



Symposium title:

Teaching literature in the language classroom: the basis of establishing an intercultural dialogue

Coordinator 1 (Fotini, Diamantidaki, Culture Communication and Media, UCL Institute of Education, UK):

Symposium format:

- **On-the-ground Symposium**

Symposium mode:

- **100% in-person**

Sub-themes:

- **LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING:** teacher education, curricula and education, classrooms, instruction, task-based learning, EAP, study abroad, (virtual) exchanges, materials and methods
- **LINGUISTIC SOCIAL ISSUES:** linguistic (in)justice, power, advocacy, attitude & bias, diversity-emancipation, discriminations, ethnicity and gender, ideology, language & social justice

Short abstract in English (15 lignes):

Teaching French as a foreign language in the UK context, has historically been a transmissive approach, where pupils find themselves at the receiving end of the teaching process. In most cases, learning French, seems very alien to students' own social reality and identity. Cultural elements in teaching are also traditionally scarce in the classroom and in many contexts, they are just a luxury added towards the end of term projects and only if the main linguistic material has been covered. Reading a literary extract from a different culture, encourages students and teachers to see that the issues they face in their everyday life also apply to other human beings across the globe. The teaching of literature is then the beginning of an intercultural journey of awareness and not feeling alone. It helps students redefine their own identity and position themselves within their own context first. This is a very important step in the teaching of a foreign language that it is generally overlooked.

The symposium will therefore offer the opportunity to participants to discover, how integrating literature within the language classroom can provide a platform for students to start a dialogue over a contentious subject that they would not approach otherwise, by depersonalising a difficult situation.

Argument (2 pages maximum, i.e., about 500 words or 3000 characters including bibliography):



On-the-ground symposium:

The symposium will demonstrate how literature in the foreign language classroom - in this case French foreign language classroom - can provide a platform for students to start a dialogue over a contentious subject that they would not approach otherwise. I argue that literature lends itself to creative expression and personal interpretation (Diamantidaki, 2019) by depersonalising a difficult situation. The focus falls on the central fictitious character and not the students themselves.

I adopt Davidheiser's (2007) concept of a 'non-threatening' environment through the use of fairy tales in foreign language learning. I will adopt this concept to show how a variety of literary extracts can become a platform for students to develop a dialogue between themselves and the 'foreign', creating therefore a non-threatening environment for that dialogue to take place whilst starting the process of acculturation.

Three different children's fictitious characters will be presented in this symposium and will bring to the fore the concept of 'intercultural citizenship' (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009). Notions of social and moral responsibility will be explored whilst learning about social issues with confidence, yet depersonalised.

I suggest for the symposium to be organised as follows: depending on logistics at the venue at the time the symposium could last between 1 hour and 1.30h (it depends on what works best in the programme). Participants will be invited to discuss amongst them and in small groups, questions arising from the presentation on at least two occasions before engaging with the French literary extracts. It would be desirable the participants can read French however this is in not compulsory at all to attend the symposium as translations of the extracts will be provided for all involved. In groups we will then discuss the three different extracts and their pedagogic value in the language classroom and the process of depersonalising a difficult situation.

Bibliography:

Abdallah-Pretceille, M., (2003) Former et éduquer en contexte hétérogène. Pour un humanisme du divers, Paris: Anthropos

Davidheiser, J.C. (2007). Fairy tales and foreign languages: Ever the twain shall meet. Foreign Language Annals, 40(2), 215-225. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb03198.x>

Diamantidaki F. (Ed.) (2019), Teaching literature in modern foreign languages. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Frantzen, D. (2001). Rethinking foreign language literature: Towards an integration of literature and lan-guage at all levels. In V. M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dia-logues. Issues in Language Program Direction: A Series of Annual Volumes, Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle, 109-130.



Spitzberg B., Changnon G. (2009). *Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence*. In D. K. Deardorff, D.K. (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2-52

Coleman, J. A. (2009). *Why the British do not learn languages: myths and motivation in the United Kingdom*. *Language Learning Journal*, 37(1), 111-127.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09571730902749003>