



Australian Government

Quality Teacher
Programme



Self-access module 3

PERFORMANCE IN INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGES
TEACHING AND LEARNING

RCLCE Research Centre
for
Languages
and
Cultures Education



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Performance in intercultural languages teaching and learning

This is a self-access learning module.

It is designed as an additional pathway for exploring intercultural language learning for teachers to work through by themselves or with groups of other teachers. It refers to modules provided as part of Phase 3 of the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) project, and assumes familiarity with the knowledge and skills gained through participation in the ILTLP. It is not intended as a stand-alone professional learning programme.

It is recommended that you work through this module individually, or with a group in a professional learning context, relating the module both to the materials explored in Phase 3 of the ILTLP and to your work with your students.

Overview of module

'Performance' interactions offer exciting participation and analysis possibilities for students in intercultural language learning programmes. A range of learning modes can be embraced, and a wide variety of linguistic forms can be encountered, modelled, analysed, experienced and 'lived' through the inclusion of performance elements considering a range of intercultural concepts. Performance can provide 'ways in' to another language and culture that extend students' understandings of visual and written materials, through active involvement and 'embodiment' of the target language and culture, where, crucially, 'observation' of cultures and languages can become 'participation' in the 'doing' of cultures and languages. In this way, students understand themselves as not only participants in but also observers of the language learning process. As a resource for languages teachers, performance offers potential for a level of engagement for students where language learning skills are actualised, where 'rote' learning is replaced by meaningful repetition with a clear and identifiable purpose, and where 'experiencing the other', in a cultural sense, is made easier through the requirement of active participation and reflection about oneself that engagement with performance necessitates.

This module explores how 'performance' can be understood in a number of useful ways for intercultural language teaching and learning. These perspectives include:

- performance as intrinsic to communication
- performance as intrinsic to *learning* to communicate
- performance as locating identity
- performance as intrinsic to a culture
- performance as a resource for use in intercultural language learning

These five perspectives identify the crucial role that 'performance' has in the process of language acquisition and use and demonstrate the inextricable link between language and culture that is at the heart of an intercultural language teaching and learning orientation to languages teaching and learning.

As you work through the module, you will explore ways of using performance in languages and cultures teaching and learning, looking at examples from current practice and considering a number of conceptions of performance. You are invited to consider ways of incorporating or extending uses of performance into your own intercultural language teaching and learning environment and to identify, analyse and reflect on the value of doing so. Learning interactions are provided to support the understanding of the concepts and to provide opportunities for you to experience and to analyse these five conceptions. Suggestions for useful ways to incorporate performance in intercultural languages teaching and learning are also provided, together with a range of examples from current practice and from materials developed by teachers in Phase 1 of the ILTLP project, that you may choose to use with your students, or use as a guide to developing appropriate processes and interactions for your classroom practice. A range of views on the potential benefits and possible 'pitfalls' of including performance in languages classrooms is also included, along with multiple references to readings and source material that may be useful.

Module Objectives

In this module you will

- consider a number of conceptions of 'performance'
- participate in interactions that explore your own conceptions of performance
- investigate ways to use performance in intercultural language teaching and learning
- consider examples of performance used in language teaching and learning

Performance as intrinsic to communication

'Enactment' in its various forms is used in every cultural group to make meaning and to demonstrate understanding of meaning to others within the group.

Geertz 1973

We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies.

Abercrombie 1963

Key Ideas/Learning

Every act of communication is a performance. In each communicative interaction one is, at the same time, a participant (an actor) and an observer (the audience). The performance is modified dependent on other participants and the events that occur during the interaction in the process of communication. Developing awareness of oneself and of others as participating in a performance in each act of communication allows self-reflection and analysis of language choices, physicalisation, vocal tone, social hierarchy, etc. as well as enhancing one's capacity to view, respond to and analyse the intercultural interactions taking place.

Reviewing a simple act of communication through the frame of the five principles of intercultural language learning allows the opportunity to reflect on the importance of performance in communicative acts using language. It positions participants to become more aware of their roles and the roles of others in communicative language acts, as self-reflexive and increasingly intercultural learners.

Performance as intrinsic to communication: the concept

- *When teaching chan and kun endings for young girls' and boys' names, a Prep girl who was out the front starting giving hints to the class saying "ch.....,ch.....,ch.....no not kun –that's for boys!"*

Jill Bignell, Tasmania¹

The central message of this module is that every act of communication is a performance. As languages teachers, we need to be mindful of this so that we can maximise the meaningfulness and value of each interaction with language our students have, through recognising the performance choices and implications that flow from these choices, in all communication. This key idea provides a foundation for conceptualising the role of performance in intercultural languages teaching. Each time we approach another person or

¹ The classroom examples used throughout the module are in the most part drawn from teacher examples prepared during Phase 1 of the ILTLP project, and can be found in full in the 'examples' section of the ILTLP website.

people, speak to them, listen to them, participate in dialogue or conversation, we perform. Performance is integral to the expression of language in the spoken form. Every utterance is nuanced by physical stance, vocal tone, register, volume, pace and 'attitude'. In the snippet of reflection provided by Jill Bignell, above, from Phase 1 of the ILTLP project, speaking of her Prep/Year 1 class, one can instantly visualise the child, bursting to share her knowledge without giving the game away completely, performing her act of communication to her classroom fellows. We recognise the act of communication through the child's performance, and her use of performance to communicate her meaning.

Within each performance in which we engage, we embody a sense of the identity we wish to portray to the person with whom we are communicating, our 'interlocutors' or 'audience'. Each of us, in communicating, is an 'actor', and represents the embodiment of a set of values, an identity. With different audiences, we alter our performance, we adapt that identity to portray aspects of our character or self that we feel are appropriate for the particular communication. We adjust our speech, in its tone, volume, register, choice of words. We adjust our physical position, our posture, placement, gestures. We integrate these two elements: speech and action. We indicate a relationship to the other person through this process, and we 'enact' that relationship, we play a part in a performance in which the other person or people, too, are playing a part or parts. As any communicative act proceeds, we make further adjustments, in response to the performance of the other, in the natural course of the interaction. We are responsive and self-reflective without necessarily being conscious of these processes. We critique our performance, and that of the other person or people, and we shift our continuing performance accordingly, in the attempt to make our meaning clear and engage with the other person.

Not only do we bring a sense of identity to each interaction or communication in which we participate, but it works the other way, too, as the interactions themselves, the communication, work(s) reflexively to help shape and confirm identity. We become what we communicate, we are what we say, what we act. In this sense, I suggest that 'performance' is fundamental in the conception of self and identity, and that this process is universal, in that it applies within any (every) cultural group.

Within the context of intercultural language learning, we take as our starting point that language and culture are inseparable, and that as learners from one (or multiple) cultures, we aim to use our own languages and cultures, sense of identity and our *intraculturality* to participate in and interrogate the new culture, through its language. We do this so that we might notice differences, points of connection and range of views, for example. In doing so, we are moved to make comparisons, analyse differences and similarities and reflect on who we are, how we define ourselves and how knowledge of the other has altered, modified or enriched our understanding of ourselves and of the other.

Through participation in performance, we are forced to make choices, judgments and decisions about vocabulary, pronunciation, tone, stance, register, volume, attitude etc. as well as about relationships to other performers, actions that are or are not appropriate and so on. The interaction and active participation required necessarily compel one to consider these questions and powerfully locate the 'actor' to consider 'otherness'. Critically, a **'stepping out'** **'de-centring'** of self occurs, so that one becomes another, while always being him/herself. Self-reflection occurs naturally and inescapably through this process, as we make judgments and justify them.

Participation includes not only being an actor, but being the audience. There is no communication if an actor has no audience, and the audience is not passive. We don't simply 'receive' the performance. We make judgments about it. In communicating, we are usually both actor and audience at the same time. Even when we attend a formal performance, we are not passive as the audience. There is always interaction, as responses happen and communication occurs. From a critical literacy perspective, we might ask about a performance: who speaks, why, what place the art form has within the culture, etc.? We notice, we react, and we interact. We then reflect, and review our own sense of self (identity) from this new perspective. This is the process that occurs in every theatre experience. The audience

participates in the drama through identification with the other, while not actually being the other. Our fascination with the other, as providing an insightful means of looking at ourselves is being satisfied, which is exactly the process we are seeking through intercultural language learning.

The example below, from another ILTLP Phase 1 participant, illustrates the point of performance being intrinsic to communication. In a languages classroom setting, a 'barrier' game is used as means of communication between students. One student is required to view a picture and describe it to the other, who recreates the picture from the words into a new picture. Both students become acutely aware of the need for accuracy in the performance of the language and the choice of words used. Both students also are engaged in an interaction where each relies on the other, with the performance of language being the only tool available for communication. The student describing the picture makes choices about what words and phrases would be meaningful to the other student, so that he/she has the maximum opportunity for understanding. The 'performer' also makes decisions about how to physicalise this description, with hand gestures, etc. The 'observer' interprets the information communicated, and, within moments, when the barrier is removed, both can see whether the interpretation was accurate, as the original picture is revealed.

Barrier game majalah

Using Indonesian 'youth' magazine, learners choose a picture of an Indonesian person, and use Indonesian to describe it (clothing and colour vocab) to a partner who cannot see the picture. The partner must try and draw what is being described.

Kim Daymond, Karatha WA

Interaction

The following interaction invites you to seek out another person willing to trial a simple act of communication with you. This person may be another teacher, a friend, partner, or colleague. The person does not need language teaching skills or experience, and neither of you needs drama teaching experience. If you both speak the same 'target' language, however, you could conduct the interaction in that language.

Within a five minute time limit, discuss with this person the morning routine you undertake on a usual working day. Describe what you do, in what order, the time constraints, needs of children, partners/housemates, preparation of lunches, what happens with your pets, transport arrangements and so on. The other person also describes their routine, to you.

When the five minutes is up, each of you makes written notes of the following:

About yourself:

How did you sit/stand? What representation of yourself did you give? Did you use casual or formal speech patterns and vocabulary? Did you feel comfortable disclosing this information? Did you leave out any bits that you wouldn't want a stranger to know? Did you add or alter what you were saying in response to signs from your partner? What feedback did you give? Did you feel comfortable? Did you have a sense of self-awareness, of yourself as a 'performer'?

About your partner:

What did you notice about him/her? How did he/she sit? Did your partner use similar speech forms and vocabulary to you? What cues, signs of understanding did your partner give (nods, words of agreement, laughs, etc)? Did you feel comfortable hearing about his/her life?

About the interaction:

Who spoke first and how did you decide this? Did you speak one after the other or was there more exchange, as in a conversation or dialogue? Did you feel any points of connection, or difference? Did you modify, add to or wish you hadn't said certain things after hearing your partner? Did you find the interaction satisfying? Would you have said the same things about yourself to someone you knew better/didn't know as well?

Discuss what you found out with your partner and ask your partner to discuss what they found out to you. See if you agree with each other's interpretation/representation. Consider the following:

How has the interaction changed in the 'reporting' stage? How do you position yourselves? How has the shift from having a discussion to reporting altered the interaction (physically, vocally, in tenor/tone/formality)? Do you have a sense of how being the audience is different from being a participant in a discussion? Do you use a different voice when reporting from when discussing? Did the expectation that the other person would evaluate your rendition of their routine affect how you thought about and talked about the material you were presenting? How would you summarise the differences and similarities in the roles you have played in these communicative acts?

Now complete the following reflection sheet, noting which principles of intercultural language learning explored in Module 2 of the ILTLP professional learning materials (active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection, responsibility) were 'at play' in this interaction, and how.

Reflection

Intercultural language teaching and learning principles	Were these involved in the communication act? How?
<p><i>Active construction</i></p> <p>Did you and your partner build on existing knowledge and develop understanding of the others and your own identities?</p>	
<p><i>Making connections</i></p> <p>Did you make connections between yourself and your partner? Did you relate to the information you gained from your partner? Did you mentally or verbally express these connections, in terms of similarities, differences, points of identification?</p>	
<p><i>Social interaction</i></p> <p>How would you describe the social interaction in this act of communication? Were you able to relate to the other person and their use of language and narrative style? Did you value their contributions? Did they value yours? How do you know from the 'performance' you both gave?</p>	
<p><i>Reflection</i></p> <p>Did you need to think back over what your partner had said before reporting back to them? Did you need to think over what you</p>	

had said when they reported back to you? Did you reflect on your performance as a partner in a discussion, a reporter and a listener?	
<p><i>Responsibility</i></p> <p>Did you take responsibility for respecting the other person's values and differences in their responses and communicating style? Did you behave with a sense of allowing the other person their space to perform as they saw fit? Did your language and body language reflect your true thoughts and feelings?</p>	

Consider how the above interaction would have been different if at least one of the participants in the above interaction was not speaking their first language. How would it have been different? If you used a common 'target' language, how did this affect the interaction? Given these considerations, ask yourself how important 'performance' is in acts of communication?

Performance as locating identity

Key Assessment Task

Imagine you are meeting a Chinese student at a school in China. Use Chinese to hold a conversation in which you introduce yourself, exchange other relevant personal information, and relevant contact details.

Stephanie Andrews, Adelaide

Key Ideas/Learning

Identity is located in performance interactions in all the spheres of activity in which we engage. Through these interactions we constantly (re)establish and (re)affirm our identities. Language and culture is crucial to these interactions. Developing an awareness of the role of performance and the use of language in the establishment and reaffirmation of identity provides language students with an insight into how others, too, establish their identities, and how both their own and others' identities are important in intercultural communication.

Performance as locating identity: the concept

Crichton (2006) discusses the relationship of performance and identity in a framework he and Angela Scarino developed for a course on culture and identity at the University of South Australia. Crichton suggests that identity is accomplished through performance interactions in the following ways:

- as family :** the family is a key site of interactions in which identities are performed and are subject to power
- as difference:** the performance and interpretation of identities varies according to the performers' understanding of the performance, the audience and setting
- as narrative:** narratives are a key resources for the performance of identity and the telling and interpretation of narratives is a key site for such performances

as membership:	in performing our identities in interaction we draw on and display our memberships
as history and memory:	the performance of identity draws on and contributes to the reproduction of history and memory
as institution:	institutions and their defining practices control the performance of the identities of participants within them, and of others in whom the institution has an interest
as language:	language is a key resource through which identity is performed and interpreted

This last point, that language is a key resource through which identity is performed and interpreted is crucial to intercultural language teaching and learning. If we can keep this idea at the forefront of planning our programmes and ensure that an emphasis on **identity** (our own and others) established **through language use** underpins classroom interactions, we will create the conditions for ongoing reflexivity and interrogation of how language influences and shapes identity and on the meaning of the 'intercultural' in language learning.

Drawing on a theatrical metaphor, Crichton (2006) adds that identity/identities:

- reside(s) in the 'character(s)' we perform
- is (are) defined by how others perceive our performances and how we perceive those of others
- is (are) affected by our understanding of the 'audiences' for whom we perform and the 'stage(s)' on which we perform

Crichton (2006) discusses performance as identity through three theoretical discourses. These 'ways of viewing' performance in relation to identity provide another insight into how we might view performance in the classroom, and point to directions for investigations and interactions that we might pursue to explore these ideas. These discourses are:

- performance as ordinary (Garfinkel/Sacks/Ionesco)
- performance as deliberate (Goffman)
- performance as subject to power (Foucault)

Performance as ordinary

Garfinkel (1967; 1963) developed ethnomethodology as the study of the 'take-for-granted' ways in which we routinely make sense of each other in social interaction, and used experiments with trust to show how we use usually unnoticed methods to accomplish and display our memberships to each other (Crichton 2006). These 'taken for granted' ways of interacting are important cultural markers. Noticing and drawing attention to them is a powerful way of gaining insight into other cultures, and provides platforms for comparison with our own ordinary conventions, which may or may not be ordinary in the target culture.

The plays of so-called 'absurdist' playwrights including Eugène Ionesco and Samuel Beckett provide texts for analysis **and enactment** that focus on the ordinary in extraordinary ways. The use of language is absolutely critical to the understanding of the ordinariness, and of the cultural norms that create French identity. Similar dramatic texts that develop the idea of 'ordinariness' are found in other language/culture groups, also. Some well known examples are Bertold Brecht (German) and Dario Fo (Italian), and David Hare, Tom Stoppard, Louis Nowra and Stephen Sewell (English/Australian English). These playwrights' texts provide valuable intercultural texts for analysis at senior secondary level. Often the language used is not complex, but the cultural subtext and the scope for interrogation of the texts interculturally are broad.

Performance as deliberate

Erving Goffman (1959, 1961, and 1968) sharply distinguished between the identity of the performer and the character performed. He explored the ways in which, within a single person, the identity of the performer and character can differ; how people manage these differences strategically in interaction for different audiences in different settings; and how people typically seek to perform a character that will gain the most advantage for them (Crichton 2006).

This view of performance relates to the points made above about choice in performance depending on with whom we are communicating. If performance is deliberate, then communication is deliberate and the language choices we make are deliberate. Interrogating the 'deliberateness' of language (what is it intended to do? what does it say about the identity of the 'actor' and the 'audience'? why was it said in this way and not another way?) provides fruitful material for intercultural investigation.

Performance as subject to power

Foucault (1979, 1980) envisaged the social world (his 'stage', to continue the theatrical metaphor) as a type of prison (a panopticon), which is a series of cells arranged in a circular building around a smaller tower within the circle that holds the guards, who can see all the prisoners, all the time. He highlighted the point that constant surveillance acts as a trigger of fear for performers to abide by the 'rules', that this eventually becomes automatic behaviour and the population is powerfully controlled in this way (Crichton 2006).

If we can bear in mind this metaphor (though not apply it!) of performance being shaped by power relationships that are often learned and automatic, and encourage students to become aware of and to deconstruct the power relationships in interactions, insights into socio-cultural and socio-linguistic understandings of languages and culture can emerge. Heightened awareness of power relationships in language/culture performance can trigger meaningful discussions and understandings of self and others, and of 'positioning' in interactions. Reflect on the cartoon used in Module 1, for example, where a power relationship was being played out in words and actions, within a particular cultural-linguistic model.

Reflection and example

The point of this perspective of performance for our purposes is that our actions, our performances, our identities are, to a great degree, determined by the requirements of the cultures within which we live. Awareness of this perspective adds further depth to an understanding of language use in a cultural context and provides further fertile ground for intercultural investigation. Consider the interaction below, for example. Students are asked to compare the 'cultural requirements' and context for a celebration by French youth with their own 'cultural requirements' and context, and then to enact this for further comparison and reflection. Consider how student's views of their own party scene would become sharper through this experience: i.e. how their own sense(s) of identity had(have) been challenged/reinforced/foregrounded through the experience of this activity.

Interaction: *Students identify and discuss how French youth interact in party contexts (based on a number of texts provided) and how this seems to compare to their own experience.*

Task: *Develop a role play (in small groups) about arranging a party for a visiting French student group.*

Reflection: *How does your role play relate to your own experience of parties, and what modifications in content and language are necessary when engaging with French youth?*

If we also ask students to consider how their performances and the choices they make are deliberate, reflect ordinariness and are subject to power (including peer and generational pressure), we ask them to think more deeply about themselves, their identities and their relationships with others; as well as providing opportunities for students to compare their situation with that of others- in this case, French youth.

Interaction

Consider Crichton's (2006) view that identity is accomplished through performance interactions:

- as family
- as difference
- as narrative
- as membership
- as history and memory
- institutionally
- as language

Language is a key resource through which identity is performed and interpreted, in its own right. Language use is also crucial to the other avenues for identity accomplishment in this list.

Spend five minutes noting how you use language in performance interactions to help identify yourself within your family, to show difference from others, to tell the narrative of your life (to whom is this told and how?), to give you membership of a group, to locate you historically, and to locate you institutionally.

Next to each observation of language use in these performance interactions note the other participants who contribute to the interactions. How are their performances different from yours and what language use demonstrates this?

Identity	Language used in performance interactions	Other participants	Differences in performances	What language use demonstrates difference?
within family				
as difference				
as narrative				
as membership				
as history and				

memory				
Institutionally				
as language				

Reflect on the range of responses you have given and how your identity and that of others involved in your 'performances' of language is both shaped by and shapes choices of language use.

Performance as intrinsic to learning to communicate

- *Talking in pairs is effective when a student with a sound understanding of the language is partnered with students needing more exposure to the ideas and language.*

Jill Bignell, Tasmania

Key Ideas/Learning

No one learns in a vacuum. We learn to speak through listening, playing, experimenting, interacting. We learn language through enacting and trialling language, through performing language. Performance is intrinsic to **learning to communicate** and language is the principal medium of this communication. Through performance communication play we highlight the advantages of language and actions for communication, and our abilities to adapt our communication strategies to learn in a particular way. We see the power of performance as a tool for communication and the importance of learning to communicate.

Performance as intrinsic to a culture (the 'aesthetic' within a culture): the concept

Performance is widely understood as being intrinsic to a culture, as defining the 'aesthetic' of a culture, those mutually recognised notions of beauty and ugliness, of what is emotionally pleasing or disturbing, tasteful or gauche, that underlie and frame what is done, how it is done and what it means for a group or culture. Even when there are sub-groups within cultures and rebels intent on subverting the dominant group paradigm, a mutual understanding of what that paradigm is, binds the group with its shared conceptions. Lange and Paige (2003) refer to 'culture' as the 'core' of languages learning. Taken a step further, I'm suggesting that aesthetic conceptions can be understood as the 'core' of cultures, and that arts forms and in particular performance are central to that understanding and are therefore essential elements of intercultural languages learning.

Arts forms have for millennia been expressions of the aesthetic for cultural groups and are therefore often defining elements for that group. Arts forms provide points of connection,

common understanding, means for expression of identity and representation, reinforcement of what and who we are and act as modes of perpetuation of these mutually-shared values.

To greater and lesser extents, arts forms continue to influence the cultures from which they come and in framing the identity (identities) of peoples from these cultures. Consider Indonesian *wayang* forms, for instance, that continue to be realised in so-called 'high' culture forms such as Central Javanese court-based shadow plays, performed in High Javanese language, using centuries old puppets and accompanied by gamelan orchestras that have essentially been the same for around 2000 years. At the same time, 'popular' culture forms of *wayang*, such as comic books and television cartoons, use the same material and values, the same aesthetic, but present the action in the form of super-hero episodes in the media of the day. *Commedia* has a similar influence in Italy. These kinds of arts forms do not define the limits of cultures by any means, but they do crucially inform their cultures.

Leaving aside the arts forms of literature and the visual arts forms of architecture, art, sculpture, etc, to concentrate on the performance arts, it is apparent that it is the human body and voice that are the means of communication of the aesthetic in these forms. The mode of communication is the use of language- vocally and physically, and, more often than not, with voice and body in combination. Words and movement are therefore inextricably linked, in this aspect of performance so crucial to the understanding of cultures.

'Performance' in this cultural aesthetic sense provides one view of how culture and language are intimately linked, and of demonstrating how language always requires a medium for expression. As teachers of an additional language(s), as a conduit for our students to reach into the 'other's' aesthetic, to discover what makes 'them' tick, we can make fruitful use of concepts of performance and of actual performing arts forms from the other culture to explore this otherness.

This conception of performance, however, in these understandings of the aesthetic, provides limited opportunities on its own for developing intercultural language learning. While it recognises the importance of understanding that the aesthetic elements underpinning cultures are crucial to the understanding of languages use, it does not necessarily engage the learner in participation or interaction with that use. There is also a risk of stereotyping culture or viewing it in a 'museum' sense, as static and without dynamism, rather than constantly subject to change and renewal. It does not ask learners to consider or question their own cultural aesthetic, nor to experience this other aesthetic as a participant. Additional conceptions of performance, tied to this fundamental conception, are needed to include these perspectives.

Interaction

Consider which performance forms you identify as being intrinsic to your culture(s) and the ones about which you teach.

- Are there overlaps? Are there differences?
- Could these performance forms be considered intrinsic to other cultures?
- What limitations do these performance forms have in terms of 'representing' the culture from which they come?
- Are these performance forms often used in stereotypical representations of the culture?

Consider how you might include 'aesthetic' cultural knowledge and understandings in your programming, without relying on displaying 'artefacts' or static interpretations.

Performance as a resource for use in intercultural language teaching and learning

Key Ideas/Learning

Language teachers have long used performance in the formal, staged sense as a tool for learning. This is often generalised into the conception of 'role play', but can also include:

- performing a scripted play, scene or episode
- writing a scene or a dialogue for performance in the target language
- performing choral recitations or poems
- learning and performing songs
- using drama exercises to enhance linguistic/cultural teaching points
- text analysis and deconstruction of language/culture elements located within performance texts
- as resources for reflection and analysis of languages and cultures.

In intercultural language teaching and learning, use of drama and performance provides opportunities to explore and develop understandings of the principles of intercultural language teaching and learning identified in Modules 1-5, and in the different ways identified in this paper.

Performance as a resource for use in intercultural language teaching and learning: The concept

Drama is often used in languages classes to allow participation that enhances experimentation with the concept of self as other. Fleming (1998, p.148) states: '(assuming a role in) drama involves looking beyond surface actions to the values which underlie them, and as such it provides an ideal context for exploration of cultural values, both one's own and other people's'. A 'stepping out of self' is required, but it should be remembered that even in 'stepping out' you are still yourself. You bring to the performance your own identity and all your own experiences of culture and language. The stepping out process can nonetheless be a powerful and liberating experience that can be of great value in intercultural language teaching and learning, as you experience both self and other at play simultaneously.

Within an intercultural orientation to use of performance in languages classes, choices made concerning delivery, motivation, relationships, speech patterns, emphases etc. are noticed, analysed and explained, within a reflective and analytical framework that contextualises the learning, allowing students to make personal and collective meaning of the language(s) and culture(s) in use. This reflective process concerns both considering the self and others involved in the performative interaction, including other performers and the 'audience'. Performers take responsibility for their actions and choices, and in doing so, are forced to consider others and their own status as well.

Use of performance in intercultural language teaching and learning needs to be considered carefully. It is important that performance experiences are meaningful for students, and are related to the wider programme being taught. Isolated 'role plays' for example, where students do not have sufficient understanding of the situation, will not be meaningful experiences in terms of considering diversity, questioning themselves or exploring and experiencing the target culture and language. Appropriate scaffolding and preparation need to be provided, of both language skills and cultural and intercultural knowledge, to enable the students to engage with the learning constructively. Performance tasks need to include processes of evaluation, analysis and reflection, where students are asked to notice and compare, to locate differences and sameness, to recognise multiplicity and diversity of meaning in texts, and to analyse and critically reflect on these understandings. Students also need to develop and become increasingly able to articulate an awareness of themselves as users of the target language in performance. They need to recognise their various roles as performer, member of a group and as the audience of their own and others' performances.

Considering reasons for using drama in intercultural languages teaching and learning

Read the following two passages from Ann Burke and Julie O'Sullivan's (2002) text on using drama in language classrooms.

Reading:

Burke A & O'Sullivan J 2002, *Stage by stage: A handbook for using drama in the second language classroom*, Heinemann, Portsmouth NH, pp. xx-xxii.

Reasons to try drama and role play in the language class

Aside from the pleasure such accomplishments give to us and to our students, there are sound reasons for using actors' methods in language classes.

1. *Teachers and students concentrate on pronunciation*

Realising that they must be understood, students feel less personally threatened when a teacher asks them to change or refine the way they pronounce certain sounds.

2. *Students are motivated*

One of the biggest reasons for including drama and role-play in our classrooms is student motivation. The teachers who have tried it have discovered that students forget that they should be learning and then do just that: learn by doing something they enjoy. And when students are having fun, they are open to acquiring skills and they feel comfortable experimenting with the new language. In turn, as they acquire skills they are more willing to continue learning.

3. *Students are relaxed*

Because the class seems less formal, the students relax. They are not restricted to their desks and are free to move around the class. Students are constantly interacting with each other, so they get to know one another well. They trust that others in the class will not ridicule them if they make a mistake. They also see the teachers join in and may laugh at themselves when something goes funny. As a result, students gain confidence. They are more willing to take a risk with language out in the 'real world' because they have been taking risks in the classroom and have been understood.

4. *Students use language for real purposes*

During a rehearsal process, we give many suggestions and directions. Students have to ask questions to make sure they understand suggestions and to clarify directions. They need to negotiate with the director how to depict certain emotions, to consult with fellow actors on how and why the plot develops as it does, and to discuss, with both director and actors, all sorts of stage business, such as where to stand and where to move.

5. *Risk-taking equals heightened language retention*

Students are taking a risk when they perform before their peers and will work hard because they do not want to make fools of themselves. There can be unpredictable moments in the performance of plays- an unexpected audience laugh or a forgotten line. These moments cause a tremendous rush of adrenaline- everyone on stage feels responsible for thinking or saying something that will carry the play forward. Anyone who has ever been in that situation knows that no one on stage at that moment is passive: every mind is engaged in trying to come up with the right set of words. This experience makes an indelible impression: they will never forget the connection between meaning and words of that particular situation. Ordinary

classroom exchanges just do not have that kind of retention power. We also find that thinking quickly on one's feet transfers to real life interactions with native speakers.

6. Community is created

One of the most obvious benefits of a drama/role-play class is that students get to know each other better and even get to know their teacher better. Those teachers who direct their students in a play find out that they and the class interact more freely and, in turn, forge closer friendships than they would in most traditional classrooms.

7. Students and teachers can approach sensitive topics

There are some topics that students do not enter into easily. Plays about those topics can sometimes be catalysts to an open and honest discussion that otherwise would stay locked within the students. Subjects such as death or suicide, betrayal of a confidence, or jealousy are painful, but if they can be discussed in relation to a character's reactions they can help students examine them on an objective level.

Reasons that teachers do not try this type of class

Unfortunately many teachers fear and therefore avoid this type of class.

1. Teachers fear that they lack training in drama/role-play

Many of our colleagues have not had training in the theatre and are not sure what to do or where to start. They have seen plays with complicated sets, costumes, lighting and makeup. They feel inadequate to deal with those various technical aspects of theatrical presentation. We recommend they do the simplest kind of production: set the scene with words (narration). New teachers to drama are unsure of how to get the actors to move on stage. Once a colleague sat in with us as we started a rehearsal and was amazed how logically the movements grew out of dialogue. 'Oh, that's how it's done', she said. 'It's easy. I had no idea'. We hope to reassure you of that very fact.

2. Teachers fear that they cannot find teacher-friendly material

Teachers don't usually have a lot of time to hunt for plays to match their classes. They may have discovered some activities books or 'how to put on a play' books or may have picked up a famous play, but none of these support the teacher throughout the whole process. We give you all that we feel a teacher needs, exercises and activities, a step-by-step process that includes text analysis (or a class produced text), casting and rehearsal preparations through to a finished production plus a few scripts by the authors and a bibliography that will give you additional information on any one of these areas.

3. Teachers fear that the class will 'get out of hand'

In a role-play/drama class some of the teacher's authority is handed over to the students who take responsibility for their own learning. We may all agree that this is a good thing to do, but faced with a noisy group of students, we experience moments of uncertainty... We encourage a teacher of this kind of class to establish a set of rules that the whole group agrees to uphold: for example, respectful ways to disagree. If something goes wrong, everyone knows what to do. In such a class, many more of the students are speaking and listening than would be actively using the language in most traditional classrooms.

Analysis and Reflection

Consider whether you agree with these reasons for including drama and why teachers might avoid drama in the languages classroom.

- What other reasons would you add in each instance?

- Do the reasons given apply to all year levels?
- What different reasons for different year levels would you give for using or not using drama in languages classes?
- Do the reasons hold for different performance activities, such as using a text written by the students, performing a very short scene, or an improvised text, such as a role play in a shop or at the market?
- Do you agree with the statement '*We also find that thinking quickly on one's feet transfers to real life interactions with native speakers*'?

How do the reasons given in the readings relate to the principles of intercultural languages teaching and learning identified in Modules 1-5? The principles are:

- Active construction
- Making connections
- Social interaction
- Reflection
- Responsibility

Ways to use performance in intercultural language teaching and learning

Key Ideas/Learning

A number of ways in which performance may be used in an intercultural language learning context are explored, drawing from examples in Phase 1 of the project, relevant literature and current practice.

Examples of use of performance for intercultural language learning

In Phase 1 of ILTLP, teacher participants attended a National Workshop on intercultural language teaching and learning. Following the workshop, each teacher worked with a member of the ILTLP project team to develop either a unit of work for one of their classes, or a long-term programme of a semester or year's length. The units and some elements of the long-term plans were trialled with the teachers' classes. These units and programmes can be found on the ILTLP website, www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au. A number of the units and plans include performance elements. Some of these are shown as exemplars, here, along with some ideas from current practice and literature.

You should view the examples shown here not as prescriptive lesson plans, but rather as indicative ideas that might be useful in your own classrooms, adapted to suit your own planning and teaching style, and the learning styles, levels and ages of your students. It is important that performance opportunities are relevant to and meaningful for your students, or a sense of artificiality will prevail, and will not assist in developing intercultural understanding.

In addition to the examples from Phase 1 of the project are some examples from current practice and relevant literature. All are intended to provide indications of what might be done in the classroom to allow students to gain a better understanding of themselves and to engage with the language and culture of the target language through the experience of performance.

Role play:

- *Tu/vous* role plays

Robert Doxey developed a unit of work for use in a French language class that focused on the appropriate use of the words for 'you' in different contexts, and the absolute cultural importance of the distinction between the two choices, 'tu' et 'vous'. He developed a role play interaction to allow students to explore the different uses in context. Through actualising the experience of defining appropriate contexts for each, and then enacting

these, students had the opportunity to perform dialogues utilising the different forms and to appreciate the difference between the two as they 'stepped out' of themselves to imagine being different people of different status within an exchange of conversation.

Task: *In pairs, students present two separate role play situations (2-3 mins max each), the dialogues for which they write themselves in French, relating to one of the topics or themes covered throughout the year – Unités 9-14 Tapis Volant 1. In the first role play, the students must use 'tu' several times in an appropriate situation and context. In the second role play, the students must use 'vous' several times in an appropriate situation and context. Props encouraged. Some may wish to use a narrator to set the scene at the start. (Engagement with content / Experimenting). Cumulative task.*

(Robert Doxey, ACT)

- Multi-contextualised role plays of everyday events

Another approach to role plays is described by Fleming (2003). In this example, he shows how giving varied contexts to a simple situation can challenge students to consider how different identities and motivations can be expressed through words, thus heightening the experience of students' understanding of the cultural and intercultural nature of every act of speech. Multiple repetitions of the exercise, as described, have the advantage of reinforcing and practicing language use, in ways other than 'rote' learning, and that these repetitions require thought and prompt discussion and reflection from students. In the activity, students are forced to consider voice, motivation, identity, the meaningfulness of the language they are using in the role play situation and the implications of the words they use. In this way, students are asked to consider the cultural implications of the language they use and how language is inextricably connected with action, via performance. A 'bonus' is that students practice their target language vocabulary in the process of performing the role play multiple times. The example used is in English, but can be used in many other languages, with enriched opportunities for discussing altered language choices (actual words used) and physical relationships (body positions and gestures used) depending on the identities of the two performers (such as the 'tu/vous' consideration described above, in French, or altered forms of address and physical positioning when the 'characters' are of different/similar ages, in Indonesian, Chinese or Japanese contexts, for example).

Foreign language teachers often ask pupils to create dramatic situations in the target language in the classroom. When students are simply repeating sentences or answering questions in the target language it could be argued that they are using a form of role play because the intention is that they do so as if the situation is happening in real life... Such approaches can increase motivation because they embed the language in concrete contexts and capitalise on the pupils' willingness to engage in forms of dramatic play, but they represent a limited use of the art form.

This type of role play exercise tends to replicate real life situations but does so often in very functional ways and tends to contain a minimum of human interest or dramatic tension. Buying a loaf of bread in a simulated situation in the classroom tends to be viewed as a substitute for the equivalent real experience... A drama teacher might approach the simple situation of buying a loaf of bread by including an extra layer of meaning, adding a sub-text, enriching the context. Imagine a simple exchange of dialogue.

A: A loaf of bread, please
B: Is this one ok for you?
A: Something smaller?
B: What about this one?
A: Fine- how much?

This situation can be deepened in different ways by creating different contexts but using the same words: A has run away from home and is scared of being caught; this is a preliminary exchange before A conducts a robbery in the shop; A is a parent with a family to feed who can barely afford the purchase; it is B's first time in the job and is very nervous; A and B are both spies and this is in fact an exchange of a code or password; A is very upper class and is condescending to B; B is always rude to customers; A used to be B's boyfriend; it is A's first time in a foreign country, using a language in a real situation for the first time; A is an escaped prisoner who must not give away the fact that s/he is from another country. The possibilities are numerous, but the different contexts require different experimentation with actions, tone, volume, speed of delivery, use of pause... From a pragmatic point of view, learners are likely to be motivated to keep repeating the same lines in the second language in different ways thus committing them to memory. But it can also be argued that probing the context and meaning is a way of probing the cultural context, defined in its broadest sense.

(Fleming 2003, pp. 90-91)

- Situational role play (Italian)

With a partner, write a short sketch/dialogue in which an Italian/Australian tourist to Australia/Italy goes to an art gallery/ shopping in a department store/makes a complaint. There should be exchange of information and the use of language that you have learned in this class module. It should be entertaining and/or humorous. You will need to consider formal and informal modes of address and the polite forms of verbs. (Written and Oral in Italian)*

(Nives Mercurio, SA)

*(*Though this interaction relates to the particular material of the class module, the idea is transferable to other contexts.)*

Text performance and analysis

Dramatic literature (plays) provide material suitable for use in the intercultural language class. There are texts written specifically for learners of languages, but also many plays written in the target language for target language speakers can offer rich opportunities for exploration of the intercultural through performance. What is important is identifying a text with a suitable level of language for the group of students involved. Interestingly, plays are often written at a relatively simple level of language, as it is the through the subtext (and the actions) that meaning is created and conveyed. Below is an example of a scene from a play by Italian playwright Dario Fo. This excerpt has been used in intercultural language planning by Nives Mercurio, a teacher of Italian.

- Dario Fo play excerpt (Italian)

Nives Mercurio and Anne-Marie Morgan, from the ILTLP project team, have prepared a series of tasks based on the text *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* (*Accidental death of an anarchist* 1970). Nives presented a unit outline at the Victorian Association of Italian Teachers congress in 2007 including some tasks based on this text. The full unit is available at:

<http://www.vati.vic.edu.au/congress/VATI-Handout-2.doc>

The following excerpt, from Act Two, is used for these tasks.

See <http://www.strano.net/stragi/tstragi/anarc/index.html> for the entire text. This is the prologue and a passage from Act 2.

Morte accidentale di un anarchico
Dario Fo

PROLOGO

Con questa commedia vogliamo raccontare un fatto veramente accaduto in America nel 1921.

Un anarchico di nome Salsedo, un emigrante italiano "precipitò" da una finestra del 14° piano della questura centrale di New York. Il commissario della polizia dichiarò trattarsi di suicidio.

Fu condotta una prima inchiesta e quindi una super-inchiesta da parte della magistratura e si scoprì che l'anarchico era stato letteralmente scaraventato dalla finestra dai poliziotti durante l'interrogatorio.

Al fine di rendere più attuale e quindi più drammatica la vicenda, ci siamo permessi di mettere in opera uno di quegli stratagemmi ai quali spesso si ricorre nel teatro. Cioè a dire: abbiamo trasportato l'intera vicenda ai giorni nostri e, invece che a New York l'abbiamo ambientata in una qualunque città italiana... facciamo conto Milano. È logico che, per evitare anacronismi, siamo stati costretti a chiamare commissari i vari sceriffi, questori gli ispettori e così via.

Avvertiamo ancora che, qualora apparissero analogie con fatti e personaggi della cronaca nostrana, questo fenomeno è da imputarsi a quella imponderabile magia costante nel teatro che, in infinite occasioni, ha fatto sì che perfino storie pazzesche completamente inventate, si siano trovate ad essere a loro volta impunemente imitate dalla realtà!

From Terza scena

QUESTORE - Lei è troppo generoso signor giudice... (gli stringe le mani commosso).

MATTO - Non mi chiami più giudice per carità... da questo momento sono il capitano Marcantonio Banzi Piccini della scientifica... Va bene?

COMMISSARIO - Ma esiste davvero il capitano Banzi Piccini... sta a Roma...

MATTO - Appunto, così se la giornalista scriverà qualcosa che non ci piace sarà facile dimostrare che s'è inventata tutto... chiamando a testimoniare il vero capitano Piccini.

COMMISSARIO - Ma lei è un genio! Se la sente proprio di recitare la parte di capitano?

MATTO - Non si preoccupi, durante l'ultima guerra ero cappellano dei bersaglieri.

QUESTORE - Silenzio è qui.

(Entra la giornalista).

QUESTORE - Avanti signorina, s'accomodi.

GIORNALISTA - Buon giorno, il Signor Questore per favore?

QUESTORE - Sono io, piacere signorina... noi ci conosciamo solo per telefono... Purtroppo.

GIORNALISTA - Piacere.. L'agente giù alla porta mi faceva qualche difficoltà.

QUESTORE - Ha ragione. la prego di perdonare, la colpa è mia che ho dimenticato di preavvertire del suo arrivo... Le presento i miei collaboratori: l'appuntato Pisani, il commissario dirigente di quest'ufficio...

GIORNALISTA - Molto piacere.

COMMISSARIO - Il piacere è mio... signorina (stringe la mano con piglio militaresco).

GIORNALISTA - Accidenti che stretta!

COMMISSARIO - Mi scusi...

QUESTORE - (indica il matto che sta armeggiando di spalle) e per finire capitano... capitano?!

MATTO - Eccomi... (appare con baffi, finiti, una pezza nera sull'occhio, e una mano coperta da un guanto marrone. Il questore resta attonito e non sa continuare. Il matto si presenta da solo): Capitano Marcantonio Banzi PICCINI della scientifica. Mi perdoni la mano rigida, ma è di legno, è un ricordo della campagna d'Algeri ex paracadutista della legione straniera... ma s'accomodi signorina.

QUESTORE - Desidera bere qualcosa?

GIORNALISTA - No grazie... Preferirei, se non vi spiace cominciare subito... Scusatemi

ma avrei un pò fretta. Purtroppo dovrei consegnare l'articolo per stasera... va in macchina stanotte.

QUESTORE - Va bene, come crede, cominciamo senz'altro, noi siamo pronti...

GIORNALISTA - Avrei parecchie domande da fare... (ha estratto un block notes sul quale legge). La prima è proprio rivolta a lei commissario, e perdoni s'è un pò provocatoria... Se non vi spiace adopero il registratore... A meno che abbiate qualcosa in contrario... (estrae un registratore dalla borsa).

COMMISSARIO - Beh, veramente... noi...

MATTO - Ma per carità faccia pure... (al commissario)... prima regola: mai contraddire.

COMMISSARIO - Ma se ci scappa qualcosa... se vogliamo smentire... quella ha le prove...

GIORNALISTA - Scusino signori, c'è qualcosa che non va?

MATTO (tempista) - No, no, tutt'altro... il Commissario mi stava tessendo le sue lodi, dice che lei è una donna di grande coraggio... democratica convinta, amante della verità e della giustizia... costi quello che costi!

GIORNALISTA - Il dottore è troppo generoso...

COMMISSARIO - Dica pure.

GIORNALISTA - Perché la chiamano finestra-cavalcioni?

COMMISSARIO - Finestra-cavalcioni? A me?

GIORNALISTA - Sì, o anche "commissario cavalcioni".

COMMISSARIO - E chi mi chiamerebbe così?

GIORNALISTA - Ho qui la fotocopia della lettera di un giovane anarchico inviata dal carcere di S. Vittore nel quale il ragazzo si trova imprigionato proprio nei giorni della notte del nostro anarchico e che parla proprio di lei commissario... e di questa stanza.

COMMISSARIO - A sì, e che dice?

GIORNALISTA - (leggendo) - Il commissario del quarto piano mi ha schiaffato a sedere sulla finestra le gambe penzoloni, e poi ha cominciato a provocarmi "buttati" e mi insultava... "perché non ti butti... non ne hai il coraggio eh? E falla finita!: cosa aspetti?". Vi assicuro che ho dovuto stringere i denti per non soccombere per non lasciarmi andare...

CAPITANO - Ottimo, pare la sceneggiatura di un film di Hitchcock.

GIORNALISTA - La prego capitano... è al dirigente di questo ufficio che ho posto la domanda non a lei... cos'ha da rispondermi? (e avvicina il microfono alla bocca del commissario).

CAPITANO - (all'orecchio del commissario) - Calma e indifferenza!

COMMISSARIO - Non ho niente da rispondere... piuttosto è lei che mi deve rispondere... "in tutta sincerità": "Pensa che io abbia messo a cavalcioni anche il ferroviere?".

CAPITANO - Zitto, non ci cascare (canticchia). l'avvoltoio vola via... vola via dalla casa mia...

GIORNALISTA - Sbaglio o lei capitano sta facendo opera di disturbo?

CAPITANO - Nient'affatto... commentavo soltanto... E se mi permette, io chiedo a lei signorina Feletti se ci ha presi per dei propagandatori di detersivi... dal momento che ci vuol vedere ad ogni costo intendi a fare la prova finestra con ogni anarchico che ci capiti sottomano?

GIORNALISTA - Non c'è che dire lei è molto abile capitano.

COMMISSARIO - Grazie... m'ha tolto da un bell'impiccio... (gli batte la mano sulla spalla).

CAPITANO - Piano con ste manate dottore... ci ho l'occhio di vetro!! (indica la pezza nera).

COMMISSARIO - L'occhio di vetro?

MATTO - E vada piano anche a stringermi la mano, è posticcia.

GIORNALISTA - Sempre a proposito di finestre, fra gli incartamenti del decreto depositato dal giudice arhcviatore, manca la perizia delle parabole di caduta.

QUESTORE - Parabole di caduta?

GIORNALISTA - Sì, la parabola di caduta del presunto suicida.

QUESTORE - E a che serve?

GIORNALISTA - Serve a stabilire se, al momento dell'uscita in volo dalla finestra l'anarchico fosse ancora completamente in vita o meno. Se sia uscito cioè dandosi un minimo di slancio oppure se sia cascato inanimato come infatti risulta... scivolando lungo la parete... se si sia prodotte fratture o lesioni sulle braccia o sulle mani come infatti non risulta cioè a dire che il presunto suicida non ha portato le mani in avanti a proteggersi nel momento dell'impatto sul terreno... gesto normale e assolutamente istintivo...

COMMISSARIO - Sì, ma non dimentichi che qui ci troviamo di fronte a un suicida... a uno che si butta perché vuol morire!

MATTO - Ah, non vuol dire... qui devo dare purtroppo ragione alla signorina... Come vede io sono obbiettivo. si sono fatti fior di esperimenti in merito: si sono presi dei suicidi, li si sono buttati di sotto... e si è notato che tutti... istintivamente al momento buono.. trach... con le mani in avanti!

QUESTORE - Ah bell'appoggio che ci dà... ma è matto?

MATTO - Sì, chi gliel'ha detto?

Following is an English translation by Richard Nelson (1983) of the same scene. The full text can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/7206/note.html>, accessed 17 July 2007.

PROLOGUE

On the night of December 12, 1969, a bomb exploded and killed sixteen people at the Agricultural Bank in Milan. At the same time, another bomb exploded at a bank in Rome which did not go by without causing casualties, and another bomb was discovered at the tomb of the unknown soldier. Milan police arrested an anarchist, Guiseppe Pinelli, and accused him of the crime. At a certain point in his interrogation, the anarchist flew out the window of the police station. The same day, another anarchist - a dancer by profession - was arrested; he was suspected of being the one really responsible for the bomb in Milan.

Something similar occurred in New York in 1921, when the anarchist Salsedo flew out the window of a police station, around the same time that Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested for a crime never proven against them. Their story has nothing to do with the one we are telling now. But from these stories we can conclude that many anarchists are obsessed by the urge to jump out of the window, because they believe they are able to fly.

It is an illusion of theirs that when they're two or three yards from the ground, they merely have to open their arms and move their feet to fly up again. Some observers have suspected that anarchists are able to fly, but they are also so underhanded that they smash themselves to the ground, just to incriminate the police and other state institutions by dying.

Anyway, the investigation of the death of the anarchist in Milan was filed away in the archives.) The dancer anarchist was proven innocent after three years in jail. Public pressure has frequently been exerted on authorities to re-open the investigation of the anarchist Pinelli's death in Milan, but they keep postponing it.

FOOL. Don't go on calling me judge, for pity's sake! From this moment on, I am Marcantonio Banzi Piccinni; from the scientific division. All right?

CAPTAIN. But there really is a Captain Banzi Piccinni down in Rome -

FOOL. Exactly. That way, if the reporter writes something we don't like, it will be easy to show that she invented the whole thing by calling the real Captain Piccinni from Rome as a witness.

CAPTAIN. Wow, you're a genius! Do you really think you can play the part of the captain?

FOOL. Don't worry; during the last war I was a chaplain for the Green Berets.

CHIEF. Quiet, she's here.

The reporter enters.

CHIEF. Come right in, ma'am.

REPORTER. Good evening. I'd like to see the Chief please.

CHIEF. That's me, ma'am; pleased to meet you. We've only spoken on the phone, unfortunately.

REPORTER. How do you do. The guard down at the door gave me a bit of trouble.

CHIEF. You're right; please excuse the inconvenience. It was my fault for neglecting to inform him that you were coming. I'd like to introduce my assistants: Officer Pisani; the Captain in charge of this office . . .

REPORTER. Pleased to meet you.

CAPTAIN. My Pleasure, ma'am. (*shakes her hand with military vigor.*)

REPORTER. Good Lord, what a grip!

CAPTAIN. I'm sorry.

CHIEF. (*indicating the FOOL, who is messing about with his back turned*) And finally, the other Captain . . . Captain?!

FOOL. Here I am (*He appears with a false mustache, a black patch over one eye, and one hand wearing a brown glove. The astonished CHIEF is unable to continue, so the FOOL introduces himself.*) Captain Marcantoni Banzi Piccinni. of the Scientific Division. Please excuse my stiff hand; it's wood, a souvenir of the Nicaraguan campaign, ex-advisor to the Contras. Have a seat, ma'am.

CHIEF. Can I offer you a drink?

REPORTER. No thanks. If you don't mind, I'd prefer to begin right away; I'm in a bit of a hurry. Unfortunately, I have to hand in the article this evening; it goes to the typographer tonight.

CHIEF. All right, as you wish. Let's get started at once: we're ready.

REPORTER. I'd like to ask a number of questions. (*Takes out a note pad and reads.*) The first is actually directed to you, Inspector, and forgive me if it's a little provocative . . . If it's all right with you, I'll use the tape recorder - unless you're opposed to it (*Takes a tape recorder out of her purse*).

CAPTAIN. Well, to tell the truth, we -

FOOL. Heavens no, go right ahead. (*to the INSPECTOR*) First rule: never contradict.

CAPTAIN. But if we let something escape . . . and want to deny it later, she has the proof . . .

REPORTER. Excuse me, is anything wrong?

FOOL. (*with perfect timing*) No, no, on the contrary. The Captain was just praising you; he says you're a very courageous woman, of real democratic principles . . . a lover of truth and justice, whatever they may cost !

REPORTER. That's awfully kind of him.

CAPTAIN. What would you like to ask?

REPORTER. Why do they call you window-riding instructor?

CAPTAIN. Window-riding instructor? Me?

REPORTER. Yes, or also "Captain riding instructor."

CAPTAIN. And who supposedly calls me that?

REPORTER. I have here the photocopy of a letter from a young anarchist, sent from the San Vittore prison where the boy was being held during the very time of our anarchist's death. The letter talks about you. Inspector . . . and about this room.

CAPTAIN. Oh, really? And what does it say?

REPORTER. (*reads*) "The Inspector from the fourth floor office forced me to sit astride the window ledge with my legs hanging down, and then started poking and insulting me . . . 'jump; why don't you jump . . . don't have the guts, eh? Finish it off! What are you waiting for?' I swear I had to clench my teeth so I wouldn't give in, so I wouldn't let myself go."

FOOL. (*as Piccinni*) Wonderful! Sounds like a scene from a Hitchcock movie.

REPORTER. If you don't mind, Captain, my question was directed to the head of this office, not to you. (*placing the microphone in front of the CAPTAIN's mouth*) How would you respond to this?

FOOL. (*in the CAPTAIN's ear*): Calm and indifferent!

CAPTAIN. I have no response at all. You answer me, instead, very frankly: do you think I forced the railroad worker into a riding position also?

FOOL. Ssh; don't get caught. (*pretending to sing to himself*) the vulture's flying high, way up in the sky, far away from my house . . .

REPORTER. Am I mistaken, Captain, or are you attempting to disrupt this conversation?

FOOL. Not at all, I was only commenting. And if you'll allow me, Miss Feletti, I'd like to ask you if you think we write commercials for Windex, since you seem absolutely determined to find us doing a window-test with every anarchist we can get our hands on?!

REPORTER. Needless to say, Captain, you're very clever.

CAPTAIN. (*to the FOOL*) Thanks, you got me out of a really tight spot. (*slaps him on the shoulder*)

FOOL. Go easy with the hands, Inspector; I have a glass eye! (*points to his black patch*)

CAPTAIN. A glass eye?

FOOL. And watch out when you shake my hand, too; it's artificial.

REPORTER. Getting back to the subject of windows, the report on the parabola of the fall seems to be missing from the judge's dossier - the one containing his decision to close the inquiry.

CHIEF. Parabola of the fall?

REPORTER. Yes, the parabola of the alleged suicide's fall to the ground.

CHIEF. What's the purpose of that report?

REPORTER. Its purpose is to establish whether or not the anarchist was still completely alive at the moment when he flew out of the window. That is, if he had taken the slightest jump before he went out, or if he fell like an inanimate object, as the report in fact states, grazing the wall. If any fractures or lesions were found on his arms or hands, which according to the report was not the case - in other words, the alleged suicide did not throw his hands forward to protect himself at the moment of impact with the ground: a normal and totally instinctive gesture.

CAPTAIN. Yes, but don't forget that we're dealing with a suicide here - a person who threw himself out because he wanted to die!

FOOL. Ah, but that doesn't mean - unfortunately, I have to back up Miss Feletti on this point. As you see, I'm completely objective. All sorts of experiments have been done on the subject; they've taken suicides and thrown them out of windows, and in each case they noticed that, instinctively, at the right moment, they all threw their hands forward: smack!

CHIEF. Great help you're giving us! Are you crazy?

FOOL. Yes, how did you find out?

REPORTER. But the most disconcerting detail for which I would really like an explanation, concerns a tape recording that's missing from that same file on the judge's decision to close the inquiry. The tape recorded the exact time of the phone call for the ambulance. The call was placed through the switchboard of police headquarters, and the Red Cross attendant, as well as the telephone operator, testified that it was made at two minutes to twelve. But every reporter who came running into the courtyard swears that the jump occurred at exactly three minutes after twelve. In short, the stretcher was summoned five minutes before the anarchist flew out of the window. Can any of you explain this curious fact?

FOOL. Oh, we often call for stretchers, just in case, because you never know . . . and sometimes we hit it at just the right minute, as you see.

CAPTAIN. (*giving him a whap on the shoulder*) Great!

The following information about interactions and assessment tasks based on the above text is provided with the text in the unit by Nives Mercurio.

About the assessment task

This may be a unit to exercise language and meaning making in a text detached from its greater whole. The scene in the play can then be viewed. Or the teacher may wish to make it a module in which the entire play, performed in English, is also viewed by the class for a larger discussion, learning, research and assessment module.

*This passage from the second act of the play *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* by Dario Fo, shows the way language is used for different purposes; to be polite, to obfuscate, to demand clarity of meaning importance and use of language to persuade or make people laugh.*

Some short introduction to the era needs to be given to set the background of the passage of literature for the task to be successful. However, the teacher's fuller presentation about Dario Fo, the anni di piombo, the 70s, in Italy and the intercultural discussion may follow.

Introduction, presentation and student learning time

The teacher briefly introduces the play by talking about Dario Fo and 1970s Italy. For a larger module of study, the teacher may talk about the anni di piombo, and may make comparisons with the current world terrorism; new laws and increased government intervention in security etc. Students may research different topics of interest of the era and these could then be presented by the students to the class.

The intercultural discussion will also involve an appreciation of how language is manipulated in different contexts for different purposes. We can observe this in this passage in Italian, in its forms and structures, the expressions and idioms. The language is at different times polite, deferential, subservient, sarcastic, humorous and entertaining, clear and incisive, brief and to the point, long-winded, verbose and obfuscating.

Students in pairs read the text titled '*Morte accidentale di un anarchico*' – scena terza by Dario Fo. They will need 20 minutes to work through this together, taking different parts and trying to understand the language and creating meaning from the words.

The teacher asks for students who wish to read the text aloud, giving meaning to the reading.

Student assessment tasks

Text analysis

Part a: Reading and responding. The student answers questions in Italian and English about the text to show understanding of the general and specific details of the text (in Italian and/or English). Questions include:

What is your understanding of the hierarchy of police officials in the text, and how are the titles of these positions similar to or different from your understanding of similar hierarchy in an Australian context (i.e. actual words used in both contexts as well as body language and 'hidden' status indicators)?

Locate a few examples of words that are similar in Italian and English and discuss your understanding of these in the language and culture of both contexts

Can you imagine this scene occurring in another context (other than Italy)? Why or why not? Include references to your understanding of the role of journalists, police and treatment of suspects in different locations. Why would it be more or less likely in another context?

Read the two passages aloud, acting the parts, in both languages. What do you notice about 'flow' of language and ease of pronunciation in each case?

Is something 'lost in translation'? Compare both the actual words used, and the meanings you derive from the two versions. Do you agree with the translator's choice of words? Why/why not? Give several examples from the texts.

What do you understand by the phrase 'lost in translation' and how has your understanding of it altered (if at all) through working with this text in both languages?

Part b: Students write a summary of the scene to show understanding of the setting, the action and dialogue. Using the information from the text, the student writes brief descriptions of the characters. What you think may be the plot/storyline? (In Italian)

Part c: Students examine the language.

What are the forms of address used by the characters? What phrases and idioms show politeness? How do the Commissario, the Questore and the Matto treat the journalist? What kind of language do they use? Is any English used and does it seem correct to you? Why doesn't the Commissario really wish the interview to be recorded? What is he worried about? The journalist asks very direct questions. What does she ask? What are the Commissario and the Matto trying to do with their answers? Who is clear in their language and who is not in this scene? What does this scene seek to show about how we use words and language? (In English and Italian)

Performing the text

In groups, work out your own performance of the text, rehearsing it over a period of two weeks. Keep a journal of the experience, noting such things as how you felt about the language (difficulty, ease in speaking, appropriateness), any difficulties you had in understanding the words, memorising the text, etc. Include a reflection on what it means to you to perform rather than just read a text such as this.

Personal reflection

Reflect on the steps you took in understanding this text. Comment on what you found easy or difficult. (In English or Italian)

(For assessment purposes see SACE Italian Stage 1, Criteria for judging performance)

Use of a play excerpt such as this provides not only a text analysis opportunity, where aspects of language and culture are noticed, compared and analysed, and connections between English and Italian drawn out, but through actually performing the piece, students gain an understanding of the rhythms of spoken text in a play, of inferred and intended meanings, and of the inextricable connections between words and actions in communicating.

Other useful playwrights to consider are the French absurdists such as Ionesco; Indonesian playwright Rendra and the works of German playwright Brecht.

French Studies lecturer at Monash University, Sally Staddon (2007), uses French absurdist plays for the 'speech' element of her programme with beginner language students. In her beginners' programme, she has found use of texts highly stimulating for the students, promoting consideration of performance of language and of meaning making through language use where students are required to reflect on how they use their bodies, voices and own linguistic and cultural skills to convey meaning and to enact the 'otherness' of the target language and culture.

Staddon's article in the June 2007 edition of *Babel* is useful reading for teachers considering using performance elements in the language classroom.

Performance poetry

Much poetry is also written to be spoken aloud, 'enacted', and provides material for use by languages teachers aiming at developing intercultural understandings in their students.

Rendra, an Indonesian poet and playwright, specifically writes his poetry for performance. It is dynamic and colourful and accessible to students in the senior secondary years. Below is a poem and translation as an example.

- Rendra (Indonesian)

Waktu

*Waktu seperti burung tanpa hinggapan
melawat hari-hari rubah tanpa ratapan
sayap-sayap mujizat terkebar dengan cekatan.*

*Waktu seperti butir-butir air
dengan nyanyi dan tangis angin silir
berpejam mata dan pelesir tanpa akhir.
Dan waktu juga seperti pawang tua
menunjuk arah cinta dan arah keranda.*

Time

*Like a bird with no nest, time
flaps through unmourned days
fluttering its marvellous, magic wings.*

*Like drops of water,
the song, the tears of a gentle breeze,
time shuts its eyes and patters pleasantly on-
And like a knowing guide
shows life and death which way to go. (Rendra (1974) *Ballads and Blues: Poems*)*

Poetry from other languages and cultures is also highly suitable for recitation and performance. Students often find the brevity of poetry accessible, and the richness of vocal sounds and meanings rewarding and revealing of both language and cultural contexts. A sense of what it is like to be a performer of the other language is gained through this experience, and students can be asked to analyse and reflect on this experience from an intercultural perspective. Japanese Haiku provides a good example of poetry that may be performed and analysed in this way.

- Haiku (Japanese)

Haiku by Shiki at [H_ry_-ji](#) (temple):

*kaki kueba
kane ga naru nari
H_ry_-ji*

I bite into a persimmon
and a bell resounds—
H_ry_ji

—trans. Janine Beichman (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masaoka_Shiki)

Interactive Games:

Interactive, 'performance' games are also a performance mode suitable for intercultural language learning opportunities. Through play, using language, student experience cultural abbreviations, slang and language short cuts, that can be analysed for intercultural significance.

Learning a song:

Songs offer many opportunities for intercultural learning.²

- French music and songs

The following is an example of a song used for text analysis purposes.

Task 3: Toc Toc (French song)

Preparation for task:

- Students listen to French song "Toc, Toc", without text. Listen again, this time with text.
- Class discussion: which words do we know? Which words can we guess? What do we call words that sound like the sound they are describing?
- Which other words do we know that are like that in French? In English? Why do we use onomatopoeia?
- Why are French "sound-words" different from English ones for the same sounds?
- When do French people say "Oh la la"? Do we know other French expressions like that?
- When do we use exclamations? Do we have exclamations like "oh la la"?
- Go through song, line by line, teacher explaining unknown words.

Note:- Class discussion will be a mixture of French and English with teacher speaking as much French as possible.

- Teacher may need to help students with examples of onomatopoeia. Animal sounds are great.
- Time can be taken to practise some of these sounds. Students can write sounds in their books.
- Teacher should have some other exclamations (in French) at hand for students to practise.

Task:

- In small groups fill out the chart you have been given. (same as for task 2)
-Prepare your spoken answer for class discussion.
- On the computer, write a short cartoon story (using pictures/images from computer). Use onomatopoeia and exclamations in the dialogue.
- In your journal answer the following questions: do you use onomatopoeia?

² A full discussion of the use of songs in intercultural language teaching and learning is not considered here, but is the subject of continuing work by Anne-Marie Morgan in the area of use of performance in intercultural language learning.

- Chinese New Year song and actions

Scope: Students learn the words and meaning of a Chinese song through Karaoke DVD

Interactions: In groups of 3 students sing and dance to a Chinese New Year song:

Outcomes: Students capture the “spirit” of Chinese New Year through the lyrics e.g. “ _____ ”(on every persons lips is gongxi gong xi) dancing singing to the lyrics and song (Nhu Trinh, Loreto College, Adelaide)

- *Satu, Dua, Tiga (One, Two, Three)*

This simple children’s song is sung in Indonesia by small children to practice numbers and names for members of a family. Karaoke versions of the song are extremely popular, easily and cheaply purchasable in Indonesia and can be used for classroom use in the early years or for text and context analysis in more senior years.

<i>Satu, satu, aku sayang ibu</i>	<i>One, one, I love my mum</i>
<i>Dua, dua, juga sayang ayah,</i>	<i>Two, two, I love dad too</i>
<i>Tiga, tiga, sayang adik-kakak</i>	<i>Three, three, I love my sisters and brothers</i>
<i>Satu, dua, tiga, sayang semuanya</i>	<i>One, two, three, I love them all</i>

Intercultural points for discussion/classroom interactions include:

- *The meaning of the word ‘sayang’ and its other uses, especially when prefixes and suffixes are added, such as ‘kesayangan’ meaning ‘pet’. Consider why this is translated as ‘love’ in English, rather than ‘like’ and what other words in English and Indonesian are used to express feelings of affection, fondness, love of all kinds and friendship and when these are appropriate. Reflect on the differences and similarities and develop a range of different situations where such words would be used in both languages.*
- *The use of the word ‘ayah’ rather than ‘bapak’ for ‘father’. When is ‘bapak’ more appropriate? How and when is ‘Pak’, the abbreviation of ‘bapak’, used? What range of words in English is used for ‘father’ and when are these appropriate? Are ‘ayah’ and ‘bapak’ interchangeable, and are ‘father’ and ‘dad’ interchangeable?*
- *The concept of ‘adik-kakak’, and the two words ‘adik’ (younger brother or sister) and ‘kakak’ (older brother or sister) on their own. ‘Adik-kakak’ translates to ‘siblings’, and is made up of the two words used to refer to either older or younger brothers or sisters. Discuss why a single word counts for both genders in Indonesian, whereas this is not the case in English. On the other hand, discuss why ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ in English do not imply older or younger status. What does this say about the different cultures? How else can gender be ascribed in Indonesian? Is it necessary to add these words (e.g. ‘adik perempuan’ for ‘younger sister’)?*
- *Use ‘semuanya’ as an example of the use of ‘nya’ added to a noun and what this means. Can it mean different things? When? Is there a similar device used in English?*

From just these few points it can be seen what a rich text this little song is, linguistically and culturally, and how many points of discussion for reflection and intercultural analysis it can raise. Though it may be used with early learners to reinforce vocabulary learning, and is a highly effective means of assisting students to memorise words, it also offers so much more,

as most songs do, being embedded with cultural content that speaks loudly of the cultural and linguistic context in which they are produced.

Cultures and languages abound with folk/children's/popular songs that provide rich texts for intercultural analysis. Young children, especially, also love to sing, and gain great enjoyment from singing in class. Singing, with the repetition that occurs through 'practice' of the song, provides an excellent means for reinforcement of language learning. The practicing achieves fluency and memorisation of phrases and words remarkably well. This learning 'sticks' (Can you remember any other language songs from your childhood?- I think of *Frère Jacques*, *Allouette* and *Sur Le Pont D'Avignon*, all of which I can remember word for word despite not being a French language speaker now)

Creating a text

Writing/workshopping/creating texts for performance is another fertile area of performance, rich with intercultural language learning opportunities. Such texts need to relate to the students and provide meaningful opportunities for them to expand their understanding of themselves and others through the use of ideas explored, language used and technical performance aspects required. Texts can be created by students, with students, with the help of a script writer, or through a combination of these approaches.

Reflection

Key Ideas/Learning

Consider the rationale for using performance as a 'way in' to intercultural teaching and learning of languages and cultures, and to reflect on how you might achieve this within your own contexts and using your own orientation to teaching and learning.

Consider what performance modes and concepts currently inform your practice. How might these be expanded in a way that is sympathetic to intercultural language learning?

Have fun with performance in your classroom.

Further reading/ references

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