable and contestable. Individuals in local interactions may work to reinforce existing nationalist social structure or they may work to transform it. Since such structures are largely taken for granted and circulate in the sub-consciousness (Billig, 1995), the first step is to raise awareness or to break the "false consciousness" of nationalism (Gellner, 2006: 119-120). Only then, would individual actors be empowered with the agency to either continue to reinforce or to instead transform the nationalist social worlds they practice.

LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Scholars of intercultural competence have long noted the complications that nationalism poses for the type of third space activity called for by the term, *intercultural competence*

(Byram, 1989, 1997, 2008; Crozet, Liddicoat, & Lo Bianco, 1999; Kramersch, 1993; Risager, 2007). In recent publications, Byram (2008) and Risager (2007) both assert that the point behind language study is to raise awareness of the limitations imposed by nationalism and to advance beyond those limitations in search of an international identity (Byram, 2008, p. 120) or of a world citizen identity (Risager, 2007: 227). Language classrooms that aim to cultivate intercultural competence must critically engage with nationalist commonsense. If they do not, they fall victim to a self-reflexive pedagogy that merely reinforces nationalist boundaries (McVeigh, 2004; Swaffer, 2006).

Defining intercultural competence

Intercultural competence will be understood here according to Byram's (2000, p. 8) definition. An interculturally competent individual is one who is

able to see relationships between different cultures - both internal and external to a society - and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures - someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural.

In short, an interculturally competent individual is one who exhibits a critical consciousness of self/other perspectives, thus an ability to mediate successfully across cultural communities. Intercultural competence-minded instructional programs begin with an explicitly reflective component. As students interact with Other cultural communities, they are prompted to reflect back on their own community and the commonsense notions they carry with them. Over time, students learn to decenter their Self-centered perspective so that they are able to see Self through Other perspectives. Intercultural competence programs share an appreciation of ethnography as a method for instilling in students the skills to see across and beyond boundaries of language and culture (Byram, 1997; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001; Risager, 2007).

Two terms

The identification of nationalist complications for intercultural competence is well accepted, but how does one impart that to students in language classroom settings? I propose two analytical terms that crystallize nationalist processes that work against intercultural competence development. They are *nationalist border practices* and *nationalist standard practices*, and are intended for students and instructors in order to

provide a means for dialogue and critical self-reflection, two key components of intercultural development.

To speak of nationalism as practice poses a benefit to intercultural competence development because it encourages students and instructors to view nationalist fixtures (e.g. national languages, national culture) as something enacted in regular everyday practice. To raise awareness of how these operations work is also to open space in the classroom for students to take agency over these nationalist practices. Following the intercultural agenda, students can identify ways to manipulate nationalist practices in ways that benefit—rather than hinder—their development as intercultural individuals.

Nationalist border practices

I define nationalist border practices as “the identification in discourse of physical, social, and psychological boundaries, given the presuppositions of nationalism” (Meadows, 2009, p. 40). There are certain characteristics to nationalist border practices that can be identified: one, relational identity work (i.e., distinction-making between two or more entities) and, two, mutual exclusivity (i.e., elucidation of discrete boundaries). In using the term nationalist border practices, I am specifically referring to those self/other distinctions framed in nationalist terms, as opposed to other organizational schemas such as gender, social class, ethnicity, among others.

The first principle specific to nationalist border practices is the principle of relational identity work. The principle begins with the acknowledgment that no nation ever sits in isolation. As both Anderson (1983/2006) and Billig (1995) point out, nations are never coterminous with the entire world population (see also Triandafyllidou, 1998). That is, they employ Other nations in order to reflexively define Self. The mutual ratification of borders between nations contributes to the mutual justification of each individual nation and by extension the entire nationalist network of nations (Billig, 1995). Relational identity work means that we confirm ourselves in the other (Hanks, 2005) and that identity is most salient at points of inter-group contact (Barth, 1969).

National identity is always practiced in relation to another, and who or what that Other is depends on the context. For example, consider the case of those who claim Welsh identity (Coupland, 2003). In one situation, the Welsh identity in Wales is apprehended in contradistinction to English identity. In another situation, across the Atlantic in the American Northeast, Welsh identity becomes an object of distinction-making vis-à-vis a wider and more expansive white mainstream American identity.

As nations locate one another they hold a vested interest in clearly demarcating boundaries. Where one nation's territory ends and another begins is a political negotiation and has potentially violent ramifications. Not only are physical manifestations of borders vigilantly protected, but so are borders of social practice (cultural, linguistic, ethnic, etc.).

Borders are rigorously maintained for the sake of self-survival. Each nation agrees not to infringe on the other because to claim the same space as another nation means the death of one, or both, or possibly the entire international system (Anderson, 1983/2006; Billig, 1995). That is, no nation exists in isolation and each nation out of necessity must recognize other nations in order to guarantee its own continued existence (cf. Bakhtin's dialogic theory of identity in Holquist, 1990).

The clear division of humanity into discrete nationalist entities of course contradicts post-structural thought now prominent in the social sciences. Human communities are interconnected throughout and the clear demarcation of community boundaries is an ideological product and not the reflection of objectifiable distinctions or sociocultural boundaries (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). Therefore, neat and crisp linguistic and cultural boundaries should be suspect in language learning contexts (Guest, 2002; Kubota, 2003; Risager, 2007; Tai, 2003).

Based on the ideal of mutually-exclusive nations, cultural and linguistic practices that cannot be unambiguously categorized as one national product or another are de-valued and deemed undesirably "inauthentic." For example, students who embody hybrid cultural and linguistic practices (e.g., transnational students, Generation 1.5 students, return migrant students) are often coerced into an either/or proposition where they must assimilate or fail. This either/or paradigm is predicated entirely on the principle of mutual exclusivity to national borders. Their hybrid practices are there but since they disrupt idealized visions of discrete nationalist entities, they are stigmatized.

I will next provide some concrete examples in order to best clarify my interpretation of the term, nationalist border practices. First, classroom activities known as *critical cultural incident* exercises can reinforce notions of nationalist borders if not approached in a critical way (Guest, 2002). Critical cultural incident exercises are short vignettes that portray a hypothetical encounter between a language student and a native speaker of a target language. Always, cross-cultural miscommunication ensues. While these activities are presented with the greatest of intentions, they can promote nationalist borders in two ways (Guest, 2002). First, the characters often portrayed serve as personifications of nationalist essences, tied to notions of nationalist standards. Second, the vignettes rarely address the type of cultural and linguistic accommodation that

individuals utilize in order to navigate cross-cultural episodes (as documented in the fields of linguistic anthropology and interactional sociolinguistics). If classroom activities are to prepare students for the multilingual encounters that they, by definition as language learners (Kramsch, 1998), are destined to engage in, at what point are they trained for multilingual practice (as opposed to monolingual) in the classroom?

In a recent ethnographic study along the US/Mexico border, I encountered nationalist border practices in my interactions with the participants of a single English language classroom (Meadows, 2009). I encountered engineering professionals on the Mexican side of the US/Mexico border who expressed great distaste for hybrid cultural and linguistic practices characteristic of border areas (e.g., *Mexican-American* and *Spanglish*). Their clear distinction between *mexicano* and *americano* subjectivities echoed the findings of Vila (2003) where he located both border reinforcement and transcendence at the US/Mexico border. For the students I worked with, their psychological nationalist borders served as resources for identifying value in classroom practice. Specifically, they attributed high value to English language classroom practices that maintained the clear border between Mexico and America. For example, a clear distinction between the students as *mexicano* and the instructor as *americano* strengthened the inherent value students perceived in the English language classroom they attended. This distinction was articulated in the classroom as the teacher and students consistently positioned one another—through their discourse—on opposite sides of a nationalist border. Additionally, the teacher and students practiced a strict division of linguistic practice, establishing English for all ratified, public discourse (e.g., frontstage, Goffman, 1959) and Spanish for non-ratified, private discourse (e.g., backstage, Goffman, 1959).

A further example can be found in Arizona state legislation. Passed into law in 2000, Proposition 203 prohibits all non-English instruction in Arizona public K-12 schools. Although the legislation is intended as a pedagogical corrective, it rests on no sound second language educational research (Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra & Jiménez, 2005). In fact, it contradicts it. Thus, the only logical alternative is to conclude that the legislation functions to segregate linguistic practices in public classroom spaces. In this case, linguistic practices (between Spanish and English) are apprehended as nationalist borders and the enactment of legislation to institutionalize that division is the nationalist border practice.

Nationalist standard practices

The second way in which I specify nationalist practice is in the term, *nationalist standard practices* which will be defined as “the process of articulating, managing, and

reproducing the nationalist standard subject and nationalist standard language in social practice” (Meadows, 2009, 48). Where nationalist border practices handle largely inter-group variation, standard practices address intra-group variation. Nationalist standard practices act on the principle of singularity: the process of isolating a single point to stand in for an entire range of points which in turn are each evaluated in relation to the centralized point.

Nationalist standard practices are articulated through the dual products of a nationalist standard language (i.e., a form of linguistic practice that ties one to nationalist authenticity) and a nationalist standard subject (i.e., a form of cultural practice that identifies one as a prototypical member of the nation). Together, these comprise the idealized notion of the *native speaker*. State-funded and state-authorized educational institutions provide one productive channel for assigning authority to nationalist standards (Bourdieu, 1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Collins, 1991; Lippi-Green, 1997). Nationalist standard language and subject are both engineered varieties of speaking and being a member of a nationalist community, respectively. According to Bourdieu’s practice theory, they are notions that reflect the interest of elite segments of a nation-state community that have been re-interpreted to appear universal (Bourdieu, 1977b). When given over to nationalism, language classrooms confuse standardization and conventionalization. The former is a discursive process linked to the power and ideology of the nation-state while the latter is a universal feature of human social interaction (Goodman, 2000).

Cultural and linguistic practices that present potential alternatives for established nationalist standards are also subject to erasure as per the nationalist preference for singularity. Regarding nationalist standard language, Lippi-Green (1997) has provided comprehensive documentation of how a standard language variety is elevated in educational circles and non-standard varieties are conversely devalued. Turning to nationalist standard subjectivity, educational settings can marginalize student cultural practices that deviate from nationalist standards, rendering students *double others* (Trueba, 2004) in the nationalist spaces they occupy. Nationalism’s privileged treatment of singularity provides justification for prosecuting student third space practices. Importantly, national standard practices do not eradicate non-standard varieties of national subjectivity or national language (Silverstein, 1996). In fact, they require them: non-standard varieties relegated to social margins serve to reaffirm the centrality of the nationalist standards, reinforced in negative relief.

Nationalist standard practices are regular aspects of language classroom activity. For example, in my ethnographic work at the US/Mexico border (Meadows, 2009), I was able to identify some of the discursive practices that contributed to a mutual recognition

of a nationalist standard language. The students and teacher demonstrated a regular occupation with discerning “correct” English usage, in other words linguistic practice that can be understood as being “standard.” The instructor also tied together notions of nationalist standard subject and standard language, conventionally understood as native speaker status. During classtime, the teacher exhibited a pattern of collocating *America + English + First-person pronouns* (e.g., *I, me, we, us*), thereby taking up position as an ideal nationalist standard subject. Outside of the classroom, interviews with students revealed the metonymic power of the standard variety to stand in for all varieties of English. Students consistently identified the English they were studying as the *general* English and the *correct* English. Furthermore, over systematic participant-observation in this classroom, it became apparent that the students and instructor shared a joint-orientation to a nationalist standard community, an imagined community populated by nationalist subjects (e.g., *americanos*) speaking the nationalist standard language (e.g., *the correct English*).

Other studies have documented the influence nationalist standard practices have on the kinds of identity options made available to students and the kinds of imagined communities in which they are invited to participate. To take one example, Shardakova & Pavlenko (2004) have illustrated how Russian language textbooks offer students white, middle-class, and male-centric identity options. It is an imagined community occupied by a specific kind of person who studies Russian and particular kinds of individuals one is to interact with in Russian. Such narrow depictions of imagined communities contradict the inherent diversity and variation to human social practice.

The discrepancy between nationalist standards and empirically-documented linguistic practices was highlighted in Fonseca-Greber & Waugh (2003) who demonstrated through corpus linguistics how the French pronoun *nous* (i.e., English, *we*) is falling out of general usage to be replaced by the pronoun *on* (i.e., English, *one*). Their analysis highlights the prescriptive nature of foreign language textbooks, especially in light of such glaring discrepancies.

Nationalist authenticity through nationalist borders and standards

The current paradigm of second language teaching, the communicative language teaching approach (Savignon, 1972), explicitly advocates the incorporation of authenticity to language classroom practices. Thus, a successful classroom under this approach is one that best presents students with simulated encounters with target culture individuals and in the target language (i.e., controlled engagement with a nationalist authentic Other). However, the difficulty is in verifying that the classroom practices are satisfactorily congruent with the linguistic and cultural practices of a given

target community. As is shown above, representations in classrooms can fail to capture the complexity of cultural and linguistic variation.

Nationalist border practices and standard practices provide an easy—but deceptive—avenue for discerning the nationalist authentic in language classroom contexts. As per nationalist border practices, that which is most distinct from a local community (and therefore fulfill the principles of relativity and mutual-exclusivity) is understood to be authentic. One may imagine a Japanese classroom in the United States where authentic is everything that articulates a distinction between American and Japanese cultural and linguistic practices (as locally-defined). In similar fashion, nationalist standards can provide simple caricatures of very complex communities due to its recognized status across nation-states. Since nation-states share particular symbols and practices that identify one another as legitimate nation-states, the nationalist standard of the Other can be taken as legitimate within the local nationalist community. The attractiveness of mutual recognition is even stronger when one considers that rejecting the standards of a nationalist Other entails the implicit challenging of the nationalist standards of the Self nation.

The notion of authenticity as understood within sociolinguistic circles carries with it nationalist undertones (Bucholtz, 2003). The general project of linking the present to a primordial past where supposedly nations and their languages sat in respectful distance from one another goes against everything that sociolinguists know about the deep interconnection of languages (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 399). Additionally, traditional notions of authenticity call into mind essentialized images of nationalist communities where members are more or less the same (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). Such beliefs echo the nationalist principles presented above.

What this means for intercultural competence is that these two processes (i.e., nationalist practices of standard and border) provide justification for devaluing and defiling cultural and linguistic practices that counter them. They provide a route to nationalist authenticity, but to an interpretation of authenticity that offers no equitable space for language learners. This kind of authenticity is only authentic to nationalism and not to the linguistic and cultural variation students encounter daily.

APPLICATION OF TERMS TO INSTRUCTIONAL SETTINGS

Together, these two terms capture the dual constraints that nationalism poses to intercultural competence development. On the one hand, nationalist border practices exaggerate the discreteness of nationalist borders and the distinction that resides on either side. On the other hand, nationalist standard practices justify the elevation of

singular standards at the expense of the cultural and linguistic variation that exists within human communities.

These two terms contribute to instruction primarily because they provide classroom participants (i.e., instructors and students) with analytical vocabulary for discussing the influence nationalism has on the way individuals organize their social worlds. To treat nationalism as social activities that students and instructors can readily identify (i.e., social practice) is to open the door to student and instructor agency to transform those practices, and hence the nationalist landscape. Rather than simply reproduce the nationalist borders and standards, students and instructors are better able to take up positions as both *animator* and *author* (Goffman, 1981) of their social worlds. Ultimately, the idea is to empower students and instructors with the analytical tools to craft their own third spaces, zones of intercultural practice that nationalist borders and standards would otherwise defile.

It is not necessary to abandon nationalist practices all together. Even Risager (2007) who crafted the transnational alternative approach does not advocate such a stance. Instead, from her perspective it is in the interest of intercultural competence to facilitate language learning experiences that prepare students for intercultural encounters of diversity and contiguity, both in ways they may not expect.

Classroom activities

This section will highlight classroom activities present in the literature that lend themselves to classroom discussion of nationalist border and standard practices. Although the authors differ (Kramsch, 1993, 2003; Liddicoat, 2006; Risager 2007) the central goals behind each activity are (1) awareness-raising, (2) dialogue, (3) recognizing potentials for transformation.

Critical classroom engagement with nationalist standard practices should endeavor to deconstruct them by taking seriously the linguistic and cultural variation of human communities. Liddicoat (2006) carried out an activity in a French language classroom in Australia that introduced students to a wide range of contexts in which the *tu/vous* distinction was instigated. Through exposure to the diversity of contexts and ways that the distinction is articulated through linguistic practice, Liddicoat (2006) reports that the students increased their awareness of cultural and linguistic complexity that far exceeded the constraining portrayals in their textbooks. What is more, a selection of students were able to draw on their exposure to French-speaking contexts in order to critically reflect on the cultural and linguistic practices familiar to them in their own communities. From a vantage point concerned with intercultural competence, such an

activity aids students in cultivating third spaces for themselves. The goal was not to emulate native speaker French sensitivities but the cultivation of interlingual awareness on the part of the students. This is one example of an activity that compels students to reflect on nationalist standard practices and to specifically identify the practices that result in limited textbook representations of the linguistic and cultural practices of both Self and Other communities.

In a similar engagement with notions of standard, Kramersch (2003) describes a collection of student written summaries across separate geographic locations. What she found was that student construction of summaries reflected their cultural communities (inter-national diversity). But what is more, Kramersch documented diversity intra-nationally as the summaries from one location in Germany differed qualitatively from those of another location. In light of this finding, she remarked that broad homogenizing statements (e.g., the German people) should be made with some caution (Kramersch, 2003, p. 16). Like Liddicoat (2006), the type of reflective dialogue that this activity elicits will undoubtedly call into play terms such as nationalist standard practices. An explicit recognition of unexpected linguistic variation found intra-nationally could in turn lead students and teachers to a collaborative identification of the specific social practices that support the erasure and marginalization of diverse (i.e., “non-standard”) linguistic and cultural practices. Having identified such standard practices, they would be in much better position to take agency over them.

Classroom activities that invite discussion of nationalist border practices should explore practices that serve in the interest of nationalist border maintenance. In her explication of the transnational paradigm, Risager (2007) recommends student activities that facilitate dialogue across conventional nationalist boundaries in order to explore perceptions of the Other. For example, a German language classroom in Denmark engages via the web with another German language class in France. She also suggests an English language class in Denmark completing an English course in Poland. Such an environment not only develops students’ sophisticated understanding of how nationalist border practices operate, they also inject students into a multilingual situation where English, Polish, and Danish are operative languages (Risager, 2007, p. 214).

The notion of exploring border-making through mutual dialogue is also advocated in Kramersch (1993) where she recounts an activity in cultural interpretation. The activity began with American teachers of Russian language re-designing a beverage commercial for an imagined Russian audience. Likewise, she asked Russian teachers to interpret the same commercial for an imagined Russian audience. Following this, she asked the same task of teachers at other geographic locations. What she found

was a kaleidoscope of perspectives (Kramersch, 1993, p. 223), each interpretive product more of a reflection of the Self than of the Other. If presented in the classroom, students could explore the various aspects of borders and the manner in which nationalist perspective is tied to dual principles of nationalist border practices, mutual-exclusivity and relativity.

I conducted a related activity with a group of Japanese language students in the United States (Meadows, 2008). Three participants assembled a collection of images to introduce Japan to a hypothetical American audience. I have termed the eventual product of their negotiations the *familiar exotic* (Meadows, 2008) because the participants identified not only Japanese imagery to include in their design but specific Japanese imagery that would be familiar to the American audience as the exotic Japanese Other. This activity helped to demonstrate the tight connection between nationalist authenticity and distinction. For the language students, it is a practice in demonstrating intercultural competence: the ability to see the perspectives of competing nationalist narratives simultaneously and to position selves between the two. This activity, like all others advocated here, must be followed up with an opportunity for dialogue and reflection.

CONCLUSIONS: RE-IMAGINING LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The deconstruction of nationalism as it pertains to language instruction calls for a re-conceptualization of what language instruction looks like. Byram (1989) has called for re-ordering language classrooms to place culture at the center and language at the subordinate. Thus the class develops students' cultural literacy of which language is just one component. This suggests classes such as *Multilingualism* where each section may address a series of linguistic communities (that could be student-selected). More recently, Byram (2008) has expanded on the notion of an international identity which he proposes as an endpoint for language instruction. International identity, as complement to national identity, should "induce a re-appraisal of self as a national subject" (Byram, 2008, p. 120). Others such as Risager (2007) and Tai (2003) have called for classrooms that place linguistic and cultural variation at the center of the curriculum therefore de-centering nationalist "commonsense." If such a position were taken, language programs could offer a course on *Japanese languages* as opposed to the singular *Japanese language*. Risager (2007) expands her critique of nationalism in her proposed transnational paradigm. Grounded in linguistic and cultural variation, the transnational paradigm takes instruction beyond nationalist constraints aiming for a world citizen identity as an endpoint goal.

What these proposed alternatives share is a shift from a monolingual orientation to a multilingual one. Current classrooms that are organized around monolingualism set up a perplexing paradox: the supposed cultivation of multilingualism through explicit monolingual practice. Instead, language classrooms should recognize the resources that are available to multilingual individuals (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Kramsch, 2006; Ruiz, 1984) and facilitate classroom practices so as to capitalize on those abilities. Additionally, a multilingual orientation calls for mutual accommodation between teachers and students. As the students are developing multilingual skills so too should the teacher (see Risager, 2000).

Turning to a multilingual orientation entails some specific changes to what instruction looks like. First, it suggests a re-imagining of the target endpoint of language instruction. If students are freed from the idealized native-speaker endpoint in order to define their success, they may aspire to develop a multilingual and intercultural identity that underscores their agency in social interaction. With a multilingual as a target model (Cook, 2002), the kinds of identity options made available to students can diversify exponentially. An endpoint for students which is couched in cultural and linguistic variation is more realistic training than the imagined monolingual and monocultural nationalist communities that borders and standards offer classrooms. Second, a multilingual orientation also suggests a strategic use of both the students' first language variety and a target variety in the classroom (Auerbach, 1993; Byram, 1989; Luk & Jin, 2007; Risager, 2007). No linguistic practice would be ruled out on principle alone. The alternative, immersion pedagogy, does nothing for the reduction of cultural boundaries and the preparation of students for transversing them. Instead it socializes them into competing worlds, mutually-exclusive worlds, where they may eventually find themselves inauthentic in both. Third, the shift from monolingual target model to a multilingual one also entails the embracing of expert status and the deconstruction of native speaker status (Davies, 2004; Rampton, 1990). A shift to expert status means that linguistic and cultural practices are assessed according to their effectiveness in a given context and not according to the participant's personal histories (e.g., family kinship, place of birth). A multilingual approach further defines communicative competence according to various factors (e.g., students involved, their needs, place of instruction, among others). Notions of communicative competence that tie appropriateness to nationalist assertions of stable monolithic communities can be satisfactorily abandoned. Also, an alternative approach must take linguistic and cultural variation head on in the classroom. Students enter into classes extremely sensitive to linguistic and cultural variation, and to pretend that variation is not relevant or to dismiss it on principle alone does nothing to cultivate intercultural individuals.

A final word on student agency is in order. All of the hallmarks of nationalist social organization work against language students taking up full agency in the target communities they train for. The notion of native speaker places language learners on the perpetual outside because by definition they can never attain native speaker status. Similarly, the notion of nationalist authenticity brands students from the start as *in-authentic* since those who attend a language class, by definition, are not *authentic*. In response to this, language classrooms must prepare students for engagement with such practices that marginalize their opportunity for eventual full participation in unfamiliar communities. The deconstruction of nationalism is one avenue to fulfill that goal. Nationalist border practices and nationalist standard practices are two vehicles to move us forward.

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