

# An Interactive, Co-constructed Approach to the Development of Intercultural Understanding in Pre-service Language Teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

As three former language teachers, now language teacher educators, we have been active in the exploration of intercultural language pedagogy and scholarship for over ten years. Over time, however, we have been challenged to reflect critically on our work with teachers, and what we have seen in classrooms. We have reflected that regardless of engagement and critical reflection upon interculturality within teacher training, publications and curriculum materials produced, ‘interculturality does not seem

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to have been entirely integrated into language teaching and learning' (Dervin, 2011, p. 1). This critical reflection has shaped our questioning of whether intercultural underpinnings have truly been embraced in language classrooms, and in consequence, our agreement with the proposition of this volume. That is, a new approach is demanded that re-examines the nature of the learning involved in classrooms where an intercultural stance is an intended outcome. In our responsibility for facilitating the development of relevant skills in pre-service teachers, we have observed the mixed nature of responses to exploration of intercultural material in the pre-service-teacher classroom and the many varied interpretations of the 'intercultural', from static culture learning at one end of the continuum to open reflective questioning at the other. This has pushed us to reconsider new ways to facilitate understanding of an intercultural approach with pre-service language teachers.

In earlier research (Harbon & Moloney, 2013), authors 1 and 2 employed an applied linguistics approach, using examination of the Initiation–Response–Evaluation (I–R–E) discourse model, to analyse school language classroom transcripts. We were interested in how intercultural learning can occur through open and well-designed teacher questioning in language classrooms. In working with our pre-service language teachers, among a range of other activities designed to explore intercultural learning, we designed a task drawing on this earlier research, to highlight the teacher role in this process. This chapter reports the unexpected additional learning that emerged from this task which we believe shows some possibilities for co-constructed and interactive approaches to intercultural understanding. Through observation of pre-service teacher collaborative dialogue on the task, we became aware that the task offered the pre-service teachers a productive opportunity to critically examine cultural assumptions, both within a transcript of the classroom discussions, and for themselves. Such critical examination has been identified as an essential learning activity in teacher education (Dervin & Hahl, 2015). It offers the possibility for pre-service teachers to co-construct understandings of the intercultural, perhaps aligned with Davcheva and Fay's (Chap. 9, this volume) 'zones of interculturality'. The study presented in this chapter thus underlines what we believe now is the necessity of a collaborative co-constructed critical approach to the development of intercultural understandings in language teacher education, one that is based on the groundedness of social constructivism in pre-service teacher education (Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

## LITERATURE REVIEW: PROBLEMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS

A number of elements have contributed to the problematic understandings, and, in our view, the often mixed outcomes, of ‘intercultural’ language learning. As teachers attempt to implement an intercultural approach, a number of troubling elements can be seen in some classrooms. These have been identified as (i) the treatment of cultural differences as objective data, leading to stereotypes, (ii) the essentializing of experience, in the research field, and (iii) (even within well-intentioned ‘intercultural’ research) confused adherence to national and ethnic categorizations (Dervin, 2010). Such issues shape how the ‘intercultural’ and its related concepts are theorized and put into practice. We recognize many research studies and classroom activities, including our own, that have, albeit unintentionally, reflected these three elements.

We identify that our concerns about the limitations of some forms of enactment of intercultural language teaching can be classified into two connected areas. These resonate with Dervin’s criticisms as the concerns can be described first as a representation of intercultural competence (IC) being a fixed (‘solid’) asset of cultural capital, creating an essentialization of IC itself, reflecting essentialized notions of culture. Second, the concerns can be seen as an over-simplification of intercultural pedagogy that occurs in language classrooms.

We acknowledge and critique the trajectory in our own development as intercultural researchers and teachers. To this end, we briefly sketch the literature of influence which we believe has contributed to some of the limited understandings being replicated in classrooms. We then deconstruct how we have worked with our pre-service language teachers to build both awareness of the role of classroom discourse and critical recognition of over-simplified and stereotypical notions of culture, constructing alternative ways of teaching interculturality.

An early influence on the current practice of intercultural education was the writing of Ned Seelye (1994). Seelye strove to provide classroom strategies for intercultural communication. As a scholar from the US ‘multicultural education’ discourse, Seelye offered teachers cultural activities and quizzes for classrooms. Seelye’s intent was to ‘teach’ culture, through the eliciting of cultural curiosity and empathy, to create critical awareness of stereotyping and anti-racism initiatives. Seelye argued that if culture can be taught as concrete items, then those items can also be assessed, and thus he included tests to assess achievement (1994). Moran (2001)

included so-called instruments of intercultural testing, and models of ‘culture learning’ in the Appendix to his volume, as ‘etic’ cultural perceptions, used in fixed and static ways (Moran, 2001, pp. 157–169).

Other such models claiming to measure or assess intercultural understanding include for example the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) (Bennett & Hammer, 1998). While the DMIS may have been a first step in awareness of developmental change in response to cultural interactions, its use without a larger frame of reference has contributed to teachers acquiring linear, objectivist and ‘culturalist’ understandings, which promote fixed notions of what intercultural development might be. Such models suggest that the individual is solely responsible for his upwardly mobile successful acquisition of IC, as a result of his actions. Considering the individual as the sole star of the process has been described as the ‘absence of the interlocutor’ in definitions of intercultural competence (Ruben, 1989, p. 234), that is, as Dervin describes it, ‘monological and individualistic’. Such definitions only mention the ‘user’ of the competence and ignore the influence of the interlocutor and the context in which interaction may be taking place. Many intercultural researchers and teachers would recognize Dervin’s amusing portrait of the individual who is ‘interculturally competent but ... easily troubled by the lack of motivation of the other, her/his bad intentions, his/her language skills’ (2010, p. 7). We would argue that ‘intercultural’ might be better understood if it incorporated understandings of how community and individuals reciprocally co-contribute to the development of cultural belonging. We argue that the notion of ‘investment’ as explored by Norton (2000, 2006, 2014) shows such a reciprocal relationship that notions of intercultural understanding also need to embrace. Norton’s work (2000, 2006, 2014) showed that to become a member of a new culture requires the investment of not only the individual themselves, but also the community around them in fostering linguistic and cultural growth. We argue that similarly the construction of intercultural understanding cannot solely take into account the individual, but must also attend to the role played by the context and the surrounding participants in this process. It must, therefore, become a co-constructed and interactive process rather than an individual experience.

In our work in teacher professional development, we have observed that many teachers have been reluctant or unable to engage with what they perceive to be abstract and irrelevant intercultural enquiry in language classrooms. Teacher training about the theoretical nature of the

intercultural approach has not always been embraced by teachers, because the unfamiliar, abstract and often alienating language of the discourse is hard to reconcile with everyday practice. In addition, one well-known model is conceptualized in French and therefore may be unclear to teachers with no knowledge of the French language (Byram & Zarate, 1996). In the prevailing pedagogic discourse, 'invisible' assumptions as to learner and teacher roles have similarly made comprehension difficult for some language-teacher communities (e.g., Moloney, 2013; Orton, 2008). Teachers retain beliefs as to their responsibilities to deliver knowledge about the particular national 'culture' of their language. Indeed, from our knowledge of Australian teacher education, we can anecdotally report that teachers frequently believe that they are 'doing intercultural' if they are teaching static culture thus essentializing both culture as an entity and essentializing the activity of intercultural pedagogy. Scholars have recognized the limited abilities in teachers to understand and adopt new pedagogy of critical thinking within language learning (e.g., Kramsch, 2006; Sercu, 2006). In the effort to 'concretize' intercultural learning to make it more 'teachable', there has been a trend to simplify and reduce the intercultural notions for language classrooms. Most commonly, activities have been devised to facilitate thinking about comparison of cultures.

The newest wave of language-learning textbooks admirably features the inclusion of activities and questions to stimulate critical cultural awareness (for example, Burrows, Izuishi, Lowry, & Nishimura-Parke, 2010; Comley & Vallantin, 2011; Goonan, 2011). Frequently however when such cultural comparison is enacted, it is up to the teacher whether these comparisons are handled as thoughtful, collaborative open enquiry or as a concrete set of exercises of stereotypical comparative point-scoring without deeper enquiry. Where intercultural learning exists only at the level of simplistic comparisons, it may continue inadvertently to promote fixed, essentialized notions of cultures (Holliday, 2010; Young & Sercombe, 2010, p. 182). At a more concerning level it can lead to 'othering', a process by which comparisons lead to over-simplification and over-emphasis of difference, which may in fact increase the generalization and stereotyping of groups and disregard the complexities of cultures (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010).

The analysis in this study thus turns to an approach prioritizing and modelling co-constructed learning through social interaction, as we explore how it might be possible to address some of the reductionist patterns occurring in intercultural practice. The key role of social interaction

within learning is long established, with much educational writing of the past 40 years having been built on Vygotsky's (1987) work on the social construction of knowledge. Vygotsky established that movement from the 'social plane' of functioning to the 'internal plane' of functioning requires active engagement by students, peers and the teacher (1987). For such engagement to occur, it is essential to use talk and other mediation to regulate attention, explore conceptualisation, integrate experience, stimulate recall, and explain. Structured social interaction enables students to transform their thinking (Wells, 2000).

Essentially the social constructivist notion is that learners learn 'through social interactions involving both peers and teachers' (O'Leary, 2014, p. 15), which develops into a partnership and 'promotes conversational interaction, collaboration and reflection' (O'Leary, 2014, p. 16). In discussing how such learning might occur, O'Leary also builds on the theory of Williams and Burden (1997, p. 46, cited in O'Leary, 2014, p. 18) that talks of a 'dynamic social constructivist model of the teaching and learning process where "the learner(s), the teacher, the task and the context interact with and affect each other"'.

In our study we became interested in noticing acts of co-construction of discourse and interaction in relation to intercultural approaches among individual pre-service language teachers participating in small group collaborative tasks. Dynamic understandings of culture and the 'intercultural', are created when individuals encounter one another in relationship. Our work is informed by Abdallah-Preteuille's (2004) identification that: 'La question n'est pas tant la culture de l'autre, mais tout simplement la question de la relation à l'autre' [The question is not the culture of the other, it is very simply the question of the relationship with the other]. To this end, in this work we look for evidence of Ogay's (2000, p. 53) term, '*dynamique interculturelle*' [an intercultural dynamic] between our participants, rather than competence, in exploring the participants' mutual responsibility and engagement.

Turning to the context of our study, in the broader university setting graduate attributes today commonly include the capacity for critical, analytical and integrative thinking and for global cultural competence (Barrie, 2004, 2007). In pre-service teacher education programmes, the ability to reflect critically requires pre-service teachers to move beyond the acquisition of knowledge towards developing active questioning of perspectives, assumptions and values (Mayer, Luke, & Luke, 2008). In pre-service language teacher education, there is mindfulness that the teaching and learning

of additional languages has a broader societal significance. Language education and critical literacy have the potential to contribute to understanding of citizenship, human rights and anti-racism (Andreotti, 2011; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Starkey, 2005, 2007). In this way, facilitating the development of interculturally aware teachers also assists these pre-service teachers to meet many of the desired graduate attributes.

There have been a number of different approaches to the development of intercultural capabilities in teacher education, for example, through curriculum intervention (Jokikokko, 2005; Mushi, 2004); international exchange opportunities (Harbon & Atmazaki, 2002; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010); use of reflective narrative (Moloney & Oguro, 2015); and use of postintercultural strategies in teacher education (Dervin, 2014; Dervin & Hahl, 2015). We recognize the struggle for intercultural understanding encountered by teachers when they engage in overseas postings, which has been shown to be only solvable through collaboration with local peers (Ye & Edwards, 2014). We are mindful of research contexts that have remarked on the limited success of intercultural development in pre-service and in-service teachers, either working in isolation, or in a passive knowledge-delivery learning model (for example, Kinginger, 2008; Moloney, 2013). Therefore, intercultural pedagogy involving collaborative construction needs to be explored.

As noted, in our pre-service teacher workshops, among other learning activities, we have sought to raise awareness of intercultural possibilities arising from the 'linguistic turn' literature, especially the I-R-E turn (Harbon & Moloney, 2013; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, 1992). In this way we encourage consideration of how interaction in the classroom may have the potential to open up collaborative dialogue about intercultural notions. Tsui (1995) and Dashwood (2004) have examined language teaching and learning in classroom interaction. Tsui's work in 1995 concluded that 'studies conducted on classroom interaction have shown that student talk accounts for an average of less than 30 per cent of talk in "teacher-fronted" classrooms' (Tsui, 1995, p. 81). Dashwood's (2004, p. 20) Australian research found how the language teacher 'invariably reclaims the "turn", thus reducing student opportunities to talk on task'. Hall (2002, p. 80) has written of the I-R-E pattern that:

The pattern involves the teacher asking a question to which the teacher already knows the answer. The purpose of such questioning is to elicit information from the students so that the teacher can ascertain whether they know the material.

In examining conceptions of interactive pedagogy, Smith and Higgins (2006, p. 499) present evidence that teachers can facilitate a more interactive learning environment ‘by careful use of the feedback move in the I-R-F exchange ... inviting peer reviews and agreements/disagreements ... [as well as encouraging] backchannel moves’ as an alternative to the familiar I-R-E or I-R-F [Initiation–Response–Follow up/Feedback] patterns. Nassaji and Wells (2000, p. 376) referred to the I-R-E discourse patterns as ‘triadic dialogue’, and although ‘essential for the co-construction of cultural knowledge’, note its limitations in that it is also ‘antithetical to the educational goal of encouraging students’ intellectual discursive initiative and creativity’.

Harbon and Moloney (2013) demonstrated that where teachers can devise patterns of communication involving inclusive open-ended enquiry, there is potential to inform construction of intercultural understanding between learners in classrooms. This has, thus, remained as one of our pedagogical tools, in our language teacher education workshops, to ask pre-service teachers to examine interaction patterns in school classroom transcripts. This chapter however involves a re-examination of the task, in noting a second layer of learning evident, of which we were not initially aware: that is, the pre-service teacher discourse as they made sense of the classroom transcripts. In our exploration of the discourse pre-service teachers engaged in while examining classroom interaction, we noticed the opportunities for co-constructed intercultural understanding. This is the focus examined in this chapter.

What then are our criteria for recognition of the intercultural dynamic occurring in the pre-service teachers in this study? We are in agreement with Dervin and Dirba’s (2006) study of Finnish and Latvian pre-service teachers, which concluded that students are operating interculturally when they demonstrate willingness/ability to communicate with individuals, when they make an effort to de-centre from their own culture, when they develop an awareness that ‘national culture’ can be an oversimplistic explanation of culture, and when they develop an awareness that all individuals are diverse, and shift identities according to interlocutor and context. Thus in this chapter we explore the unexpected ways that some pre-service teachers de-centre, critically analyse culture, and develop a dynamic together in a workshop class through ‘talk’.

It is our responsibility both to refine our practice and to facilitate the development of interculturally aware teachers, knowing that the nature of



intercultural communication can be challenging, even uncomfortable and confusing (see Chap. 4, this volume). The goal of this study is to examine whether a learning task can afford the growth of an intercultural dynamic within language-teacher education.

## METHODOLOGY: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS CO-CONSTRUCTING

Our participants are pre-service languages teachers. As part of a methodology workshop conducted in two different university contexts, following a short introduction to the I–R–E discourse model and its role in classrooms, pre-service teachers worked in pairs, to read three classroom lesson transcripts from a secondary school in Sydney, and to identify the functioning of the I–R–E in the lesson transcripts. The transcripts are, respectively, one Japanese, one Italian, and one Spanish lesson. The teachers featured in these three lesson transcripts were all engaged in what they considered to be an explicit ‘intercultural’ approach. In the case of Japanese and Italian, the transcribed lesson focused on the topic ‘festivals’, and in the Spanish class, the focus was upon the analysis of behaviour at a dinner party in a Spanish home. Ethics permission had been granted to video-record and transcribe the teacher and student discourse in a number of school lessons in those languages. We subsequently obtained ethics permission to audio record the pre-service teacher interactions as they explored the transcripts.

While all enrolled pre-service teachers participated in the university workshops, informed consent for the audio-recording and research participation was given by 37 students in University A, and 35 in University B. Those who gave consent were audio-recorded during this task. Participants were all multilingual and most had background experience of travel, exchange or immigration. Some participants had engaged in lengthy practicum experiences while others had limited classroom experience at the time of the study.

At the time of the study the first author taught in the pre-service language teacher education programs at University A. The second and third authors taught in the pre-service language teacher education programs at University B. Approval of ethical considerations were sought and approved in both universities. We acknowledge the influence of the ideology and physical presence of the three researchers in the task (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

One sample of language classroom discourse text was first examined together by all class participants as a whole group, identifying and labelling the I–R–E features, and introducing the possible limitations of the labels and the need for other possible discourse labels, such as Follow-up, and Feedback. This was followed by the small group analysis activity. Transcripts of actual Italian, Japanese and Spanish language lessons from schools (published in previous research, see Harbon & Moloney, 2013) were provided to the groups of pre-service teachers for analysis. Sample classroom transcripts used are included as Appendices A and B.

Pre-service teachers participated in a Concurrent Verbal Reporting protocol (Jääskeläinen, 2010), whereby the researchers used the audio recording function on flip cameras to record the ‘stream-of-consciousness thinking and reflecting’ dialogue between the pair (or group) of pre-service teachers as they grappled with this task. Participants examined the transcripts, identifying and labelling the I–R–E turn in the transcript discourse, and questioning whether the teacher and students were successful in constructing any intercultural enquiry. The transcribed data from the Concurrent Verbal Reporting protocols were read, re-read, and analysed using a constant comparison method of content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Using a grounded thematic approach by successive researchers’ readings, common themes were highlighted and data grouped according to the themes emerging from the data. Data were reduced through content analysis, enabling more concise themes to be derived.

Our pedagogical intent, and the design of the learning task, was to raise our pre-service teachers’ awareness of linguistic patterns in classroom discourse, and how such discourse patterns might affect learning and opportunities for intercultural consideration. The task was thus preceded by instruction about I–R–E patterns of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, 1992) and the role of mixed patterns of discourse in encouraging greater inclusion of learner response. The task was also embedded within a sustained engagement with intercultural pedagogy, as mandated by our local syllabuses, and, therefore, students had already engaged with key ideas underpinning intercultural approaches to teaching languages. We were initially less concerned, and, in fact, less critically aware ourselves, about noticing differences in the school transcripts in how the teachers had designed their lessons and variously sought to enact intercultural learning in their classrooms.

As we listened to the audio-recordings of the pre-service language teachers' small group discussions, and later examined the transcripts of these recordings, it became clear that the pre-service teachers had moved beyond the demands of the task, in their critical comment. They offered collaborative identification of the patterns of questions and answers, as demanded by the task, but they also offered co-constructed critique of the lesson content, and the teacher behaviour, with considerations of how the interaction opened up or stifled opportunities for intercultural engagement. They brought to the discussion their own rich backgrounds and prior learning, and from this, constructed their interpretation of the school teacher and learner behaviour.

## FINDINGS: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS

### *Sample 1: University A, Group of Three Participants*

In order to examine the flow of interaction in a group of three participants, two extended extracts from the transcript are offered below. The three participants, of different cultural backgrounds, are examining the transcript of the Italian lesson, (which had been conducted in Italian, which accounts perhaps for the simplicity of the question/answer format). In the Italian lesson, after some initial discussion about festivals in Italy, the teacher had asked groups of learners to prepare written answers in Italian to a number of questions about festivals in both Italy and Australia. For readers unfamiliar with the Australian context, Anzac Day commemorates the World War I landing by Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli, Turkey. Extract 1 is a transcript of pre-service teacher discussion.

- S3: (reads from the translated teacher line within the transcript) *'what do young Italians and Australians like to do on festivals?'*
- S1: if you had a class full of kids who weren't native Australians, they might not actually know ... wouldn't know what the typical Australian things were. They would genuinely have to look things up, find out what Australians do.
- S1: (reads translated teacher line) *'Anzac day is an emotional day'*.
- S3: if you just said that, you'd have to explain what Anzac day is.

- S1: you'd have to explain it to lots of kids ... Imagine if you had international students, you'd have to explain everything.
- S3: I'm sorry, but Anzac day is touchy, it's also so uniquely Australian. I don't know any other country that celebrates a war day like Australia does. It's very strange to me, coming from my background. It's a very strange concept, very strange concept.
- S2: same for Italians.
- S1: oh, that's a good perception.
- S1: (reads translated teacher line) '*What is the most important festival in Australia?*' Again—it's too typical—we have a broad spectrum of nationalities here, if your background is not Australian ... you will have other days that are important too.
- S2: You can't really say we eat lamb, if you have Muslim kids in the class ... It's culturally insensitive.
- S1: It's very stereotypical. Exactly.
- S3: The teacher should be saying 'Australia Day means different things to different people'. Because we are such a multicultural...
- S2: It's also in fact the day Australia was discovered, not just that we eat lamb.
- S1: But it's a good way to bring those things up, to find out, like, whose family celebrates what, their religions. Like I wouldn't even know the different countries, it'd be interesting to find out from the kids.
- S2: But then you'd have to talk about Aboriginal history and what Australia Day might mean to them. It's definitely not as nice and happy for them as for others.
- S1: It's more a way to show a broad range of what's different. It's a good way to include, you should show as many different things as possible. I mean, 'Australian', what is that?
- S3: Yes, what *is* that?

Across this extract we can see various examples of the progressive co-construction of what may be identified as an intercultural dynamic. In addition to identifying Initiation–Response elsewhere in the transcripts, the three participants identify and criticize the culturally 'solid' nature of the teacher questions. They identify that the questions used by the

teacher may fail to incorporate the practices of many Australian families. However, the pre-service teachers also show some tendency toward stereotyping and limitations themselves, in S2's assertion that Australia Day is the day Australia was discovered, when it had in fact been occupied for 40,000 years by Indigenous Australians.

They are critiquing the strategy of over-simplification in the school task, using their prior knowledge from their in-school practicum and their knowledge of the high representation of students with a language background other than English, in Sydney classrooms. When it comes to Anzac Day, S3 strongly expresses her individual consternation as to the Australian celebration of a war commemoration, supported also by S2 from her own experience, and this appears to prompt a surprising new perception in S1 about what it actually means to be 'Australian'. A discussion of Australia Day (26 January, commemorating the arrival of the British Fleet for settlement with the first convicts) follows. This has been offered by the classroom learners as the answer to the translated teacher question 'What is the most important Australian festival and why?' The eating of lamb on this day has been commercialized by the meat industry as an 'Australian' thing to do. S1, S2 and S3 attack the inadequacy of the culturally generalized question for its production of simplistic answers. They are able to construct an alternative, what the teacher could have said, to have positioned it differently. S2 moves to counterbalance her previous statement as to the 'discovery' of Australia, by contributing to the perspective of Aboriginal Australians (some of whom refer to the day as 'Invasion Day'). Finally, they come to the conclusion together that the classroom task may still be a useful one if conducted in a much more fluid complexity, to engage the idea of 'what is Australian?'. They move towards a collaborative conclusion by throwing up the entire question of essentialized and generalized culture, ('I mean, 'Australian', what is that?') in the face of the multiplicity and individuality of school students', and their own, identities and experience.

In this extract, we see pre-service teachers building co-constructed diverse perceptions which lead them to critique and challenge assumptions evident in the lesson transcripts. Their relationship is represented in their willingness to contribute and respect individual perspectives and backgrounds, and their expressions of concern. Together they collaborate to criticize the reduction of national culture, and construct an understanding of complexity.

*Sample 2: University A, Group of Two Participants*

While in Sample 1, the extract has shown the co-construction taking place at the pre-service teacher level in this task, and their criticism of the Italian lesson strategies, the Sample 2 extract shows their awareness of the positive co-construction taking place between the teacher and students in the transcript of the Spanish lesson, which was an analysis of language and behaviour at a Spanish dinner party. The teacher is encouraging learners to notice that the guests do not say the word for ‘thank you’ at the end of the party.

- S1: She’s giving them some information. But she asks ‘what else’ ‘what’s missing?’
- S1: She’s getting them to give her what’s missing, so she can give them feedback, so they are already then on the track.
- S2: Response, feedback. There’s lots of feedback.
- S1: Feedback and initiation, she is following on with a question from that feedback. She’s asking them to make a judgement, as to whether this is culturally appropriate.
- S1: The kids make a guess then she affirms.
- S2: Students respond again, feedback... It’s not a yes/no answer, it’s going deeper.
- S1: They are questioning the teacher, seeing if they are on the right track, and she can say yes...
- S1: So she is setting it up. Getting them to think about their connection with the situation... This is a really good lesson, the way she has gone into the text, getting them to think about it culturally, and use what they know. She’s making them construct everything
- S2: She uses open-ended questions.
- S1: She’s really only added one point, no, two points, to the actual cultural information. The kids guess, she is getting it all out of the kids.

This sample shows that the pre-service teachers recognize, through their collaborative analysis of the communication patterns in the transcript, that this teacher is facilitating a discussion in which the classroom learners themselves co-construct intercultural understanding of the behaviour in the Spanish dinner party. It suggests that here the classroom learners

are involved, not with information about ‘the culture of the other’, but with constructing their ‘relationship with the other’ (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004). This stands out for them as exceptional, in contrast to the other lesson transcripts. We thus see the co-construction process occurring at two levels in this sample.

*Sample 3: University B, Group of Three Participants*

The three pre-service teachers in this group similarly appear able to easily identify and label the I–R–E in action, and also critique the stereotypes they perceived in parts of the lesson, layering their observations as they spoke over the top of each other, to construct a conclusion. This group is discussing both the Japanese and the Italian lesson transcripts. They also judged that the teachers in the transcripts missed opportunities for further intercultural exploration.

- S1: Well I think much of the topics have come up in these dialogues... They could be developed further. It’s sort of like a selection of different topics as we see the conversations happening. For example, the specific reference to the Japanese festivals discussion. A lot of words come up like sausages, watermelons, which people link to a certain culture. And I think it’s good to have that kind of intercultural understanding coming through the things that we use in our daily routines but it’s good to have a focus
- S2: Yeah
- S1: And as pre-service language teacher, I would say ...it’s very good to brainstorm but I don’t want to keep it at a superficial level.
- S3: Yeah, well they seem pretty superficial to me.
- S1: Compared to the Spanish ones.
- S2: Yeah, because like things like, you know, the Italian ones, what is it? Italians like New Years because there is [sic.] fireworks? You know that’s not really true, is it?
- S1: There’s a lot of unjustified stereotypes. And these stereotypes don’t really help to...
- S1: I think it’s kind of creating an intercultural barrier as opposed to promoting the exchanges of knowledges [sic.] that are valuable to each of the cultures. To say that something is a

typical Australian thing or a typical Italian thing—I mean stereotypes are good, they give us awareness of who we are, like identity, but...

We observe a confidence in S1's statements about cultural stereotypes, confirmed in turn by her classmates. The criticism about reduction of 'national culture' is termed 'unjustified' by S1 and also an 'intercultural barrier'. This reflects what Holliday et al. (2010) call 'othering', which can lead to the over-simplification of understanding about cultures.

The group cohesion that is established among the three participants here shows evidence that the pre-service language teachers are now confident to actively apply the terms and notions learnt (such as labelling parts of the transcript as 'Initiation', or 'Response' or 'Follow-up'). However, beyond this they are engaged by the active learning, which differs from previous exposure to the intercultural notions through lecture/textual information. In other words, the pre-service language teachers are now 'experiencing' the classroom discourse seeing a language teacher trying to take an intercultural stance, not merely reading about it. We note the role of pre-service language teachers' individual prior knowledge in interpreting the transcript and its dialogue with their peers. Through this process they co-construct their understandings of what is intercultural and what is stereotyping.

In the analysis of the following short extract from the same three participants commenting on a section of the Spanish lesson that dealt with punctuality in Spain, we see further examples of the engagement with intercultural language learning on a deeper level. The school class transcript showed that the learners wanted to know exactly how late you could be in Spain. In the pre-service teachers' discussion, we see this participant's ability to recognize the learners' involvement in the question, and we observe her 'de-centring' as she engages in reflecting on her own interest in it, shedding light on her own intercultural understandings and cultural knowledge.

S2:           Yep, you have to find something that sparks their interest. I think that was what was really good with the Spanish one, coz they were all, like, 'They get there late' and they were all interested in it, you know. I'm interested in it. I hate waiting two hours.



We can see that S2 extends the individual nature of the student's question about lateness protocols in Spain, by providing her own emotive response to the notion of lateness. The other members of the group interject throughout the extract, building upon the perceptions that they each provide and demonstrate collaboration, peer confirming and co-constructing of understanding. The methodology appears to allow the group a certain engagement and enjoyment of the multiple peer perspective-sharing, allowing them to display enjoyment of identifying cultural differences.

The following extract shows one of the pre-service teachers demonstrating that 'we' (assuming this represents 'her Australia') don't have any festivals. She is caught in what some have observed to be normative, or 'invisible' Australian culture (Lo Bianco & Crozet, 2003). She is interrogated by S1, however, on this comment, thus exhibiting their co-construction of understanding.

- S1: Mmm. Yeah, like in the Italian lesson they could have talked about the fact that most of the public holidays are like religious...
- S2: yeah.
- S1: whereas in Australia most of the public holidays aren't. There are a lot of things they could have expanded on. But you could start off first with Italian festivals as opposed to talking about the Australian ones.
- S2: Well we don't really have any, so I think that...
- S1: Is that right?
- S2: Well....
- S1: is it?
- S2: Well, I'm saying they have so many in Italy, like festivals and holidays, and it's so much more exciting than what we do on Australia Day.
- S1: Yeah, like every weekend is like the Festival of Bean, or like the Festival of Pork. [All laugh]

The task appeared to give the participants the chance to hypothesize and second-guess what might have been intended and how the classroom learners responded. They were able to discuss freely any aspect of the transcript that took their attention, in their small group. The

seemingly ‘off topic’ reference to little towns in Italy that have what may appear to them to be absurd-sounding festivals—celebrating something which may never be celebrated in Australia—seems to be a catalyst for intercultural curiosity. There is evidence that these students, while able to notice some of the limitations in the transcript, still themselves exhibit some essentialized notions of the ‘other’ where they see the Italian festivals as innately fun because of their ‘difference’. In doing so, they indicate what Gorski (2008) discusses as unintentional reinforcing of stereotypes. As Gorski says: ‘despite overwhelmingly good intentions, most of what passes for intercultural education practice ... accentuates rather than undermines existing social and political hierarchies’ (Gorski, 2008, p. 516).

Nevertheless, we see in this dialogue some challenging of ideas. Within the group dynamic we can see one student taking on the role of the ‘initiator’ of questions, and the others, the ‘responders’. What could also occur, therefore, is a modelling of the form of questioning that might be used in an intercultural exploration in her own classroom later on.

Then returning to the prescribed pedagogic task, the final conclusion of the three pre-service teachers appears to consist of a statement of what they have learned, again confirming their critical understanding of the intercultural shortcomings in the lessons examined through the task.

- S3:           Actually if you look at these ones, then it’s all like just I–R. There’s not even an Evaluation. Teacher asks a question, Initiation. Student gives an answer. Another student gives an answer. Another student gives an answer. Teacher makes a statement, that’s it.
- S1:           So it’s about analytical skills as well that they can transfer into other subject areas. That’s what we should also be looking at. That’s what’s missing in all of these conversations.

We see here that the students themselves construct an understanding of what they perceive is missing in these transcribed attempts at intercultural pedagogy. The three pre-service language teachers have determined what they might need to add to their pedagogical repertoire to make their classrooms more intercultural—that is expanding the forms of questioning and facilitating students to build on prior knowledge and link to other subjects.

*Sample 4: University B: A Group of Four Participants*

This group provides further evidence that together the pre-service teachers undergo a process of co-construction in their analysis of the extract. This example shows the pre-service teachers analysing the I–R–E patterns in the transcript. The group indicate that they have the ability to decentre, and put themselves in the position of both the students and the teacher in the classroom as they empathize with what is occurring in the transcript. In this extract, participants are considering learner answers to what has been a closed question from the teacher, to which there was a ‘right’ answer. Participant S4 in this group considers her own communicative practice in her university classes:

- S4: I think that student gave that comment as an answer (Response), but you know, when you’re a student sometimes if you’re not sure, your tone goes up, it’s more like a question.
- S2: yeah if you’re not sure.
- S4: so she [the teacher] probably didn’t catch her tone so she thought it was a statement not a question.
- S2: but these students are not sure of the answers.
- S4: because as a student, I remember doing a similar thing. As a student you’re not supposed to know, or you don’t know if you have the right to, like, make a statement, because it’s more of a question. You’re not supposed to be perceived as having the most knowledge. So generally you try to answer a statement but naturally sometimes your tone goes up. And you try to get confirmation from the teacher.

In this extract we also see S4 offering a personal reflection from her own experience of classroom interaction. Together the pre-service teachers construct a critique of the power structure of the I–R–E classroom discourse in which a student either lacking in confidence, or in interpreting the classroom power dynamic, may feel she does not ‘have the right to’ participate and contribute. Their suggestion that a student may not feel entitled to be perceived ‘as having the most knowledge’ indicates the pre-service teachers’ perception of the coercive power relations in the class, where the teacher is the expert with the answers. The construction in this excerpt may refer to young pre-service teacher perceptions that it is not cool to be seen as knowledgeable. The participants show their curiosity to notice and reflect as they jointly critique the work of the teacher:

- S4: She's (the teacher) having her own conversation!  
 S2: She switches topics too quickly. Shouldn't she, like, ask what do you do?  
 S3: Yeah.  
 S2: Like give some comparison. But then she just switches to another topic.  
 S4: Yeah like every one of her comments is like that.  
 S2: She should switch to another topic after the comparison. She doesn't give them any new information at all.  
 S3: There's no linking. There's no linking between the two, it's just stating.

The pre-service teachers show in their discussion of this lesson extract that they have awareness of diversity and complexity in terms of what the students in the transcript might have had the potential to contribute to the class discussion. The pre-service teachers exhibit some belief that a more collaborative classroom dynamic is needed, which would enable students to contribute to, extend and build the interaction. They argue that the teacher is limiting the discussion by not enabling a full range of responses to each question to be put forward by different students. They believe the teacher moves too quickly from one topic to the next without fully exploiting the opportunities for intercultural exploration.

We also can see this group of pre-service teachers' awareness of the notions of self and other. They critique the discussion of 'Australian' culture as being monolithic when Australian culture is often interpreted as what they call 'Caucasian Australian':

- S2: (reads translated teacher line) Young Australians like to watch the march on Anzac Day  
 S3: Is that true?  
 S4: *laughs*  
 S2: Not particularly  
 S3: That's what young Australians do?!  
 S4: Maybe if you're, like, five years old... they're really talking about Australian things like barbecues, Anzac day you know they're really stereotypical like Caucasian Australian things.  
 S2: I guess she's just asking questions and letting a few people answer.

The pre-service teachers, therefore, indicate the ability to construct their own understandings of what an intercultural stance might look like through the task of critiquing other teachers' attempts at interculturality, and recognizing their own perspectives. This, therefore, appears to be a useful prompting task to help pre-service teachers critique their own beliefs about what effective intercultural classroom pedagogy might look like in practice.

### DISCUSSION: VIEWING THE 'INTERCULTURAL' IN LESS CONCRETE WAYS

A number of themes have emerged from our analysis of the pre-service language teachers' discussions about intercultural aspects of language classroom discourse. These themes, echoing Dervin and Dirba's (2006) identification of elements of intercultural ability, support our assertion that this is a useful task, which provides a context in which an intercultural dynamic may be experienced among pre-service teachers. It is also a task in which new teachers can see how a limited interpretation of 'intercultural' in the language classroom may in fact have a detrimental effect upon learners' critical and intercultural development. The pre-service teachers spotted and critiqued limitations in the intercultural teaching within the transcripts, and in this way could explore the 'essentializing' and 'stereotyping' that ensued. We believe tasks such as this afford the opportunity for the pre-service language teachers to engage with intercultural pedagogy in a new way. Whereas previously they had explored intercultural pedagogy in more traditional ways and through the academic literature, through this task the pre-service language teachers together observed, reflected, brought to it their own experience and co-constructed a personal understanding of an intercultural approach to language teaching. We thus argue that the task exemplified in this chapter indicates how a co-constructed pedagogy might be employed in teacher education.

Setting the expectation of collegial co-construction in the transcript task, we believe offers the pre-service teachers an active opportunity to analyse the communicative patterns in the classroom and reflect on the role of such communicative patterns in opening up, or closing down, critical enquiry among language learners in classrooms. All groups perceived the differences in communication patterns in the lessons and were able to identify the positive and negative effects that these patterns had

on classroom enquiry. By providing pre-service teachers these concrete examples of classroom transcripts and the many instances of the teacher-focused I–R–E discourse patterns, pre-service teachers appeared to feel equipped to deconstruct the classroom teacher–student interaction. By engaging with classroom interaction transcripts they were able to explore and critique how the language teacher can open up classroom dialogue for a stronger intercultural stance. The pre-service teachers may have drawn upon their understanding of the intercultural notions, from earlier reading of the academic literature, and applied this to produce an active engagement with the task. Although the task is based around a concrete set of examples, the nature of the critique and discussion enables the pre-service teachers to move beyond narrow interpretations of intercultural discourse.

The transcript task affords the pre-service language teachers a collaborative opportunity to identify, label and critique not only the less-positive teacher and student stereotyping in some of the lesson content, but also the positive strategies of a teacher facilitating a collaborative, co-constructed discussion in the classroom. Viewing the lessons through transcripts, as voyeurs at a distance, rather than first hand in an actual classroom themselves, the pre-service teachers showed the ability to critically observe another teacher. It is possible that the reading and decoding necessary to make meaning from a transcript actually enabled these pre-service teachers to analyse the teacher and student interaction in more in-depth ways than they had exhibited through observing teachers in action during their practicum periods.

With the exception of the Spanish lesson transcript, the pre-service teachers indicated how they observe the teachers in the transcripts unintentionally involved in the reduction of ‘national culture’ as they go about their daily language teaching. The pre-service language teachers are able to read the transcript and observe an unwitting perpetuation of stereotypes, through the language teachers’ over-simplification. In the process of attempting to introduce an intercultural stance, some language teachers have unintentionally become purveyors of the process of ‘othering’ as argued by Holliday et al. (2010), leading to an over-simplification of culture. They have, as Gorski (2008) argues, engaged unwittingly in accentuating stereotypes and the hierarchies underpinning those stereotypes, rather than challenging them.

The pre-service language teachers show recognition that simplistic comparisons of cultures can lead to even greater stereotyping. The transcript task may thus facilitate perceptions, in pre-service teachers, that their future role and responsibility, as intercultural language educators, teachers

and community members, needs to focus more on combating, rather than unwittingly supporting, stereotypes and xenophobia. Such a development may prove to be a critical element in the formation of teachers' identities.

Pre-service language teachers need to be aware of the potential pitfalls associated with the over-simplification and use of comparison inherent in many intercultural approaches (Holliday et al., 2010). The collaborative discussion transcript task which we provided for our pre-service teacher groups can be considered a pivot point that requires collaborative dialogue for the deconstruction of meaning from the I–R–E exchange. The pre-service teachers are empowered to make collaborative suggestions from their prior knowledge and their own perspectives. They are encouraged to accept, reject or modify peer perceptions. Wells (2000, p. 56) has written that:

particular occasions of situated joint activity are the crucible of change and development ... in joint activity, participants contribute to the solution of emergent problems and difficulties according to their current ability to do so; at the same time, they provide support and assistance for each other in the interests of achieving the goals of the activity.

The collaborative group nature of the task enables the pre-service language teachers to contribute their individual prior knowledge, both independently and interdependently, in their own interpretation of the transcript and in their dialogue with their peers. They become aware of their co-construction of knowledge because the lecturer/researcher has devoted a particular focus to the task, underlining its importance in the development of an intercultural stance. The pre-service language teachers appear curious to notice and reflect, and to bounce ideas off each other. Learning is constructed as a collaborative activity. The pre-service teachers appear respectful of the diversity and complexity of self and peers. The nature of the task encourages pre-service teachers to form their own definitions of what is intercultural within each of the transcripts and develop their own critique of what limitations are shown.

The study demonstrates social-constructivist learning in action, and an intercultural dynamic in the development of learning with peers. The pre-service teachers show the ability to de-centre, highlight their own practice (for example, critically noting their own linguistic behaviour in university classes, making connections with their own practicum teaching, and in interrogating what it means to be Australian). In this way they exemplify the elements of intercultural stance that require teachers to be able to critique their own assumptions.

## CONCLUSION: COHERENT CO-CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERCULTURAL DYNAMIC

Like McConachy and Liddicoat (Chap. 2, this volume), our work has examined the interpretive aspect of intercultural mediation. We believe that the pre-service teacher interaction explored in this chapter represents in microcosm a new collaborative practice in teacher education which is needed to develop new approaches to intercultural language education. While our original focus was to encourage pre-service teachers' exploration of questioning patterns to facilitate intercultural dialogue, their collaborative enquiry took the task to another level, as an unexpected but positive outcome. Engaging in what we see to be a 'dynamique interculturelle' the pre-service teachers took a group initiative to de-centre and to construct understandings. In light of the need to shape beginner language teachers' abilities, and their need for models to imitate, Wells (2000) has described a process of development within a group, where, 'it is not necessarily the most expert member(s) of the group who are most helpful in inducting newcomers ... in many situations, there is no expert; in the case of the invention of radically new tools and practices, this is self-evidently so' (Wells 2000, p. 57). Thus we can see how the community-of-practice hierarchy can be altered through co-constructive practice to enable newcomers to contribute to shaping understanding.

This two-level study (we studied the pre-service teachers studying the classroom teachers) thus demonstrates that within a co-constructed classroom model students have the opportunity to voice different perspectives, pursue curiosity, to critique and respect multiple perspectives in collaboration, and to take initiative in challenging perceived stereotypes. This applies equally in the school-language classroom and in teacher education. Much is revealed to pre-service language teachers about how this process may similarly occur in school classrooms through management of classroom discourse. With no 'expert' evident in the process at either the school or the university level, the school students, the pre-service teachers, and the teacher educators, take forward an un-fixed yet coherent construction of an intercultural dynamic. At a time where the intercultural has been diminished in some contexts to static and essentialized comparisons of culture, a new co-constructed pedagogy is essential to revive the core aims of the intercultural approach. We have highlighted how one task might work towards teachers and teacher educators developing a more collaborative and co-constructed stance in their intercultural approach to teaching a language.



APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF ITALIAN CLASSROOM TRANSCRIPT,  
WITH I–R–E LABELLING ACTIVITY

	<i>Festivals</i>	<i>What's going on? IRE?</i>
Teacher	<i>Durante i periodi di feste che cosa piace fare ai giovani in Italia? E ai giovani australiani?</i> What do young Italian and young Australians like to do on festivals?	
Student 1	<i>Ai Giovani italiani piacciono stare insieme e scambiare i regali per natale</i> Young Italians like being together and exchanging presents for Christmas.	
Student 2	<i>Ai giovani australiani piace fare un BBQ per la festa di Australia</i> Young Australians like having a BBQ on Australia Day.	
Student 3	<i>Ai giovani australiani piace assistere ad una marcia il giorno di ANZAC</i> Young Australians like to watch the march on ANZAC day.	
Teacher	<i>ANZAC e' una giornata emozionante</i> ANZAC day is an emotional day.	

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF SPANISH LESSON TRANSCRIPT,  
WITH I–R–E LABELLING ACTIVITY

	<i>A Spanish dinner party</i>	<i>IRE?</i>
Teacher	<i>“Vale. Nos llamamos y citamos—we’ll ring you. And we’ll fix a date.”</i> So, what’s not in here? What’s missing?	
Student 1	Bye!	
Teacher	<i>Adios, yep. What else is missing?</i>	
Student 2	Thank you.	
Teacher	Thank you. There is no way of thanking. <i>No hay palabra que dice ‘muchas gracias’. Hay ‘mucho gusto’ y ‘encantado’ que son muy respetuosos. Pero en ningun momento se dice ‘gracias’. (muffles) Que mas no hay? (What else is not there?)</i>	
Student 3	<i>Por favor.</i>	
Teacher	<i>Si. ‘Por favor.’ No hay ‘por favor’, no hay ‘gracias’. Pero os pregunto, pensais que esta gente esta amable o que no tiene educacion? No ‘please’, no ‘thank you’. Do you think they are like polite or impolite?</i>	

	<i>A Spanish dinner party</i>	IRE?
Student 4	Polite.	
Teacher	Ya. Polite. But they don't say thank you and they don't say please. So, how do they express the politeness and the respect?	
Student 5	Compliments.	
Teacher	Compliments. <i>Hacen complimentos. Que. mas?</i>	
Student 6	They invite them to their house?	
Teacher	Yeah. So they invite them over. That's very typical in Spain. Before you leave you say 'Oh how about you come to our house in two weeks? Nos vemos en dos semanas'.	

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