



The nature of learning in languages education

2015 Research Centre for Languages and Cultures symposium

26 — 27 November 2015

DAY 1: 26 NOVEMBER
Room: H6-12 Hawke Building, UniSA City West

9.00 – 9.30	REGISTRATION AND COFFEE	
9.30 – 9.45	Welcome	Associate Professor Angela Scarino
9.45 – 10.15	Language learning as an interpretative process	Associate Professor Angela Scarino Professor Tony Liddicoat
MORNING TEA		
SESSION 1		
10.50 – 11.20	On the epistemological multiplicity of 'learning' in languages education	Professor Lourdes Ortega
11.20 – 11.50	Values and ideology in language learning and assessment: The case of the CEFR	Professor Tim McNamara
11.50 – 12.10	Discussion	
LUNCH		
SESSION 3		
1.10 – 1.40	The nature of language learning in Indigenous Australia	Professor Gillian Wigglesworth
1.40 – 2.10	Examining the learning dimension of intercultural language learning through a focus on mediation	Dr Michelle Kohler
2.10 – 2.30	Discussion	
AFTERNOON TEA		
SESSION 3		
2.40 – 3.10	The impact of initial teaching experiences on understandings of language learning by early career language teachers	Dr Jonathan Newton
3.10 – 3.40	The impact of learners' beliefs about language learning on their second language learning	Dr Reiko Yoshida
3.40 – 4.00	Discussion	
4.00 – 4.15	Day 1 review and close	

DAY 2: 27 NOVEMBER
Room: H6-12 Hawke Building, UniSA City West

8.30 – 8.50		COFFEE	
SESSION 4			
8.50 – 9.00	Introduction		
9.00 – 9.30	Co-learning and symbolic competence in the community language classroom	Professor Li Wei	
9.30 – 10.00	Critical learning in madrasah education contexts	Dr Ibrahima Diallo	
10.00 – 10.20	Discussion		
MORNING TEA			
SESSION 5			
10.50 – 11.20	Online social interaction for learning: the role of multilingual conversational repair	Dr Enza Tudini	
11.20 – 11.50	Language learning shaping languages education?	Professor Lesley Harbon	
11.50 – 12.10	Discussion		
LUNCH			
SESSION 6: H6-O3			
1.10 – 1.40	Learning language(s) and learning to communicate through language: Emerging issues from EMI and CLIL	Professor Constant Leung	
1.40 – 2.10	Multilingualism, translanguaging and learning English in an Australian university	Associate Professor Kathleen Heugh Ms Li Xuan Dr Song Ying	
2.10 – 2.30	Discussion		
2.30 – 3.00	Close		

CRITICAL LEARNING IN MADRASAH EDUCATION CONTEXTS

Dr Ibrahima Diallo

University of South Australia

Learning in madrasahs is generally perceived as being traditional and static. Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and a series of attacks elsewhere (e.g. the Bali and London bombings respectively in 2002 and 2005, and the 2008 Mumbai attacks) these stereotypes worsened and madrasah education drew considerable global interest. For many people, the roots to Muslim radicalisation in the madrasahs are to be found in their culture of learning, which is characterised as rote learning, uncritical mimicry, blind recitation and repetition of drills from the Qur'an and other religious texts, devoid of context and relevance. However, my experience of recent fieldtrips to India's best-known madrasahs suggests that learning in madrasah education is more complex than these stereotypical views. In fact, madrasahs are places where students are engaged in intense reflective and critical analyses and where they are encouraged to use their reasoning skills and common sense in the process of interpretation and clarification of the original intentions and meanings of Qur'anic texts. This presentation focuses on learning in the madrasah education context in India. The presentation is divided into three parts. The first discusses the nature of the learning practices found in madrasah education. The second discusses learning in madrasah education within the Islamic epistemological framework and the ways in which this framework accommodates critical learning approaches. The third part discusses critical learning in contemporary Islamic education.

Ibrahima Diallo obtained his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Griffith University in Australia. He is a member of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC) at the University of South Australia, where he is currently the convenor of the Francophone studies. In addition to teaching French, his research interests focus on languages-in-education in French-speaking Africa, French in Sub-Saharan Africa, Qur'anic and madrasah literacies, and *Ajami* in West Africa.

IS LANGUAGE LEARNING SHAPING LANGUAGES EDUCATION?

Professor Lesley Harbon

University of Technology Sydney

It is timely that the organisers for this symposium have drawn our attention back to language 'learning', when so often we hear only of language 'teaching'. In fact, they appear to be joining other scholars in a re-engagement with the notion of learning. For example, in her editor's message in the first issue of *Foreign Language Annals* for 2015, Nerenz (p. 3) asks readers to first question whether there is even any 'consensus surrounding the definition of student learning'. Needless to say, Nerenz and others view learning as an issue 'worthy' of attention.

In this paper, I examine the tables of contents and editorials of the languages education journals that appear prior to the symposium in late 2015, in order to gain insight into the scholarly focus on language learning. The journals are purposively selected and contain either 'learning' in their titles, or are the key languages education journals for Australia, UK, USA and Canada.

This paper and my comments, like the comments made by *Language Learning Journal* editors (Broady, Huettner, Pachler and Wingate, 2015, p. 1), ask whether scholars may be 'reinventing the wheel' in a continued pursuance of the factors influencing language learning, or whether scholarly insights and innovations are moving our understandings of language 'learning' forward.

Lesley Harbon is Professor and Head of School, School of International Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. She has been involved in languages education in Australian schooling systems and universities since the early 1980s. Her research is in the areas of content and language integrated learning/ bilingual education, language teacher narratives, language teacher education and intercultural language education. Her most recent project is an international collaboration focusing on linguistic landscapes.

MULTILINGUALISM, TRANSLANGUAGING AND LEARNING ENGLISH IN AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

Associate Professor Kathleen Heugh

Ms Li Xuan

Dr Song Ying

University of South Australia

In this paper, we discuss attempts to re-think conventional boundaries of English language learning and pedagogy alongside 'western' epistemologies offered to international students at the University of South Australia. We do this through a multilingual approach to teaching English that draws on research and practices of multilingualism in Africa and 'multilinguality' (Agnihotri 2014) in India. The approach includes explicit use of what several contemporary scholars refer to as 'translanguaging' (e.g. García & Li Wei, 2014). In particular we discuss the trialling of interventions and practices in which students are encouraged to make purposive use of their knowledge and expertise in their home (or strongest) language alongside their journey towards developing high level proficiency in English. Diagnostic assessment of students' written texts in Cantonese, Putonghua and English indicate that such approaches permit a more nuanced understanding of students' linguistic proficiency in both their home language and English. They also suggest that students experience enhanced metalinguistic awareness of, and confidence in, using their own linguistic and knowledge repertoires in addition to English. The findings further indicate that, while engaged in this process, the three sets of participants (undergraduate students, HDR student researchers and university teachers) experience heightened reflexivity of learning and teaching English in relation to their own and others' linguistic repertoires.

Kathleen Heugh is a socio-applied linguist whose work has focused on language policy and planning and multilingual education in sub-Saharan Africa. She has led several small, medium and large-scale country-wide and multi-country studies of literacy; mother-tongue and multilingual education; and large-scale assessment of multilingual students. She teaches English to international students at the University of South Australia, using pedagogical practices informed by research and theories of multilingualism and multilinguality.

Li Xuan is a PhD candidate based at the University of South Australia, whose research focus is on Chinese–English translation, translanguaging, bilingualism and bilingual schools.

Song Ying was awarded a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of South Australia in 2015. He has taught English for a number of years at university level in China and is currently responsible for the design and teaching of English language courses to international students in Adelaide.

EXAMINING THE LEARNING DIMENSION OF INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH A FOCUS ON MEDIATION

Dr Michelle Kohler

Flinders University

Within the growing theoretical and practical interest in intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997) and intercultural language teaching and learning over more than two decades, the concept of mediation has typically been associated with translation skills and the ability to navigate an 'other' culture. Much of the emphasis has therefore been on mediation in relation to the *intercultural* dimension (Buttjes & Byram 1991; Zarate, Gohard-Radenkovic, Lussier & Penz 2004), with far less attention given to mediation in terms of the *learning* dimension of an intercultural approach. In order to explore this latter sense of mediation and its relationship to learning, it is worth drawing on sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky 1978, Lantolf 2000), in which mediation is understood as social and individual processes of knowledge construction.

Based on extracts of interactions between language teachers and students, this paper considers mediation *in situ*, focusing on the dual processes of mediation taking place from the perspectives of both intercultural communicative competence and sociocultural learning theory. The paper highlights how an expanded conception of mediation foregrounds the complexity and importance of attending more explicitly to learning within intercultural approaches to languages education.

Michelle Kohler is Senior Lecturer in Languages Education and Indonesian at Flinders University and member of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia. She is an experienced educator in pre-service and in-service languages education, and Indonesian language. Her research interests include intercultural perspectives on language teaching and learning, with a particular focus on mediation, language curriculum and assessment, and participatory action research.

LEARNING LANGUAGE(S) AND LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH LANGUAGE: EMERGING ISSUES FROM EMI AND CLIL

Professor Constant Leung

King's College London

There is a tendency for second/modern language curriculums to assume that language learning is about learning a particular language/s and that learning can be conceptualised in terms of second language acquisition theories. Developments in English-medium instruction (EMI) in linguistically diverse classrooms and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in many parts of the world have introduced additional conceptual and pedagogic complexities. In both EMI and CLIL contexts, the pedagogic focus is not exclusively on language learning; the learning of the subject content (e.g. science) is of equal importance. Furthermore, because non-language teachers (e.g. science teachers) are often involved in the teaching in EMI or CLIL classes, we are beginning to understand that theories and models of learning in the classroom in other curriculum areas should be taken into account. In this presentation I will seek to map out some of the emerging conceptual and pedagogic issues related to language and learning in EMI and CLIL classrooms. Classroom data will be used to support the discussion where appropriate.

Constant Leung is Professor of Educational Linguistics at King's College London. His research interests include additional/second language development, language assessment and teacher professionalism. His recent publications include *English: A Changing Medium For Education* (Multilingual Matters, 2012) and *The Routledge Companion of English Studies* (co-editor: Brian Street, Routledge, 2014). He is Senior Associate Editor for *Language Assessment Quarterly* and Editor of Research Issues for *TESOL Quarterly*. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK).

VALUES AND IDEOLOGY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF THE CEFR

Professor Tim McNamara

The University of Melbourne

The changed context of learning in post-war Europe, which inspired the European version of the communicative language movement, can be seen as a precursor to globalisation, but on a European scale. The communicative movement was triggered by a recognition within the Council of Europe of the need for labour mobility, within a multilingual Europe lying in ruins from clashes over values in the broader context of economic reconstruction and cooperation. Far from challenging 'the predominantly functional, communicative orientation' to language learning, this changed context actually inspired it. The ultimate statement of the values of this movement is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR: Council of Europe 2001). What is lost when economic cooperation is the core value underlying curriculum and assessment in language learning? The question is made more urgent by the widespread use of the CEFR as a tool of globalisation beyond the boundaries of Europe. The paper examines the speaker's own history of language learning and the personal and ideological values involved in each case, and how they are at variance with the values and ideological assumptions of the CEFR. The implications for language learning curriculum and assessment are considered.

Tim McNamara is Professor in the School of Languages and Linguistics at The University of Melbourne, where he teaches and supervises at graduate level in Applied Linguistics. His main areas of research are in language testing (particularly specific-purpose language testing, Rasch measurement, and the social context of language tests), language for specific purposes, and post-structuralist theories of language and identity. Tim is the conference chair for AAAL 2017 in Portland, OR.

THE IMPACT OF INITIAL TEACHING EXPERIENCES ON UNDERSTANDINGS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING BY EARLY-CAREER LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Dr Jonathan Newton

Victoria University of Wellington

A major strand of research into teacher cognition addresses the relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practice. Drawing on a distinction between core and peripheral beliefs, Phipps and Borg (2009) argue that understanding the 'tensions' between different beliefs and between 'what teachers say and do' is a 'valuable focus for research and teacher development' (p. 381). In this paper, I explore the understandings of language learning that early-career language teachers draw on to inform their teaching practice. I discuss the way these understandings evolve through initial teaching experiences, how and when the teachers draw on these understandings, and the factors that mediate the way the teachers connect their theorisations of learning to their decision-making in and for the classroom. The teachers who provided the main data for this study were Malaysian ESOL teachers in their first year of teaching English in Malaysian secondary schools and student teachers in their final year of a teaching degree program. Data were drawn from interviews (including stimulated recall), written reflections, and classroom observations.

Jonathan Newton is Senior Lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He has worked in language teaching and teacher education for 30 years. His research interests include L2 vocabulary acquisition, learning through tasks, and intercultural language teaching and learning. He has published widely, including two co-authored books, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (Routledge, 2009) and *Workplace talk in action: An ESOL resource* (University of Wellington, 2010).

ON THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL MULTIPLICITY OF 'LEARNING' IN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

Professor Lourdes Ortega
Georgetown University

In languages education and its neighbouring fields, not one but many metaphors of 'learning' circulate. For example, depending on one's theory, learning can be envisioned as compulsory tallying of the statistical shape of experienced language, purposeful self-regulatory mediation to stretch language use beyond current capacities, recalibration of emic methods for social action, power-laden and reciprocal negotiation to become a member of a chosen community of knowers, and so on. In some theories, the phenomenon of learning is transitive (students learn something, like a body of knowledge), in others it is a process (students learn by doing or participating or co-aligning), and in others it is a liminal and visceral accomplishment of the imagination (people learn by (re)imagining themselves and others in affiliative and disaffiliative ways). I will argue that this multiplicity of understandings is needed, because language learning is at once neurobiological, cognitive, social, emotional and ideological. Each dimension of what it means to learn a new language is essential to understanding the overall phenomenon across space and time. In the advancement of languages education and in today's very complex multilingual worlds, it is not the culling of competing notions of 'learning' that will bring benefits, but a keen and widespread awareness of the necessity of this epistemological multiplicity.

Lourdes Ortega is Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University. Her main area of research is in second language acquisition, particularly usage-based, bilingual, and educational dimensions in adult classroom settings. She also has long-standing interests in second language writing and foreign language education and has published widely about systematic research synthesis and epistemological and ethical dimensions of research. She is the author of *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* (Routledge, rev. edn, 2016).

LANGUAGE LEARNING AS AN INTERPRETATIVE PROCESS

Associate Professor Angela Scarino
Professor Anthony J. Liddicoat
University of South Australia

This presentation considers language learning as an interpretative process which is based on experiences of language in texts, interactions and the life worlds of students. It demonstrates how learning is an act of meaning making in exchanges between students, the teacher and experiences of language as communication focused on interpreting and reflecting on meaning-making. It examines learning as students work on a concept over a period of time – in this case 'multilingualism'. In their exploration of the concept, they consider multilingualism as a phenomenon, extend their linguistic repertoire and also develop understandings of themselves as linguistically and culturally situated. As students work they participate in a dynamic process of building knowledge as they interpret the texts and experiences of language provided by the teacher, and develop layers of increasingly complex meaning around the concept. The presentation will examine the learning processes of the students and also will consider how the teacher interprets and comes to understand the evolving learning of individuals and the group.

Angela Scarino is Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures at the University of South Australia. Her areas of research are in languages education in linguistically and culturally diverse societies, second language learning, second language curriculum design, learning-oriented assessment, intercultural language learning and second language teacher education. She has been a chief investigator on a number of research grants. She is the author of the *Shape Paper for Languages* in the recently developed Australian Curriculum. She is currently the Chair of the Multicultural Education and Languages Committee, an advisory committee on languages and multicultural education to the Minister for Education in South Australia.

Anthony J. Liddicoat is Professor in Applied Linguistics at the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures in the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages at the University of South Australia. His research interests include: language and intercultural issues in education, conversation analysis, and language policy and planning. In recent years his research has focused on issues relating to the teaching and learning of culture through language study. He is a former President of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia and the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations and is Executive Editor of *Current Issues in Language Planning*.

ONLINE SOCIAL INTERACTION FOR LEARNING: THE ROLE OF MULTILINGUAL CONVERSATIONAL REPAIR

Dr Vincenza Tudini
University of South Australia

Conversational repair is fundamental to the construction of shared meanings, achievement of understanding and maintenance of social relationships during face-to-face and other forms of interaction, including online written interaction. It is also an interactional resource for learning that is available to speakers of foreign languages during online interaction. Focusing on interpersonal talk in online text chat between geographically dispersed speakers of both Italian and English as either L1 or L2, this study explores how participants use various types of multilingual conversational repair (especially other-initiated repair) as a resource to develop language. Code-switching between two or more languages is a key resource for the pursuit of understanding, learning and affiliation during repair sequences. Thus, even within open-ended conversational tasks, learning may be promoted by fundamental mechanisms of social interaction, the learning-oriented objectives of the partnership, adaptation of interactional resources from face-to-face to written conversation, unique interactional features of the medium of communication, and participants' linguistic profiles.

Vincenza Tudini works in the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures at the University of South Australia. Her research interests include the application of conversation analytic techniques in computer-mediated communication contexts. Her book on online language learning, *Online Second Language Acquisition: Conversation Analysis of Online chat* was published by Continuum in 2010. She is currently co-investigator in the Knowledge for Network-based Education, Cognition and Teaching (KONECT) project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

CO-LEARNING AND SYMBOLIC COMPETENCE IN THE COMMUNITY LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Professor Li Wei
University College London

Global migration has had a significant impact on the traditional configuration of the teacher's classroom role set. The language teacher may be teaching a group of learners with highly mixed interests, abilities, learning histories and exposures to the target language, while the language learner may be confronted with so many different models of the target language that notions of native, first, second and foreign languages become blurred. In this presentation, I will describe a specific language classroom context, where the traditional role set of the teacher and the learner, and the power relations implied in such a role set, is being challenged by the sociocultural changes that are occurring simultaneously in the community and in society at large. Using the theoretical concepts of *co-learning* and *symbolic competence*, I will show how teachers and pupils in the complementary schools for Chinese children in Britain, through co-learning, utilise and negotiate the discrepancies in their linguistic knowledge and sociocultural experience in the learning and construction of language, cultural values and practices, and identity.

Li Wei is Chair of Applied Linguistics at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London, UK. He was until the end of 2014 Pro-Vice-Master of Birkbeck College, University of London. He is Principal Editor of the *International Journal of Bilingualism*, co-editor of the journals *Applied Linguistics Review*, *Global Chinese* and *Chinese Language and Discourse*, and book series editor of Wiley-Blackwell's series, 'Research Methods in Language and Linguistics'. His most recent publications include *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education* (with Ofelia Garcia, Palgrave, 2014) and *Applied Linguistics* (Wiley, 2014). He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, UK, and currently serving as Chair of the University Council of General and Applied Linguistics, UK.

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING IN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

Professor Gillian Wigglesworth
University of Melbourne

Indigenous students in Australia, and particularly those living in the more remote areas, bring to the classroom extremely varied language experiences. Some will come to school speaking Standard Australian English (SAE), whereas others will speak Aboriginal English (AE), a non-standard dialect which may vary from one place to another. Other Indigenous children, particularly if they live in remote locations, will bring minimal previous access to either SAE or AE, but speak fluently either a traditional Indigenous language (TIL), a new mixed language, or one of the variety of creoles spoken across the Top End of Australia. These latter groups, the focus of this paper, have in common that they all live in communities which are essentially non-English speaking.

The role of language in children's cognitive, social and cultural development cannot be underestimated. Learning language and being able to use it to manage the world is critical to the healthy development of all children, both cognitively and linguistically. This paper explores the challenges and issues in learning language faced by Indigenous children from these non-English speaking (i.e. EFL) backgrounds, and argues for the importance of language as a focus in education.

Gillian Wigglesworth is Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and Professor of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the University of Melbourne. She is a chief investigator on the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language, and leader of the Learning program. Her major research focus is on the languages that Indigenous children living in remote communities are learning, and how these interact with English once they attend school.

THE IMPACT OF LEARNERS' BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING ON THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Dr Reiko Yoshida
University of South Australia

Second language learners' beliefs about language learning are considered to be an important factor that influence their learning by mediating their learning actions. However, what kinds of impacts learners' beliefs (apart from self-efficacy beliefs) have on their second language learning have not been sufficiently examined. The study described in this paper examines how beliefs of Japanese language learners at an Australian university support or impede their learning of the language. The study involved ten students and the period of data collection varied from four years to six months, including their Japanese study abroad experience. Methods of data collection consisted of the learners' weekly diary entries and interviews, either face-to-face or by Skype. The learners' beliefs positively influenced their learning by mediating their learning actions: (1) creating learning opportunities; (2) overcoming difficulties; (3) creating and/or using appropriate learning strategies for their learning purposes; and (4) setting appropriate goals. Conflicts between the learners' different beliefs negatively influenced their learning actions. The learners' beliefs were complexly associated with their learning contexts, including socio-environmental factors (e.g. the education policy of the particular institution), and affected their learning positively or negatively.

Reiko Yoshida is a lecturer in Japanese at the University of South Australia. She completed her PhD about corrective feedback and private speech in Japanese language classes in 2008 and her book *Learners in Japanese Language Classrooms: Overt and Covert Participation* was published by Continuum in 2009. Her research interests include learners' second-language self-concepts, beliefs about language learning, learner motivation, identity and interculturality, as well as classroom studies.

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