L2 Journal, Volume 17 Issue 2 (2025), pp. 1-13 Produced by eScholarship, 2025

ARTICLE

Educating the Multilingual Subject

ANTHONY J. LIDDICOAT

University of Warwick
E-mail: a.liddicoat@warwick.ac.uk

One strand of Claire Kramsch's work has been a deep reflection on what it means to be multilingual. Kramsch has argued that being multilingual involves subjective and symbolic dimensions of engagement with languages, cultures and interlocutors that have often been ignored in much language education practice. This article will reflect on the consequences of this thinking for language education and the ways that it has in turn expanded the scope and understanding of language instruction. It will consider what it means to posit the language learner as a multilingual subject living and communicating in and between languages and cultures and negotiating identities, as well as how the teaching and learning of another culturally contextualized language can be designed with reference to the developing multilingual subject.

> Language learners are not just communicators and problem solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies, and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identity. (Kramsch, 2006a, p. 251)

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes meeting a person can be a pivotal moment. That was the case for me when I first met Claire Kramsch. At the time I was at the beginning of my academic career and at a transitional point in my thinking about language and language education. I had recently finished a PhD in Norman French dialectology, and during my studies two key experiences had led me to question my assumptions about my discipline and my future direction. The first of these was going to France for the first time after having spent ten years studying the language in Australia. I found that, although I could speak French, my education had not prepared me to engage with the people I encountered in France. While I had a thorough grounding in grammar and vocabulary, linguistic theories and literature, there was something lacking that made interacting with people there both challenging and discouraging. The second happened during my field work on the Channel Islands of Jersey and Sark. In both these islands, the language varieties I was studying were undergoing language shift to English and the people I was working with were experiencing a profound feeling of loss as they saw their language and way of life disappearing around them. Both experiences led me to realize that languages were not simply structural systems but were peopled in complex ways, and that it was the peopling of language that was both intensely interesting and complex in a way that went unaddressed in the structuralist linguistics I had studied. As a result, I began to profoundly question my assumptions about what a language was, and especially what language education needed to be in order to address the complexity of peopled linguistic realities.

At this point, the Australian National University where I was then working invited Claire Kramsch to deliver a two-day workshop for language teachers on our campus. She had recently published *Context and culture in language teaching* (Kramsch, 1993a) and was working on ideas that emerged in that book. Through reading it, and most especially from conversations over meals, I came to feel that I had a way forward in responding to the questions that I had been struggling with; this way forward became the impetus for my work since. Although she was not using the term at the time, the key ideas that inspired me so much then can be understood through the idea of the multilingual subject (Kramsch, 2006b, 2009). In this paper, I wish to reflect on the significance of Kramsch's line of thinking for language education—that is, for how language educators can support developing multilingual subjects. While this line of thinking has parallels with other authors, the main focus is on Kramsch's contribution and the issues she raises in her work. The paper begins with a reflection on what the multilingual subject is, then considers some main themes for language education. It concludes by asking what is required in language education when the multilingual subject is in focus.

THE MULTILINGUAL SUBJECT

Claire Kramsch's (2006b, 2009) concept of the multilingual subject is a central idea in her work that challenges traditional views of multilingualism as a purely cognitive or functional skill. For Kramsch, the multilingual subject refers to an individual whose multilingualism is deeply intertwined with their personal identity, emotions, experiences, and cultural interactions. This perspective goes beyond seeing multilingualism as the ability to speak multiple languages; it considers how languages shape and are shaped by the subjective, symbolic, and ideological dimensions of human existence.

Kramsch argues that the multilingual subject is not simply a user of multiple languages but a person who embodies and negotiates multiple cultural and linguistic identities.

> [T]he symbolic self of the multilingual does not merely abide by the symbolic order of the Other. It retains an outsidedness that enables it to play with various objective and subjective meanings… The self that becomes aware of the subjective realities indexed by various languages, including his or her own, embraces another kind of symbolic realm and experiences another kind of symbolic power than that usually attributed to language learners. (Kramsch, 2009, p. 189)

Each language a person speaks carries with it unique worldviews, social norms, and emotional resonances. For the multilingual subject, each language they speak is imbued with personal and cultural significance and their languages interact and influence their sense of self. Rather than viewing languages as discrete systems, Kramsch highlights how multilinguals fluidly shift between languages, creating a hybrid identity that transcends fixed national or cultural boundaries, that enables different forms of engagement and different senses of self.

> [B]ecoming bi- or multilingual increases one's semiotic potential and one's ability to carve out for oneself a hybrid identity that is at once multiple, changing, and conflictual. (Kramsch, 2014, p. 406)

Language, then, is more than a tool for communication—it is a symbolic system that conveys cultural meanings, values, and ideologies. This symbolic engagement with languages

affects how multilinguals interpret and create meaning and links their linguistic practices to their emotions and ideologies (Kramsch, 2006a, 2011, 2021).

Another critical dimension of Kramsch's reflection on multilingualism is her focus on the symbolic power of language.

> The pervasive indexicality of language, that is, its ability not only to refer to objects in the world, but to point to other signs in the immediate context or in past and imagined contexts, both on the micro-level of proximate events and on the macro-level of collective discourses, beliefs and ideologies, gives individual speakers, writers and bloggers an enormous power to construct an interpretation of social reality and make it stick. (Kramsch, 2021, pp. 196-197)

Language is not merely a means of expression; it is an enabler or constraint on legitimate participation in the social world. Multilingual individuals often experience the tension between aligning themselves with dominant cultural norms and maintaining their distinct linguistic and cultural heritage. This tension underscores the political and ideological stakes of multilingualism, as speakers navigate issues of belonging, marginalization, and power dynamics in multilingual contexts.

In essence, being a multilingual subject embodies the interplay between language, culture, and identity, demonstrating that multilingualism is as much about personal and symbolic engagement as it is about communication. Kramsch argues that traditional language education—"teaching of forms to express universal meanings" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 2)—often neglects these subjective and symbolic dimensions, with pedagogical practices tending to prioritize measurable outcomes such as vocabulary acquisition or grammatical accuracy, overlooking the ways in which learners emotionally and ideologically engage with the languages they learn. For multilingual individuals, languages are not neutral tools; they carry personal and cultural significance, shaping how speakers relate to themselves and others. Kramsch's concept of the multilingual subject therefore has profound implications for language education and research. It challenges educators to move beyond a focus on linguistic proficiency and consider how language learning is consequential for people as knowers and users of language.

THE MULTILINGUAL SUBJECT AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The idea of the multilingual subject has many entailments for language education. The sections below will consider three that are particularly important for reshaping language teaching and learning: the idea that the multilingual subject lives and communicates *between* languages and cultures rather than just *within* them, the importance of negotiating identities, and the need to develop a multilingual self.

Living and Communicating in and Between Languages and Cultures

The idea of the multilingual subject emphasizes that language use is essentially an engagement with languages and cultures in lived experiences of human communication. Using multiple languages is therefore a participation in multiple enculturated realities and this participation is always between multiple realities; that is, one's lived experiences in other contexts cannot be separated out from the context in which one is currently engaged. This means that learning to

be multilingual is more than just an acquisition of languages and knowledge of "other" cultures. It involves learning to be a participant in linguistic and cultural diversity as one moves between languages and cultures (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Living and communicating between languages is not just a linguistic act but an intercultural one, requiring individuals to develop an awareness of how language reflects cultural values and worldviews both for oneself and for others (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The emphasis on interculturality underscores the importance of understanding how meanings are co-constructed in interaction, as speakers negotiate cultural differences and adapt to the communicative norms of their interlocutors. Thus, learning the languages and cultures of others is not a matter of assimilating to their norms, or "abid[ing] by the symbolic order of the Other" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 189), because the multilingual subject is inherently both personal and relational, engaging with others to create shared understanding while maintaining a critical awareness of their own cultural positioning. Moreover, it is an engagement with languages and cultures that is both intrapersonal and interpersonal:

> In individuals who speak more than one language and belong to more than one culture, IC [intercultural contact] could refer to multilingual/multicultural identities and subjectivities within one and the same person. (Kramsch & Uryu, 2020, p. 205)

One entailment of seeing language learning as an engagement with diversity is that every encounter with a language—reading a text, participating in an interaction, viewing a video, etc.—needs to be seen as an experience of communication in a language embedded in a cultural context and of communication across languages and context (Kramsch, 1993b; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). When language use is understood as experience, the language used is seen as an enactment of ways of thinking, knowing and being that are communicated in order not simply to exchange information but as a symbolic enactment of self within the world, recognizing the ways in which language exercises power over social realities. Understanding language use as experience therefore does not simply require comprehension of the language—working out what the text says, but also interpretation—what a text means, and personal engagement—how the text is consequential for the self (Liddicoat, 2017, 2019, 2024).

Moreover, the goal of interpreting is not to identify a correct meaning (c.f. Schleiermacher, 1977), as meaning is not simply embodied in the forms of language but is also embedded in the circumstances of interpretation. Meaning, therefore, is not singular and objective but rather plural and constructed. Differences in interpretation are, therefore, not simply the result of the noise created by differences in the cultures, languages, discourses, personal circumstances, etc. between a creator and interpreter, but features of the act of interpretation itself. If interpretation is always potentially plural, where multiple interpretations exist no particular meaning is necessarily better than another, but each is contingent upon the interpreter (Vandendorpe, 1992). As Gadamer (1960) and Ricoeur (1965) argue, interpretations are ultimately personal, as meaning comes into being as the result of what the interpreter brings to the act of interpretation. For Gadamer, interpretation is influenced by both language(s) drawn on in the act of interpretation and one's previous history of interpretating others' formulations about the world. It is thus based on assumptions, expectations and pre-judgments about the nature of meaning-making; without these, interpretation is not possible. For the multilingual subject, interpretation is ultimately a bringing into relation of possible meanings that a message may have for the participants in the exchange of meanings—*Fusion von Horizonten*, as Gadamer terms it.

The language learner needs, therefore, to come to understand that meanings are contingent and multiple and this is central to understanding the nature of meaning-making entailed in Kramsch's (2006a, p. 251) definition of symbolic competence as "the ability to produce and exchange symbolic goods in the complex global context in which we live today." Language learning involves engaging with meanings encoded in a language and coming to recognize the need to identify and reflect on the meaning possibilities available to both the maker of the meaning and its interpreter, rather than relying on a simple process of decoding meaning from linguistic forms. Language education thus needs to provide opportunities for learners to engage and reflect on their and others' acts of meaning making and interpretation in and across languages and cultures.

Negotiating Identities

Kramsch's work emphasizes the identity dimension of language learning as a central feature of becoming a multilingual subject:

> For many language learners, desire is the need for a language that is not only an instrumental communication, or a means of identification with some native speaker, but a way of generating an identity for themselves, of finding personal significance through specific attention to articulation and meaning. (Kramsch, 2009, p. 15)

For Kramsch, the multilingual subject's identity is fluid, shaped by the interplay of languages, cultures, and personal experiences. In developing her thinking about identity, Kramsch also draws on the work of Norton (e.g., Norton, 2000; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Norton & Toohey, 2002). Norton (2000) argues that language learners actively negotiate identities rather than passively acquiring a new language, and emphasizes that identity is dynamic, shaped by social interactions and power relations. The development of the multilingual subject's identity can thus be seen as contextualized in language but also in social needs and actions. Learning and using multiple languages allows individuals to explore different facets of their identity, as each language provides access to new cultural frameworks and ways of being.

However, this process of identity negotiation is often fraught with tension, as multilingual subjects must navigate societal expectations, cultural stereotypes, and power dynamics associated with their linguistic choices. Questions of identity are therefore significant for language learning. As Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 23) argue, "Language learning provides a challenge for identity. It raises first the question 'Who am I when I speak this language?' and second 'How am I me when I speak this language?'" These questions arise because different languages provide different resources for performing identity. Liddicoat (2024), for example, analyses how learning French raised identity questions for an Australian student, who explicitly raises the question of "being me:"

> Liam: The big challenge for me in learning French isn't really you know grammar and vocab. That's sort of okay. It's that I don't know how to be me in French.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by that?

Liam:	Well like uhm there's ways we do things here in Australia and I know that stuff but you can't just like just do that in French. It's like the words don't go together the right way or something.
Researcher:	Can you give me an example?
Liam:	Well you know there's *tu* and *vous*. And so you don't know what to call people. You have to think about that and I never had to before. It just comes easily in English, but you well you can make a mistake in French. And the uhm the mistake isn't like just grammar it's going to affect how you like speak with people and uhm what they sort of think of you.
Researcher:	So how's that a problem for 'being me' in French?
Liam:	Okay so you know in Australia you want to be friendly with strangers right? And so that's how I do things and I think of myself as being friendly.
Researcher:	mhm
Liam:	So in French how do you do that? How are you friendly to strangers? Uhm I mean you've got *vous* and that doesn't sound friendly to me, but there's only some people you can say *tu* to. And if you say *tu* it doesn't sound friendly cos it could be rude. Like uhm I think I'm a friendly person but I don't know how to do that in French. (Liddicoat, 2024, p. 102-103)

In this extract Liam is wrestling with the complexities of performing the sense of self that he has developed in an Australian English-speaking context and how such an identity can be performed through French, which offers different ways of expressing the social relationships that are central to his self-concept. Such questions are rarely addressed in language classrooms but can be central issues for learners as they engage with language as both a communicative and representational resource.

Engaging with questions of identity, and the affordances and constraints that different languages provide for adopting and expressing identity positions, requires the integration of reflection and reflexivity into the processes of language teaching and learning. This reflective process aligns closely with Kramsch's idea of the multilingual subject as someone for whom "the self is constantly engaged in reflecting upon itself, aware of its state of wellbeing and of its relation to others" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 70). Moreover, as Leung and Scarino (2016) argue, language learning is not merely about acquiring linguistic competence but involves a process of self-understanding and reinterpretation. As learners engage with new experiences of languages and cultures, they are prompted to question their own cultural assumptions about who they are as human beings and to consider how their identities are constructed through language.

Developing a Multilingual Self Through Language Learning

The teaching and learning of another culturally contextualized language play a crucial role in the development of a multilingual self. Unlike language instruction that prioritizes functional or instrumental goals, culturally contextualized language education places emphasis on the symbolic and intercultural dimensions of language (Kramsch, 2006a, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This encourages learners to engage with the cultural meanings embedded in

linguistic practices and to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and identities. Kramsch (e.g., 1993a) has therefore advocated for language education that goes beyond the acquisition of grammatical competence to foster critical awareness of how language shapes thought and social interaction.

Such an approach invites learners to explore the cultural worlds associated with the target language, which can be found at any level of language, from the very macro level of knowledge of the world to the very micro level of linguistic forms (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Liddicoat, 2009). The macro level may be present in language classrooms in the form of literature, areas studies, or a focus of contemporary events, and in some contexts has been largely formalized as a component of language programmes, notably for French as *civilisation* (Beacco, 1986; Porcher, 1994), for German as *Landeskunde* (Krumm, 1998; Zeuner, 1997) and for Japanese as *Nihonjijou* (Hasegawa, 1995; Toyota, 1988). However, such approaches focus on "cultural content" and rarely on how language is consequential for how content is conveyed and understood or how histories of interpretation influence understandings and responses to the content. The micro level of linguistic forms is also likely to be in focus in language classrooms but primarily as language structures and not as conceptual representations of experience that frame how the world is known and communicated. In such ways language and culture are treated as separate and separable entities. When language and culture are treated as separable entities, the ways in which they interact and interrelate—especially in meaning making and interpretation—are obscured, and their implications for an individual's identity construction in and across languages may be difficult to discern.

Developing a sense of a multilingual self requires engagement with the full meaning potential of both language and culture, and of their interrelationships, for understanding and presentation of the self. This requires a sense of language and culture as part of a repertoire of symbolic resources that can be drawn on to construct and perform identities. Understanding of these resources can be developed by reflecting on how language and culture are drawn on to make and interpret meanings and on what meanings are created and interpreted by self and others with these resources. Most importantly, this reflection needs to be focused on the experience of moving between languages and cultures—both what such movement reveals about how languages and cultures construct symbolic representations and how the differences in this process of construction are consequential.

Moving between languages and cultures is not simply an act of re-wording, but rather is a sophisticated act of re-conceptualizing and reinterpreting meanings. It requires an act of decentering from established knowledges, languages, and cultures to enter into new possibilities and ways of thinking. Moving between languages is therefore an interactive, interlinguistic, and intercultural accomplishment that involves mediation between languages and cultures (Scarino, 2016). Moreover, moving between languages and cultures should not be understood as movement between fixed and mutually exclusive language and cultural systems but as a complex navigation of the symbolic resources within one's own repertoire. As the quote from Kramsch and Uryu (2020) above argues, intercultural contact is both interpersonal and intrapersonal, and moving between languages is a negotiation of self and other, of self in relation to other and of self in relation to self. Being a multilingual subject thus involves translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2018) and the formation of translanguaged identities and subject positions (Li Wei & Zhu Hua, 2013)

The development of the self as multilingual subject through processes of interpretation and reflection involves more than understanding meanings and the diverse ways meanings are constructed and interpreted; it also contributes to the development of learners' agency as users of language (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). Agency allows language learners to become

social actors making decisions about how they can and will use their complex linguistic and cultural repertoire (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019). In any communication, multilingual subjects have many possible ways of deciding about their language use. Agency in language use is not, however, an exercise of free will as Ahearn (2001) argues, a mediated capacity to act in which context enables or constrains possible courses of action. In using a language, the capacity to act is closely linked to speakers' ability to achieve communicative, identity and social goals and is mediated by awareness and understanding of how different languages and cultures can be used to achieve such goals. As McConachy and Liddicoat (2021, p. 11) argue, "[i]n order to exercise agency… learners need to understand the multiple and sometimes contradictory affordances of the symbolic tools at their disposal." That is, they need an understanding not only of how actions can be formed in a particular language, but also of how different ways of communicating achieve goals. As Kramsch (2006a, p. 251) argues: "Today it is not sufficient for learners to know how to communicate meanings; they have to understand the practice of meaning making itself."

IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Viewing language learners as multilingual subjects has profound implications for language education. This framework has the effect of challenging traditional approaches that treat languages as discrete systems to be mastered independently. It also calls for pedagogies that recognize the interconnectedness of languages and cultures and the ways in which learners' existing linguistic and cultural resources shape their engagement with new languages and cultures. Such pedagogies need to position the learner at the center of the learning process, not just in terms of active engagement in learning, but also as the focus of learning. The focus of learning is thus on the individual student's experiences of engaging with diversity through the act of learning a new language and teaching is not simply a transmission of knowledge about language and culture but the shaping of experiences.

When the focus is on the student as a multilingual subject, teachers' expertise is not simply understood in terms of knowledge of a language or culture but also in terms of their lived experience as multilingual subjects themselves—that is, as people who have experiences in encountering and responding to linguistic and cultural diversity. These experiences are not synonymous with knowledge of another culture, or in-country experiences, but rather can involve any form of encounter with diversity, whether these are connected with the target language or not.

In designing learning, the focus is not on transmission of teachers' knowledge but rather drawing on the teacher's lived experience to create opportunities for learners with engage with, explore, and reflect on linguistic and cultural diversity. That is, the teacher is neither positioned as an instructor, who, possessing knowledge, transmits this to a learner, nor as a source of linguistic input in the target language responsible for producing comprehensible language to facilitate students' learning. Rather, the teacher is a facilitator of learning who provides opportunities for students to develop their own knowledge by engaging with acts of language use as experiences of enculturated practice. Teachers play an important role in creating the conditions in which learning can happen and constructing opportunities for learning by providing resources and supporting students' work.

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) argue for teaching and learning languages as learner-center engagement with practices of meaning making and interpretation, which they call active construction. Active construction is based on the idea that learning is a hermeneutic process

that involves coming to understand not only the meanings present in any act of communication but also one's own and others' responses and reactions to these meanings (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2016). It is understood as a learning process in which learners create their own understanding of languages and cultures and the ways that these affect communication by exploring the processes of meaning making and interpretation that are present when learners engage with another language. In this process of exploration, learners are positioned as multilingual subjects engaged in meaning making and interpretation across languages and cultures. It is thus a process in which learners are centered as they engage in processes of exploration and discovery of meanings constructed in a new language, for example, spoken interactions, written texts, video or audio recordings, online texts, and through reflection on their experiences. Learning evolves from purposeful, active engagement in interpreting and creating the meanings found in these experiences as learners consider and reflect on their own responses and reactions to the meanings they encounter. Active construction is thus an interpretative process in which learners come to make sense of themselves and of their experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Designing learning for active construction involves engaging students in processes of noticing what is happening in moments of meaning making and interpretation—in terms of what meanings are present, what reactions and responses are occasioned by these meanings and what personal consequences arise from the experience of meaning making for the learner as a developing multilingual subject. One example of how a teacher enacts active construction in designing learning experiences can be seen in Figure 1, in which a teacher has designed a lesson for students of English in a Chinese middle school focused on the educational culture of the United Kingdom. This lesson is supported by a single text—a copy of a timetable from a UK school—which is then linked to students' experiences of their own schooling.

The inclusion of students' experiences is an important part of the way that active construction is designed in this lesson. First, it plays an important role in creating ways for the students to engage with new information about a different cultural context. In order to make sense of something new, it is important that students have a chance to construct their own understanding of the familiar (Byram & Feng, 2004; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), and what is familiar is often unconsidered and unanalyzed by learners who need to engage with different ways of being and acting. In this case, the students are constructing for themselves an understanding of what they know, and these constructions can be personal and differ between students; that is, the aim is not to essentialise experience to achieve an agreed consensus about the nature of education in a particular context but rather to give students an opportunity to make sense of their experiences for themselves.

Figure 1

Lesson From a Unit of Work Designed for Chinese Students of English in Year 2 Junior High School

Processes	Classroom Activities	Resources	Interaction
Lead-in	Teacher asks students to answer the following questions: • Which subjects do you learn at school? Are they compulsory or optional courses? • What is your favourite subject? How often do you have this course? • Do you think all Year 2 junior school students in China need to study these subjects? What might be similar and what might be different? • Do you think UK students need to study the same subjects as you do? What might be similar and what might be different?	students' experiences	teacher-students
Noticing and comparing	Teacher shows the curriculum of a UK school and ask students to read and discuss the following questions in groups of four: • What do you notice about this timetable? • How is this timetable similar to your timetable? • How is this timetable different from your timetable? • Do you think all students in the UK share the same timetable? What might be similar and what might be different? After discussion, students report back to the whole class.	Text: example timetable from UK school	teacher-students, students-students
Reflecting	Students discuss the following questions in groups: • What do you think about the UK school's timetable? • Which timetable do you prefer, your timetable or the UK school's timetable? Why?		students-students

The active construction in this lesson does not, however, reside so much in the materials used as the way in which the teacher works with them, and particularly as this bears on the questions that have been designed to frame the activities. In working with students' experiences in the 'Lead-in' part of the lesson, the teacher asks questions that are designed to construct a personal view of schooling. Most importantly, she engages learners in thinking about the possible diversities within each context by inviting students to consider the similarities and differences that might exist. Again, the purpose here is for students to consider this issue for themselves rather than to identify some pre-specified list of similarities and differences. These questions therefore raise the issue of diversity within differing contexts as something that students are required to think about and bear in mind as they approach each context and begin to consider that there may be reasons for differences between contexts. In the 'Noticing and comparing' section, she uses a text that introduces students to a new cultural reality. The text is quite simple in form but allows the students to begin to think about differences in the ways that education is constructed. In using it, contents are presented as information for students to work with to construct their own understanding of educational differences.

The active construction here does not depend on the teacher as an instructor but rather as someone who scaffolds the experience of encountering a text that displays a different way of constructing a cultural reality. She aims to support students in noticing what the text

contains as an example of a cultural enactment of curriculum, and to use this noticing to begin to understand the dimension of cultural variation in a familiar field. Students do this work dialogically, by interacting with the teacher as a more knowing other (Vygotsky, 1934/2005, 1978), in the sense that she knows more about the process of thinking through an encounter with diversity, and by interacting with each other to exchange ideas as they explore concepts collectively.

The process of active construction then moves to an opportunity for reflection in which students are asked to make sense of what they have experienced in reading the new text. The questions here are not particularly sophisticated, reflecting the young age of the learners involved, but they invite the students to reflect on and find points of interest in what they have experienced of the other culture. While the first question is very broad and may need to be modified to work effectively with the learners involved, it nonetheless frames the key issue for learners in experiencing cultural difference, or how they see and understand the things they have experienced. This question thus makes space in the classroom for students to consider and articulate their responses and reactions to difference (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The second question is evaluative and recognizes that in any experience of diversity there is the possibility of both positive and negative reactions, here framed as "liking" and "disliking," which are age-appropriate points of entry (Liddicoat, 2008). These questions could perhaps have been pushed further by inviting the learners to decenter from their first-culture perspective and consider how the intercultural other, represented here by school children in the UK, might perceive the students' own Chinese realities.

The discussion here demonstrates the importance of planning for questioning in designing lessons for active construction. The inclusion of questions in the plan is important for guiding the focus of the classroom and for clarifying what students will do with the materials they are working with, as well as the focus of the learning to be elaborated through the work students do. The questions used by the teacher in her plan are quite broad and serve to construct the overall focus of the lesson and the topics that students will engage in. These questions will of course need adapting to specific classrooms and are not necessarily the exact questions that the teacher will use in constructing the lesson.

CONCLUSION

Considering the language learner as a multilingual subject offers a holistic and dynamic perspective on multilingualism, one that acknowledges the interplay between language, culture, identity, and power. By emphasizing the subjective and symbolic dimensions of multilingualism, this framework shifts the focus of language education from mere linguistic proficiency to the development of intercultural competence, critical awareness, and a multilingual self. The teaching and learning of another culturally contextualized language provide a powerful means for developing a multilingual self. By engaging with the cultural meanings and values embedded in language, learners can expand their linguistic repertoires, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, and navigate the complexities of living and communicating in and between languages and cultures. Ultimately, adopting a multilingual and intercultural orientation to language education not only enriches the experiences of individual learners but also contributes to a more inclusive and equitable vision of multilingualism in a globalized world.

REFERENCES

Ahearn, L. M. (2001). Language and agency. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *30*, 109-137. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.30.1.109

Beacco, J.-C. (1986). La civilisation entre idéologie et méthodologie. In L. Porcher (Ed.), *La Civilisation* (pp. 101-118). CLÉ International.

Byram, M., & Feng, A. (2004). Culture and language learning: Teaching, research and scholarship. *Language Teaching*, *37*(3), 149-168. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444804002289

Crozet, C., & Liddicoat, A. J. (1999). The challenge of intercultural language teaching: Engaging with culture in the classroom. In J. Lo Bianco, A. J. Liddicoat, & C. Crozet (Eds.), *Striving for the third place: Intercultural competence through language education* (pp. 113-126). Language Australia.

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

García, O., & Li Wei. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hasegawa, T. (1995). 文化研究の書類形から見た日本事情 [Nihonjijoo seen from the perspective of cultural studies]. In 外国人留学生のための日本事情教育のあり方についての基礎的調査研究 *[Fundamental Research on the Nihonjijoo Approach to Education for Foreign Students]* (pp. 51-66).

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

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

Kramsch, C. (1993b). Language study as border study: Experiencing difference. *European Journal of Education*, *28*(3), 349-358.

Kramsch, C. (2006a). From communicative competence to symbolic competence. *Modern Language Journal*, *90*(2), 249-252. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00395_3.x

Kramsch, C. (2006b). The multilingual subject. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *16*(1), 97-110.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. Oxford University Press

Kramsch, C. (2011). The symbolic dimensions of the intercultural. *Language Teaching*, *44*(3), 354-367. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000431

Kramsch, C. (2014). Language and culture in second language learning. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 403-416). Routledge.

Kramsch, C. (2021). *Language as symbolic power*. Cambridge University Press.

Kramsch, C., & Uryu, M. (2020). Intercultural contact, hybridity, and third space. In J. Jackson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication* (pp. 204-218). Routledge.

Krumm, H.-J. (1998). Landeskunde Deutschland, D-A-CH oder Europa? Über den Umgang mit Verschiedenheit im DaF-Unterricht. *Informationen Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, *25*(5), 523-544.

Leung, C., & Scarino, A. (2016). Reconceptualizing the nature of goals and outcomes in language/s education. *The Modern Language Journal*, *100*(Supplement 2016). https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12300 0026-7902/16/81-95

Li Wei, & Zhu Hua. (2013). Translanguaging identities and ideologies: Creating transnational space through flexible multilingual practices amongst Chinese university students in the UK. *Applied Linguistics*, *34*(5), 516-535.

Li Wei. (2018). Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics*, *39*(1), 9-30.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2008). Pedagogical practice for integrating the intercultural in language teaching and learning. *Japanese Studies*, *28*(3), 277-290.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2009). Communication as culturally contexted practice: A view from intercultural communication. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, *29*(1), 115-133. https://doi.org/10.1080/07268600802516400

Liddicoat, A. J. (2017). Interpretation and critical reflection in intercultural language learning: Consequences of a critical perspective for the teaching and learning of pragmatics. In M. Dasli & A. Díaz (Eds.), *The critical turn in language and intercultural communication pedagogy: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 22-39). Routledge.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2019). Critical perspectives in intercultural language learning. *ELIA: Estudios de Lingüística Inglesa Aplicada*, *19*, 17-38. https://doi.org/10.12795/elia.mon.2019.i1.02

Liddicoat, A. J. (2024). Developing a critical intercultural perspective in language learning. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *21 (Supplement)*, 97–108. https://doi.org/10.56040/atld2121

Liddicoat, A. J., & McConachy, T. (2019). Meta-pragmatic awareness and agency in language learners' constructions of politeness. In T. Szende & G. Alao (Eds.), *Pragmatic and cross-cultural competences: Focus on politeness* (pp. 11-25). Peter Lang.

Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. Wiley-Blackwell
McConachy, T., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2016). Metapragmatic awareness and intercultural competence: The role of reflection and interpretation in developing intercultural understanding. In F. Dervin & Z. Gross (Eds.), *Intercultural competence: Alternative approaches for different times* (pp. 3-30). Routledge.
McConachy, T., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2021). Introduction: Second language pragmatics for intercultural understanding. In T. McConachy & A. J. Liddicoat (Eds.), *Teaching and learning second language pragmatics for intercultural understanding* (pp. 1-8). Routledge.
Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Longman.
Norton, B., & De Costa, P. I. (2018). Research tasks on identity in language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching*, *51*(1), 90-112. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000325
Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 113-123). Oxford University Press.
Porcher, L. (1994). L'enseignement de la civilisation. *Revue française de pédagogie*, *108*, 5-12.
Ricoeur, P. (1965). *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud*. Seuil
Scarino, A. (2016). Reconceptualising translation as intercultural mediation: A renewed place in language learning. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *24*(3), 470-485.
Scarino, A., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2016). Reconceptualising learning in transdisciplinary languages education. *L2 Journal*, *8*(4), 20-35. https://doi.org/10.5070/L28429918
Schleiermacher, F. (1977). *Hermeneutik und Kritik: Mit einem Anhang sprachphilosophischer Texte Schleiermachers* [Hermenuetics and criticism: With an appendix of Schleiermacher's philosophical texts] (M. Frank, Ed.). Suhrkamp
Toyota, T. (1988). 日本語教育における日本事情 [Japanese way of life in Japanese language education]. *日本語教育*, *63*, 16-29.
Vandendorpe, C. (1992). Comprendre et interpréter. In C. Préfontaine & M. Lebrun (Eds.), *La lecture et l'écriture: Enseignement et apprentissage* (pp. 159-181). Éditions Logiques.
Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/2005). *Мышление и речь* [Thought and language]. Smysl
Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, Trans.). Harvard University Press
Zeuner, U. (1997). Landeskunde und interkulturelles Lernen in den verschiedenen Ausbildungsbereichen Deutsch als Fremdsprache an der technischen Universität Dresden. *Zeitschrift für interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht 2*(1), 1-14. http://tujournals.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/index.php/zif/article/view/724/701