



The intercultural dimension in language teaching: perspectives from the teaching of English and French

Η διαπολιτισμική διάσταση στη διδακτική των γλωσσών: προοπτικές υπό το πρίσμα της διδασκαλίας της αγγλικής και της γαλλικής

Richard Fay & George Androulakis

The twin Masters programmes offered by the Hellenic Open University (HOU) in Teaching English and French as Foreign Languages share many characteristics. For example, they address the continuing development of teachers whose professional home is located in foreign language education in the shared socio-cultural Greek context. However, as well as sharing some similarities, each programme has its own particularities regarding the content and ways of exploring it. For those who collaborated in the development of these programmes, such particularities and similarities stimulated an ongoing concern with the appropriacy of the emerging approaches on each programme. In this article, we explore the theme of appropriate methodology with a particular focus on the module on each programme which addresses the intercultural dimension of language teaching. These explorations identify some of the particularities and similarities in this topic area. They also enable us to speculate about the broader theme of appropriate methodology as it applies to these two programmes and their similar spheres of professional practice.



Τα δύο παράλληλα Προγράμματα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών (ΠΜΣ) που προσφέρει το Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο (ΕΑΠ), για Καθηγητές Αγγλικής και για Καθηγητές Γαλλικής ως Ξένης Γλώσσας, έχουν πολλά κοινά χαρακτηριστικά. Για παράδειγμα, αντιμετωπίζουν τη συνεχή επαγγελματική εξέλιξη των καθηγητών που ασχολούνται με τις ξένες γλώσσες ως τοποθετημένη σε ένα κοινό πολιτισμικό και κοινωνικό περιβάλλον στην Ελλάδα. Ωστόσο, παρότι έχουν και αρκετές ομοιότητες, κάθε ΠΜΣ παρουσιάζει ιδιαιτερότητες, σχετικά με το περιεχόμενο και τους τρόπους αξιοποίησής του. Για όσους συνεργάστηκαν στην ανάπτυξη των δύο ΠΜΣ, τέτοιες ιδιαιτερότητες και ομοιότητες τροφοδότησαν έναν ήδη υπάρχοντα επιστημονικό προβληματισμό για την καταλληλότητα των αναδυόμενων προσεγγίσεων σε κάθε ΠΜΣ. Στο άρθρο αυτό, διερευνούμε το ζήτημα της κατάλληλης μεθοδολογίας με ιδιαίτερη εστίαση στη Θεματική Ενότητα κάθε ΠΜΣ που σχετίζεται με τη διαπολιτισμική διάσταση της διδασκαλίας της γλώσσας. Αυτή η διερεύνηση εντοπίζει και αναλύει ορισμένες από τις ιδιαιτερότητες και τις ομοιότητες σε αυτό το συγκεκριμένο θεματικό πεδίο. Μας επιτρέπει επίσης να επιδιώξουμε την εξέταση του ευρύτερου θέματος της κατάλληλης μεθοδολογίας, όπως βρίσκει εφαρμογή σε αυτά τα δύο ΠΜΣ και στις αντίστοιχές τους σφαίρες επαγγελματικής πρακτικής.

An initial version of this article was presented in 2009 at the Hellenic Open University (HOU) conference¹ commemorating the 10th anniversary of its parallel Masters programmes for teachers of English, French and German². These programmes were amongst the first offered by the newly-established HOU in 1998 (Lionarakis, 1996). Since then, each of them has provided several hundred language teachers with an academic site of continuing professional development not easily available to them otherwise. The programmes have also been contributed to the development of the distance learning (DL) practices and perceptions in Greek higher education. The diverse papers at the conference celebrated many of the achievements of the materials developers, the tutoring teams, and the participating teachers. As contributors throughout the ten-year development of the HOU's MA programmes for teachers of English and French³, we used the opportunity that the conference provided to share some of our long-standing ideas about appropriate methodology arising from our HOU experiences. In particular, we focused on the intercultural modules⁴ for which we had interconnected development experience. This article revisits what we presented at that event.

Introduction

A collaborative orientation

This article is the outcome of our shared professional curiosities as explored with mutual respect not only for each other but also for the national, disciplinary, linguistic, methodological and other traditions we have been shaped by, with which we identify and interact, and to which we each contribute. We recognise that our collaboration brings together our differing perspectives as shaped, at least in part, by the different

- ... societal contexts – for example, British, French and Greek⁵ educational and academic traditions in which we each have, to a large extent, been socialised;
- ... language-based traditions– for example, the English-medium, French-medium and Greek-medium traditions of thought, philosophy, and so on in which we are each immersed; and
- ... methodological discourses that affect our professional roles – for example, ways of thinking about the teaching English specifically⁶ and, more generally, the ways of thinking about foreign language education in Europe⁷.

¹ The “Distance learning of foreign language teachers at the HOU, 1998-2008: present and future” conference, Athens, 23rd May, 2009.

² In this largely English-medium article, we list the languages in English-alphabetical order unless otherwise indicated. The sequence is not an indication of the relative status which we or others might accord to these languages and language teaching professions.

³ Throughout the article, we use the terms *English* and *French* programmes as shorthand for the MAs in Teaching English or French as a Foreign Language. By extension, when we say, e.g. *the French team*, we mean those colleagues (most of whom are Greek) involved with the French programme.

⁴ Throughout the article, we use the term *intercultural modules* as shorthand for the module on each programme which addresses the intercultural dimension of language teaching.

⁵ As with the listing of languages, in this largely English-medium text, the sequence we use for national terms is simply based on English-alphabetic order.

⁶ e.g. Ways of methodological thinking informed to some extent by the private-sector, instrumental practices which Holliday (1994) terms British Australasian and North American (BANA).

⁷ e.g. Ways of methodological thinking informed, at least in part, by the work of the Council of Europe.

The Anglocentric backdrop

We recognise the widespread concerns about the Anglocentricism of our increasingly globalised world and, more particularly, about “the Anglocentric forces at work in the academy” (Kramersch, 1993). We are not surprised that some scholars, mindful of the extent to which contemporary research debates are conducted in English, now question whether it is possible to accurately articulate scientific/research ideas in English⁸. We also note that much of the thinking about issues such as linguistic imperialism (e.g. Phillipson, 1992), and native-speakerism (e.g. Holliday, 2006) is not only available mainly through English but also has the English language global phenomenon and the internationally-spread practice of English language teaching (e.g. Holliday, 2005) firmly within its sights.

We hope that our discussion recognises such Anglocentricism without unwittingly contributing to it. Thus, we wish to emphasise that we are not seeking to elevate either of the intercultural modules above the other, nor do we seek to contribute to the kudos of one language over the other, or to give preference to methodological insights from English or French language teaching. On the contrary, we want to explore the particularities of, and similarities between, the two modules and to use any insights arising from this to speculate about appropriate (English and French) language teacher education methodology in the Greek distance learning (DL) context.

The context of collaborative programme development

The first generation of courseware used on the HOU’s English programme was licensed from the University of Manchester’s comparable DL programme. Strong links developed between the English team and Manchester colleagues as a result of the latter’s support in the localisation of the Manchester materials for the new HOU context. Rather than license-and-localise existing materials, the French team developed their courseware in-house. However, they did so, to some extent, with the Manchester materials as a stimulus, and with Manchester colleagues as critical readers for some of the materials. Links, therefore, also developed between the French and Manchester teams. Occasionally and, in our experience atypically, special events stimulated by HOU activities (e.g. on the theme of appropriate methodology, or to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the programmes) brought members of all three teams into contact with each other.

With this brief historical sketch portrait in place, we can more clearly explain our authorial duet. Throughout the above processes of collaboration, Richard has been a key member of the Manchester team and has worked with members of both the English and French teams. George has been a key member of the French team, with Richard as a critical friend during the materials writing process.

A shared interest in appropriate methodologies

It is rare for near-simultaneous development by one institution (i.e. the HOU) of parallel programmes for language teachers with differing specialisms (i.e. the English and French programmes) working within the same overall context (i.e. Greece). As such, this HOU context provides an opportunity to explore the particularities of each of these MA programmes, to note their similarities, and consider their underlying design rationale. Further, the involvement of a ‘third party’ (i.e. Manchester) in the HOU development context necessitated a process of materials and methodology localisation. This process prompted questions about the externally-produced, English-focused language teacher education courseware and its appropriacy for French and English language teachers, based in Greece,

⁸ e.g. Recently Wierzbicka has asked: “Since English is not a neutral scientific language then the key question is what (meta)language other than English can be used instead?” (2009: 21). In that discussion, her concern was with emotion research but her worries about Anglocentrism are longstanding and can be found, for example, much closer to our methodological home in her 1985 article on speech act theory.

who are taking Greece-oriented programmes. For example, how and why do the DL practices of the Manchester programme, the HOU English programme, and the HOU French programme differ?

Such questions illustratively operationalise a pair of related interests that arose during the collaborations sketched above, i.e. an interest in:

1. appropriate language teacher education methodology; and
2. appropriate distance learning methodology.

These appropriacy formulations are an extension of the discussion, primarily in the TESOL literature, of *appropriate (TESOL) methodology* and international educational project activity (e.g. Holliday, 1992a, 1992b, and 1994). In the early years of the collaboration, we - i.e. colleagues from the English team, the French team, and from Manchester - jointly discussed these interests (e.g. Fay, Spithourakis and Anastassiadi, 2000). The discussion also extended more widely in HOU / Manchester circles⁹ but, such discussions apart, these two areas of interest are, we are surprised to note, not widely researched or discussed in the literature.

Some intriguing initial sights

From these inter-team discussions, some insights arose which we believe merited, but have yet to receive, fuller attention. For example, with regard to appropriate DL methodology, one member of the French team described the HOU DL context (in implicit comparison to that of Manchester) as follows:

Le concept d'enseignement à distance est inconnu jusqu'ici. Certains éléments qui existent dans les livrets (par exemple, les questions d'auto-évaluation) sont nouveaux pour la réalité grecque. (Fay, Spithourakis & Anastassiadi, 2000: 115)

[The concept of distance learning is quite unknown. Certain features in the units (for example, the self-evaluation questions are new to the Greek situation.)]

Given more time and space, it might be interesting to reflect on the ways in which the HOU (and Manchester) DL methodology has developed since then. What might a similar comparison in 2010 highlight? This, however, is not our current concern.

The English and French programmes share many characteristics: thus, both are offered by the same institution and involve the same DL study modality; and both target experienced teachers who, although from different language specialisms, practise within, broadly-speaking, the same educational and socio-cultural context. Given these commonalities, we were intrigued by some potentially rich areas of emergent difference between the two programmes. For example, with regard to appropriate language teacher education methodology, the same French materials developer as quoted above noted how:

comparé au matériel anglais, le contenu des livrets français est plus théorique, l'approche y est diachronique, plus conforme à la bibliographie française. [*ibid*, pg.113]

[compared to the English materials, the French modules are more theoretical; the approach is chronological conforming to the French rhetorical tradition].

⁹ e.g. Agiakli (2001), Androulakis, et al (2001), Fay (2001), Fay (2004), Fay & Hill (2003), Fay, Hill & Davcheva (2002 and 2006), Fay & Sifakis (2003), Papaefthymiou-Lytra, Sifakis & Hill (2003), Sifakis (1999), Sifakis & Fay (2003), and Sifakis & Hill (2001).

In this article, we return to the intrigue we felt back in the early days of the HOU for appropriate language teacher education methodology. We do so with a specific focus on the intercultural dimension of language teaching and language teacher education.

Exploration

The intercultural modules

Richard is responsible for Manchester's intercultural module which has been a resource for the development of the intercultural modules on the HOU English and French programmes. The French intercultural module came first (1998-2002), developed by George and a colleague¹⁰ with Richard as critical reader. Our collaboration on it sparked an interest in appropriate methodology and the approaches taken in the Manchester and French intercultural modules. The intercultural module for the HOU's English programme came significantly later (2007-09), a development led by Richard¹¹ which closely follows the Manchester module. Thus, there was some Manchester influence on the HOU French module but far more on the HOU English module.

The time-lag in the development between the French and the English intercultural modules is important and helps explain why newer considerations, such as computer mediated intercultural communication, feature only in the later module. Further, these development dates might also explain the greater attention paid in the English intercultural module to a problematisation of the key construct 'culture' from what might be broadly seen as a postmodern sensibility.

	1st intercultural module (French programme)	2nd intercultural module (English programme)
Title:	<i>Education interculturelle et enseignement du FLE</i>	<i>Intercultural approaches to the teaching of English</i>
Published in:	2002	2009
Edited by:	----	Richard Fay
Content authors:	George Androulakis & Eleni Ginou	Susan Brown, Leah Davcheva, Richard Fay, Vally Lytra, & Howard McKee
Critical reader	Richard Fay	Nicos Sifakis
Structure:	4 volumes (2 more theoretical, 2 more applied)	2 volumes (1 more theoretical, 1 more applied)
Status:	elective module	elective module

Fig 1. The two intercultural modules

Transdisciplinary and transnational exploration

We believe that the collaboration through which the intercultural modules were developed enriches both the resulting modules and the collaborators. In this regard, we find Claire Kramsch's (1993) thinking to be insightful. Speaking of foreign language educators in the USA, she suggests that:

The study of a foreign language and culture has not only a transdisciplinary but also a potential transnational dimension. Just as American engineers are trained in a tradition that differs from that of French or German engineering [so too] American sociologists, educators, or literature scholars have intellectual styles unlike those of their French and German counterparts: they ask different questions and search for answers in different ways.

¹⁰ Androulakis (2002a, 2002b) and Ginou (2002a, 2002b).

¹¹ See Fay (2009a, 2009b).

She argues that foreign language educators are well-placed to gain “intellectual enrichment” from an examination of the transdisciplinary and transnational character of their field. By way of example, she notes how American teachers of German are:

.... naturally informed by insights from the American tradition in education, which is steeped in behaviorist and psychological theories of learning; but they can also draw on German educational traditions, either directly, through contact with the German field of language teaching and learning research or indirectly, through materials prepared by German educators for the teaching of German as a second language Second language acquisition research in Europe is more qualitative, more ethnographic in its approach than quantitative American-style research ... An American teacher of German may draw professional sustenance from both American and German traditions.

She concludes that such teachers “may draw professional sustenance from both American and German traditions”. We hope that through the confluence of our separate perspectives, there may be professional sustenance not just for ourselves but also for all those language educators and language teacher educators for whom the conference was intended and to whom this article is addressed.

Some particularities

Context-specific / -general approaches

The French intercultural module¹² was developed, and is now tutored, by language teacher educators mostly based in Greece. It is clearly oriented towards French language teachers based in Greece, i.e. for teachers working in the reality of the Greek public and private educational systems - it is not easy to imagine it being immediately usable for French language teachers in other educational contexts. The English intercultural module has been produced by an international team of writers based in several contexts but including Greece only indirectly. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the input orientation is not specific to the Greek-context. Instead, the participating teachers are explicitly invited to explore the relevance of the module’s content for their practice and their context.

Identity and the reflective practice

Building on the previous point, we note that, in the English intercultural module, a significant responsibility of, and role for, the participating teachers is that of being reflective practitioners (e.g. Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1983; 1987). They must theorise their practice rather than apply theory to it (Edge & Richards, 1998). As befits an intercultural module, they are invited to reflect on their professional identity, experiences, and realities in light of the ideas explored in the module. Further, they must theorise (inter)cultural identity, their own and those of their learners. Thus, the module explicitly invites the participants throughout to reflect on their own complex and unique cultural identity, i.e. to re-locate themselves in (inter) cultural terms.

The French intercultural module is less explicitly oriented towards reflective practice and identity. It devotes considerable coverage to developing the participants’ understanding of the concept of identity – e.g. its complexity, multiple identities, etc - but the participating teachers are not directly encouraged towards self-projection. Their module focuses more on the ‘it’ (of the intercultural dimension) whereas the English module focuses more on the teachers themselves as intercultural beings and practitioners. There are, we want to suggest, particularities of teacher education ideology

¹² In this part of the article we tend to start with the French intercultural module since this was developed first, i.e. a development-date sequence rather than an English-alphabetical one.

and higher education pedagogy at play here. It may be that the more content-focused, tutor-/ materials-driven approach of the French intercultural module is closer to the expectations of the participating teachers given their previous experiences of higher education in Greece. It may also be the case that the process-focused, participant-oriented aspect of the English intercultural module is less familiar for its participants.

Theory and beyond: competence and skills

The coverage in both modules includes extensive presentation and exploration of conceptual and theoretical issues. In the case of the French module, there is also a general move from teachers' intercultural awareness towards their ability to mediate in intercultural interactions. In the English module, there are frequent opportunities for reflection regarding the teachers' understandings of their own cultural identity and professional activities. Both modules are concerned with the nature of, and development towards intercultural (communicative) competence.

In the French module, the frameworks are drawn mainly from the work of the Council of Europe, with intercultural competence being seen as complementary to the more familiar competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic, etc). Further, the examples used of particular teaching methods/materials are ones mainly developed in Greece, i.e. there is a clear preference for materials designed with Greek students (and teachers) in mind. In the English module, participants explore the English-medium, US-driven intercultural communication training literature. As a result, the model for intercultural communicative competence is largely autonomous of other familiar competences, and the module has little of the 'European' flavour of its counterpart and no focus at all on the Greek educational or cultural contexts.

Exploration as a core metaphor

Both modules make use of related *exploration* metaphors to explain their objectives, i.e. for foreign language teachers, the intercultural dimension is something seen as new that they can, and should, explore. Thus, for the French module, the broad aim is "*orienter la formation de l'enseignant du FLE et sa pratique vers la dimension interculturelle de l'enseignement / apprentissage des langues*" ["to orientate EFL teachers' training towards the intercultural dimension of language teaching and learning"]. It seeks to help French teachers become aware of the importance of the 'new', 'promising' intercultural dimension and to 'discover' what this dimension involves. As it does this, it makes a basic move from more theoretical coverage to more practical concerns. The English module invites participants to explore "the cultural and intercultural territory". It overviews these territories, maps the complexities involved, and provides teachers with directional advice about how to explore them.

As we now write this text in early 2010, we ask ourselves whether the intercultural dimension really is such a 'new' thing for these participating teachers, and whether or not they really need such exploration-oriented guidance. In this regard, and at this point in time, are the modules in step with the teachers' professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996)¹³?

Problematizing 'culture' and defining key terms

Both modules devote substantial coverage to the core construct / term 'culture'. The French intercultural module seeks to raise participants' awareness about the distinction between *la culture savante* ['learned culture'] and *culture comportementale / quotidienne* ['everyday culture']. It

¹³ Interestingly, the 'knowledge landscape' image from Clandinin and Connelly resonates with the core exploration/territory imagery used in these intercultural modules.

suggests that teachers' main concern should be with the latter, and not the broader sense of culture (*belles lettres* ['great literature'], history, etc.). This is an ideologically-driven suggestion, i.e. the module writers wish to encourage teachers to approach culture from an applied linguistics rather than a *littérature-civilisation* point of view. Underlying this positioning, we believe, is the continuing importance and power of the *littérature-civilisation* sections in other Greek universities. The intercultural module assumes that the undergraduate experience of most of the participating teachers will have been shaped by this *littérature-civilisation* tradition. Consequently, it seeks to reposition French language teaching, to make it informed more by applied linguistics concerns than the cultural ones whilst still embedded in the *littérature-civilisation* tradition.

It may well be true that in the undergraduate studies of the participating English teachers there was a similar cultural positioning. However, perhaps because the English materials writers do not themselves come from that tradition in the Greek university sector, the problematising of 'culture' moves in a different direction. Following Holliday (e.g. 1999; Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2004), the English intercultural module distinguishes between the default, large culture approach - with its typically essentialising, reductivist, prescriptive, stereotyping, otherising tendencies - with the small culture approach - with its preference for interpretative, descriptive, contextualised, localised possibilities. It argues strongly for the latter.

Both modules address the links between the terms *language, culture, communication* and *intercultural communication*. The French module is especially concerned with the relationship between language and culture, and the implications this has for intercultural communication. The English module is more concerned with the relationship between culture and communication, and the implications this has for intercultural communication.

Global perspectives, multiculturalism and paradigm possibilities

Both modules assume that participants are likely to understand their work as foreign language teaching, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and FLE (*Français Langue Etrangère*). In the French module, there are some references to French in global terms, to *francophonie*, but the module does not significantly depart from the FLE anchoring with which teachers are most familiar. Thus, the intercultural dimension is understood in terms of FLE. The English module speaks of the "global English language phenomenon" and devotes substantial coverage to mapping the complexities resulting from this. It links such complexities to a discussion of different paradigm possibilities and seeks to explore the intercultural dimension in these different possibilities, including Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) and Multicultural Awareness through English (MATE) in the Greek context.

Here, we wonder about the paradigm implications for the changing status and functions of the two languages in global terms. Does the increasingly globalised role and function of English encourage a post-EFL concern with different teaching paradigms? Are these an appropriate part of the English teachers' knowledge landscapes? Are there now any similar post-FLE concerns for the French teachers? Can TEFL and TFFL be approached in similar ways or do the differing roles and functions they have in the world today make this less helpful?

Both modules have a concern for the multiculturalism of increasing numbers of classrooms in contemporary Greece. In the French module, this is seen as an intercultural resource and as a starting point for intercultural action and intervention. In the English module, such multiculturalism provides the starting point for the new MATE paradigm.¹⁴

¹⁴ See also: Fay, Lytra & Ntavaliagkou (2010); Fay, Ntavaliagkou & Lytra (2009); Sifakis & Fay (2009; and forthcoming); and Sifakis, Lytra & Fay (2010).

Related to this paradigm discussion is the issue of the native-speaker model and the assumptions about the native / non-native background of the people with whom the students will be using French or English. For both modules, it is clear that the native-speaker model is no longer seen as being as central as it used to be. However, in the French module, there remains a core focus on the intercultural dimension of Greek speakers of French interacting with French native-speakers. In the English module, the intercultural dimension is also explored in terms of this native-speaker model but significant attention is paid to the phenomenon of Greek speakers of English using English with other non-native speakers of English.

Some concluding thoughts

The above areas are illustrative of the particularities and similarities we have noted with regard to these two intercultural modules. As we discussed them, we raised a number of questions and speculated a little about the reasons for the points of interest we had noted. What do these points of interest suggest to us about (English and French) language teacher education methodology in the Greek distance learning (DL) context? Our speculations take the form of a number of questions which need to be set against the contextualising scenario below.

Imagine for a moment the entirely possible situation in which two colleagues working in the same school – one, the teacher of English, the other, the teacher of French – register for their respective English and French MA programmes, and, as part of their studies, take the intercultural module on the programme concerned. Such colleagues clearly have differing language specialisms but their professional and study contexts share many characteristics. They teach the same pupils (largely drawn from the same societal context), and, to do so, they work from the same (or very similar) curricular specifications for foreign languages. Their practice is set in the same overall context of a dominant large culture (i.e. Greek-speaking, mostly affiliated to the Greek Orthodoxy religion) but with significant, recent increases in the multiculturalism resulting from immigration of various kinds. For both of these colleagues, a key assumption underpinning their practice has been that the target language in question is a foreign language (rather than a second language for example), i.e. it is a language with only limited presence within the home society. Further, the teachers' studies are being undertaken on the parallel programmes within the same HOU institutional context in which the assessment procedures, for example, are broadly the same.

Given the substantial similarities in their socio-cultural, professional and academic contexts, the substantial differences we identified above between the two modules are surprising. Of course, as the differences in our own personal, academic and professional biographies suggest, the full team of materials writers for these modules have their own routes into this intercultural area within language teacher education. It is to be expected, therefore, that they will have idiosyncratic preferences, experiences and understandings vis-à-vis the intercultural dimension, and that these will be embedded in their materials. But is this a persuasive explanation and rationale for such levels of difference in approach? Is it desirable that the two imaginary colleagues above have such differing experiences as a result of these idiosyncrasies of the materials writers concerned?

Further, we have come to realise that the differences evident in the two intercultural modules may also have deeper roots, ones lying in the differing language specialisms to which we belong and with which we are concerned as teacher educators. Our specialisms are informed, to some degree, by the differing presence of English and French in the world, and the differing traditions of thinking associated with them. Thus, our two modules provide both a context and pretext for our exploration of these differing approaches to the intercultural dimension of foreign language education and the possible reasons for such differences. Again, this raises some questions for us: given that these two

areas of language teaching are related but also distinct, what would be an appropriate level of shared approach in general and with regard to the intercultural dimension in particular? Do the differing roles of English and French in the world really require significantly different approaches to the intercultural dimension in language teacher development courses?

At this point, we return to Kramsch's view, quoted above, that language teachers might gain professional sustenance from the differing (disciplinary, national, language-based, etc) traditions which they encounter. However, for such enrichment to be valuable it needs to be valued. We feel disappointed that the various language teaching specialism do not crossfertilise more. Further, in the HOU context - with its near simultaneous development of three parallel programmes and its ongoing provision of three parallel language teacher development experiences – there is a largely missed opportunity for inter-specialism interactions (for developers, tutors and participating teachers). We believe that the traditions language teacher education builds upon are not often made fully explicit and they are rarely problematised through encounters with sibling traditions such as those linked to English / French language teaching, to English- / French-medium scholarship, and to Greek- / French- / UK-based educational practices.

Finally, although this is not our main focus here, it is also curious that the distance learning methodological practices on the two programmes also seem to differ, perhaps reflecting the influence upon them of their respective language teacher education practices but also of English- / French-medium distance learning practices. Again, we would suggest that through more mutually-enriching encounters across programme boundaries in this regard, participants will also gain sustenance as distance learners.

Authors' e-mail: R. Fay: richard.fay@manchester.ac.uk, G. Androulakis: gandren@ath.forthnet.gr.

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