Intersection of Language Learning and Intercultural Learning

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Foundational Questions

• What is the role of language in our models of intercultural competence?

• What is the role of the intercultural in models of second language acquisition?
A brief history of second language acquisition

1970’s
Communicative Competence

1980’s
Proficiency Movement
Search / National Standards

1990’s Language as Meaning Making

2000-present
Language Socialization
ACTFL World Readiness Standards
Communicative Competence

- Grammatical Competence
- Discourse Competence
- Sociolinguistic Competence
- Strategic Competence

A brief history of intercultural communication

1940s & 1950’s
Applied Cultural Anthropology / Cultural Dos and Don’ts

1960-s - 1970’s
Edward T. Hall
Birth of Intercultural Communication as a field

1980’s Theories Cultural Basis for Communicative Behavior
Psychological turn

1990’s – Today
Explosion of Inventories (IDI, etc.)
Linguistics and the Interculturalists

Linguistic competence and cultural competence are inseparable

Language fluency and intercultural competence are separate skillsets
ACTFL, Language and Intercultural Communication, and the Study Abroad Context

Leland J. L’Hote.
IES Abroad
What is “culture” for the US second language classroom (ACTFL)?

Cutshall (2012): The old idea that language could be taught by itself as a set of vocabulary and grammar points, with no sense of the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of the people who speak the language, is long gone. In fact, ACTFL’s Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century states:

“The true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language.”
ACTFL definitions

• “Three P’s”: products, practices, and perspectives.

• *Products* are what many people think about when asked what culture is.
  – Include famous authors and literary works, works of fine art, typical foods, laws, ways of dressing, types of dwellings, and well-known musical genres.
  – Also referred to as “big C culture” (to be distinguished from “little c” ahead).
Practices & perspectives

Products are only the “tip of the cultural iceberg.”

*Practices* = “what to do, when and where”.

Patterns of social interaction that are accepted and usually expected by members of a group. These include:

- rites of passage such as Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and *quinceañeras*
- accepted social hierarchies
- when and how food is eaten
- how public space is used
Perspectives

- Involve a culture’s view of the world; the meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas that underlie the products and the practices. Perspectives are often outside of conscious awareness.

- Practices and perspectives are often referred to as pertaining to “little c” culture.
ACTFL

Perspectives
(Means, attitudes, values, ideas)

Practices
(Patterns of social interactions)

Products
(Books, tools, foods, Laws, music, games)
• Most US second language faculty now realize the need for students to **not simply memorize a list of products** – such as authors, painters, important historical events, etc. – but rather to examine the other culture’s practices and perspectives.

• Many US language faculty no longer promote culture & intercultural competence development as a tool (realia) toward linguistic proficiency, but rather as a **primary outcome** of the second language classroom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Practices &amp; perspectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is eaten in Spain</td>
<td>“When the first drive-through restaurant opened in my town in Spain, I went with my host mother, my sister, and my nephew. We drove up and ordered our food. After we retrieved it at the window, we parked the car, brought the food inside, and sat down to eat it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At what time meals are eaten in Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td>What does this suggest about the cultural practices and perspectives of this family regarding the ways in which food is supposed to be consumed? What are the underlying values there, vs. in the U.S.? Where do I situate myself within these values</td>
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IES Abroad MAP for Language & Intercultural Communication
Bridging Language Acquisition and Intercultural Competence Development
Key Considerations

• How can language programs be organized by study abroad programs in order to take advantage of the abroad setting?

• How should students abroad be guided toward active and meaningful learning, appropriate to their level, in the home environment, in the academic environment, and in the broader community?
The IES MAP for Language & Intercultural Communication

• Realistic Goals & Deliberate Design:
  • Students (and faculty) at times overestimate linguistic & intercultural growth potential abroad

• Proficiency growth varies greatly from program to program (Kinginger 2009, 2010, Kearney 2010, Isabelli 2011)
  • Learning unlikely to happen via osmosis
  • Structured & prompted opportunities outside classroom = better results
What Does the Language MAP Do?

- **Comprehensive guidelines** for language learning that **incorporate the overseas environment**, including
  - *at the homestay or other residential placement*
  - *in the study abroad classroom*
  - *in the local community*

- Emphasizes the **connection between learning a second language and understanding the host culture**
  - *Intercultural communication skills and language proficiency are inseparable*

- **Practical strategies & specific activities** that faculty, staff, resident assistants, Internships, and host families

- Responds to research that shows while it can enhance overall language ability and each aspect of communicative ability, **study abroad is most beneficial to the development of abilities relating to social interaction in the local culture.**
What Does the Language MAP Do?

- Provides students tools for managing their own learning.
- Emerges from the tradition of communicative language teaching, which focuses on what students can do with the language, not on what they know about the language.
- Responds to research that shows while it can enhance overall language ability and each aspect of communicative ability, study abroad is most beneficial to the development of abilities relating to social interaction in the local culture.
Common Learning Outcomes Across Centers Teaching Same Language:

I. **Intercultural Communication**

A. Students will be able to identify and describe at a basic level key host cultures, subcultures, habits, norms, and behaviors in a variety of settings, and they will be aware of the risk that generalizations can lead to stereotypes.

B. Students will be able to identify and discuss the validity of their own cultural beliefs, behaviors, and values by contrasting and comparing them with the host cultures.

C. Students will be able to describe and interpret gestures and body language, and they will integrate some of those non-verbal actions into their interactions with native speakers.

II. **Listening**

A. Students will be able to understand most spoken communications of moderate complexity (media, speeches, music, conversations, etc.) on a wide range of concrete everyday topics as well as abstract topics covered in classes.
Putting it all together:
How the MAP helps students
On-Site Data: Language Learning Abroad

• Site: IES Abroad Madrid
  • Mid sized program
  • Many interactive experiences which involve language:
    • Trained homestays and tutors
    • Broad array of local university partnerships
    • Service Learning and Internships

• Results
  • Two course cohorts tested with before & after OPIc (14 students total)
  • 1.4 average level growth. Intermediate low-Int high, Int. high-Adv Mid

• Spring 2015: 80 student sample size in progress
The Intersection of Language and Intercultural Learning

Ana María Wiseman
Wofford College
Institutional Core Values

- Critical & Creative Thinking
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Written & Oral Communication
- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- Global & Applied Learning

from Association of American Colleges and Universities
High Impact Practices

• HIP for our shared language and intercultural outcomes in consultation with the language faculty and the institutional research team:
  • Homestays
  • Internships
  • Volunteering
  • Directed Research
  • Study in the target language
  • Direct Enrollment
  • Experiential Learning
Language & other disciplines

- Experiential learning (HIP) and study abroad
- Language as tool
- Changing landscape of language programs
- Language as part of skills portfolio
- IIE numbers and declining FL majors
- Interdisciplinarity
Program Alignment

• What's working?
• What's not working?
• Why not?
• Equivalence vs. Relevance
• Are we helping or hindering student learning and development through our administrative practices?
Get Language Faculty Involved

• Visiting IES language professors
• Faculty Development Seminars focused on language
• Language faculty on familiarization trips and site visits
• Support for the Language Assistant Program
• Other faculty development opportunities
Program Assessment

- Measuring study-abroad learning objectives
- What rubrics are already out there?
- Obstacles with creating a rubric for this specific purpose.
- What are the challenges?
- How can we move forward?
Gather data & formulate questions

- Information about applicants
- Open Doors
- Studio Abroad
- eg Do more students go to Spain or Latin America?
- What are their OPI results?
- Correlate with NSSE for program info
The Study Abroad Connection

- On-Line and On-Site components.
- Pre-departure: On-line
- On-site: In class, interactive usage
- Divergence with Home U placement?
- Issues with equivalences and credits?
- Asymmetric competences
- Placement principle: To foster students' Linguistic and Cultural Growth.
Upon return

• Re-entry
• Valuing what they've learned abroad
• Bring it back into the classroom
Experiential learning & global citizenship

- What can you do from an administrative POV?
- Preparing the language student for meaningful interaction with other peoples and cultures
Bringing it All Together

- What is the role of language in intercultural competence development?
- What is the role of intercultural competence in language proficiency?

“If we interpret language as meaning-making, there is no dividing line between language and culture. While it may be possible to learn a language without wholeheartedly embracing an associated culture or cultures, it is not possible to learn a language in the true sense without being exposed to the cultural.” Celeste Kinginger (IES MAP)
Questions