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OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Directorate of **Learning Resources**

Title: Intercultural Competence for Students of Spanish: Can we teach it? Can we afford not to teach it?

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Abstract:
This article considers the role of language learners in the global society, and the extent to which interaction between different language communities can be regarded as possible without intercultural competence. It moves on to review the skills and competencies that can be taught to undergraduates in an attempt to enable them to engage more effectively with the target language culture while on their Year Abroad.

After discussing the merits of various activities that can be worked on, and ways of assessing student performance, it reports on the reactions of students undergoing intercultural training in readiness for their period of residence abroad. As a final measure of student engagement, it explores the kind of projects students feel able to undertake as a result of the training received, while on placement in universities and companies and teaching as assistants in Spain.

Heads nod wisely and concur on the expediency, not to say the strategic importance of ‘having a language’, or preferably several (Taylor, 2006). Yet, ask people what they understand by command of a modern foreign language, what constitutes competence at different levels of achievement, or what is required to achieve this level of competence, and there may be a sorry silence. Although, as a trading nation, Britain needs languages for its export drive, and sale of goods overseas, there is a lack of ‘joined-up thinking’ in language-learning policy and practice (CILT, 2006). Internationalisation and globalisation are the buzz-words of the era; the International Strategy for Education (DfES, 2004) promotes global citizenship in the curriculum. However, despite the redesign of education policy, and the mention of intercultural competence in many programmes, the teaching of intercultural skills is at best embryonic, as indeed is the case in initial teacher training (Álvarez and Garrido, 2005). Although when recruiting, organisations too place emphasis on communication skills, surprisingly little attention is subsequently paid as to how their staff are trained and prepared to be able to meet the demands of communication across cultures. The rise of multicultural organisations operating throughout the world means that employers are now dealing with people from a wide range of nationalities and backgrounds in the day-to-day running of the company. Nor is the understanding of intercultural difference any less important to non-international organisations operating in a multinational country. Human Resources Management (HRM) is therefore increasingly taking on some of the features previously associated only with international HRM. This latter is in turn that much more complex in that managers not only have to consider foreign cultures, but diverse cultures within these.

Second, despite the emergence of cultural consultants, intercultural competence is, at best, low on the list of priorities of Human Resources Departments (Renwick, 2005). Language competence fares little better, although for recruitment purposes, it remains high on the list of required skills. Nonetheless, it continues to be regarded by many as that impossible task that dogged one’s schooldays, of memorising weird sounds that one was afraid to pronounce for fear of making a mistake; and if one attempted to commit supposed words to paper, even greater wrath was incurred. Nor, and this is my third introductory point, is the link perceived between globalisation, internationalisation and languages, not at least, where it counts. Herein the paradox: languages are in crisis, yet according to curricula, are apparently of ever-increasing importance in international relations, business, hospitality management, financial management etc. I originally thought this was my own observation, but have long since found abundant evidence (Higher Education Academy, 2004a) of the non-originality of this statement.

The national context

Although the outlook varies according to the source consulted, the national picture is far from encouraging. Research by CILT the National Centre for Languages (2004), -formerly the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research-, argued that pupils are missing out on their entitlement; in Autumn 2004 only 30% of pupils (except those in Specialist Language Colleges) were required to study a language beyond Key Stage 3, compared with 45% in Autumn 2003, and 97% in 2004 for independent schools. CILT (2004) pointed out that French and German are in decline, and Spanish largely unaffected. Figures from the Teacher Training Agency -TTA- (2005), meanwhile, based on data from CILT (2004), showed that French and German are still the most popular languages. Nothing was said by the TTA (2005) about the decline of French, revealed by the Education Guardian (Curtis, 2005) to be 2.27%. The TTA referred to an overall 8% increase in entries for GCSE in languages over the last ten years, with a rise of 14% in Italian and 81% in Spanish. Shifting the focus to include life-long learning, yet another picture emerges (CILT, 2005a); 32,659 children and adults, representing a third of all language-learners, were studying Spanish, over a quarter French, and 10% Italian.

Despite increased interest in minority languages (Chinese, Russian, Japanese) and community languages, underlying the statistical findings is the harsh reality that languages are not perceived as ‘worthy’ or ‘worthwhile’. Furthermore, although languages combine well with Business Studies, Leisure and Tourism, at secondary level they are being squeezed out by these very subjects for reasons of time-tabling, or because the other subjects, which ironically could be said to depend on languages for their survival, sound more vocational. The ATLAS project -A Taste of Languages at School- (2004) confirms what we all suspect, attributing the reduced uptake of languages to students’ low self-esteem as regards achieved competence in languages, the lack of enjoyment, the ‘jump’ between GCSE and A-level, teaching methods, over-assessment, lack of use made of IT and the media. The fact that languages are perceived as difficult inevitably has an adverse impact on students’ views of their ability to spend time on, and do well in, other subjects if they also study languages. This influences not only the students making their choices, but also schools, which are reluctant to enter candidates for examinations in which they might score low marks to the detriment of the school’s position in the league tables. Meanwhile, to complicate matters, we ponder the merits of the plans for the introduction of primary languages (CILT, 2005b).

Marshall (2005) commented on the increasing collaboration between schools and universities, indicating further possibilities for collaboration. The reality we face is that unless university enrolments counter the trend of waning interest in languages in schools, Single and Joint Honours degrees will continue to be affected, while courses for non-specialists and Institution-Wide Language Programmes are likely to see changes in numbers, student profiles, the actual languages chosen, and the level at which they are studied. Meanwhile Footitt (2005), of the University Council for Modern Languages -UCML-, investigating the role of HE in the National Languages Strategy, flagged as a matter for concern the low credibility of the National Languages Strategy among senior university personnel.

Against this gloomy picture, one might wonder whether there is any point in trying to extend the scope of language teaching. To this I would say, not only is it within our power to influence matters. It is our obligation. Much depends on the potential impact on student motivation, the value-added, the perception of languages in the wider community and the demand in terms of employment. In this, let us not forget that graduate linguists enjoy an unemployment rate of 5.9%, next best after that of graduates in Medicine, Vet Sciences, Education, Law, Architecture and Agriculture (CILT, 2005c).

Furthermore, publicity surrounding the importance of language-learning has not been lacking. CILT (2005d) responded to the report by HEFCE -the Higher Education Funding Council for England- (2005), ‘Strategically important and vulnerable subjects’, welcoming HEFCE’s ‘call for long-term strategies which provide a co-ordinated response to mismatches between supply and demand’. Sir Digby Jones, Director-General of the CBI (Confederation of British Industry, 2005) has referred to the ‘very few studying those (languages) needed by business in the increasingly globalised world -such as Mandarin, Russian or Spanish’, stating ‘The decline of French and German would be of no consequence if young people were instead learning Spanish or Mandarin, equiping them to do business across the world in the 21st century’s global economy… We must change our cultural attitude: we are an island race but must embrace the world and speak its languages if we want to be in the pole position for business’. This concern has been echoed by many, including Sir Trevor McDonald who called for ‘joined-up thinking’ on languages (CILT, 2006), and has been widely reported by such as MacLeod (2005), Randall (2006), Taylor (2006).

The role of language learners in the global society

The attributes of linguists and the skills they are good at are the skills we teach to meet our learning outcomes, and they are the very characteristics employers value in our graduates. Yet, all too often, our students are only aware that they are acquiring these skills if we make them explicit. The skills of linguists can be summarised as follows, communication being the most obvious. After all, what is a language for if not for communication? Similarly, teamwork, since communication is not a solo activity. On the other hand, working independently may be a necessary step along the line. Then comes time management, and the necessary juggling of different tasks and deadlines whether for written work, or to conduct meetings and interviews effectively and productively. Nor should we overlook the importance of critical thinking, thanks to the emphasis placed in language-teaching on the analysis of texts and films, and synthesis of different arguments. Finally, lateral thinking, which comes with the need to follow an issue through and maintain flexibility. The acquisition of these skills explains why graduate linguists enjoy such good employment prospects, due not merely to linguistic competence, but to the transferable skills associated with language study. But it does not stop there, and now we come to intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence: touchy-feely?

Stories are legion of embarrassing incidents stemming from intercultural misunderstanding, and resulting in loss of credibility, and for the business world, in loss of big contracts. One could debate the extent to which interaction between different language communities can be regarded as possible without intercultural competence and understanding. Yet, it is often held that intercultural competence is airy-fairy, touchy-feely, founded on supposition, and lacks a discipline.

Theory

The theory, however, is there, and in abundance. Through research carried out in the 70s, analysing the attitudes of 116,000 employees in 50 countries, Hofstede (1984) set out a framework to help understand differences in thinking and social action, and demonstrate how basic values influence behaviour. He identified four cultural dimensions; power distance, individualism (the extent to which people are integrated into groups or are expected to act on individual initiative), uncertainty avoidance (which reflects people’s attitudes to ambiguity, the extent to which they feel threatened by the unknown, and their resistance to change), masculinity (values of assertiveness, competitiveness as contrasted with what is perceived as the more feminine emphasis on relationships and quality of life). He then created a score for each country; for some people, Hofstede's dimensions explain all. A major criticism, even at the time, was that the generalisation of national characteristics of organisational behaviour overlooks the subcultures within a society. Whether the concept of national identity is now disregarded as 'old hat', is a matter for the individual to decide, but Hofstede's research , modified by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), nonetheless serves to reinforce the importance of awareness of cultural difference, and its possible implications. Others have contributed to the body of literature, among them Samovar and Porter (2004), Varner and Beamer (2005), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2004), whose 'Riding the Waves of Culture' (2002) is eminently readable, and Olofsson (2004) with her manual of guidelines. However, the most relevant works for our purposes are those of Byram and Fleming (1998), Byram and Tost Planet (2000), Byram and Grundy (2003), and Roberts *et al* (2001), with their emphasis on 'border crossers', and the development of the skills needed to interact with people from cultures that differ from our own.

Interculturalism: the meeting of minds

Teaching interculturality involves innovative pedagogies and links ethnography, language, history, literature, film, psychology, and philosophy in new combinations. Interculturality can be interpreted as both an attribute of personal outlook and behaviour, and as a field of study in its own right (Crawshaw, 2005). It may be seen as an adjunct of language study, as preparation for the Year Abroad, or a specialised area within Translation Studies. In some vocational courses it sometimes features as Communication Studies, particularly when there is a behavioural outcome.

Although Intercultural Studies may be seen to overlap with Cultural Studies, above all in the areas of philosophy, anthropology, ethnography, and literature, a difference can be defined in that Intercultural Studies places more emphasis on the intercultural approach to living. The term ‘Intercultural Competence’ tends to be used when there is emphasis on the ethical and cognitive understanding, as well as key skills, and the ability of individuals to relate in their own language to people from a different culture. ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’, on the other hand, suggests interaction in the foreign language (Byram, 2004).

The ethnographic approach was promoted in the FDTL LARA project -Learning and Residence Abroad- (2000), and underpins the undergraduate module to which I refer later in this article. Other approaches include cross-cultural pragmatics, relating to the study of spoken discourse in intercultural situations, and cross-cultural capability. This latter is largely the contribution of IALIC, the International Association for Languages and Intercultural Communication, and has been the theme of its annual conferences.

Key Institutions

IALIC (2006) describes itself as ‘a specialist forum for academics, practitioners, researchers and students working in an interdisciplinary and critical framework and sharing a concern for the practical and theoretical interplay of living languages and intercultural understanding’. Its focus is the theoretical understanding of cultural and linguistic difference.

Meanwhile, SIETAR UK, the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR, 2006) has brought together practitioners and researchers; it aims to ‘enhance the awareness of intercultural issues in policy-making, business and education and to contribute to the solution of societal problems by facilitating communication between people of different cultures’.

CILT (2005d), together with LLAS, the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (2005), and now part of the Higher Education Academy, has lent credence to the argument that there is a definite place for Intercultural Studies within Modern Languages.

Learning and teaching interculturality

The approaches we can adopt in order to help students function in cultures other than their native culture are various, and lend themselves to different situations and categories of learner. Cultural difference can be looked at through language, including courses in translation and rewriting, and sociolinguistics, or through the behavioural approach. This latter tends to be adopted by the more vocational courses, which study intercultural awareness in the context of real-life situations (Crawshaw, 2005).

Approaching through Literature and/ or Film is a readily identifiable option. Drama, likewise, can make multiple contributions, not least in that it consists of everyday exchanges. It is also rich in tension and conflict in a way that no text book ever is, presenting problematic situations in which students can get involved (Cunico, 2005). It therefore calls for empathy, and is the ideal prelude to the discussion of cultural difference. Reflective writing in the form of journals, portfolios, diaries or logbooks is another way of promoting reflection and understanding of intercultural realities, as well as enhancing students' writing skills.

It is important to point out that the objective is no longer for teachers to imitate the native speaker, but rather to adopt an interactive approach and facilitate our students' acquisition of an ethical, social and political understanding of the other culture. It is equally worth noting that the emphasis is on exploration by the student, rather than the acquisition of facts.

Games, which feature large in management training, are not far removed from the acquisition of self-knowledge through quizzes and intercultural incidents, simulations and role plays, which can also be used to raise consciousness and prepare students for intercultural living. Nor should we leave out electronic communication as a means of promoting intercultural communication, although in this article I shall restrict my observations to the e-learning materials I have written to foster interculturality.

My WebCT

We have to note that e-learning is not yet valued in the academic community to the extent that would seem to be the case according to academic journals (Oliver, 2004). However, the bank of materials I created in WebCT seemed a logical way of fostering autonomy and supporting the first-year undergraduate module, ‘Intercultural Learning for Residence Abroad’. Both are demonstrably student-centred, and endeavour to get students to see groups rather than nations, and to counter ethnocentrism, namely the notion that one’s own culture is central to all reality (Rosinski, 2003). The Year Abroad takes the form of university study or a work placement in Spain. or a teaching assistantship in a Spanish school. Aiming to raise students’ awareness of the importance of intercultural competence, the WebCT materials focus on norms and behaviour in social interaction and in the workplace; issues relating to health and welfare; politeness codes; locating key places on campus, transport, observation of the world around; and practical issues such as opening a bank account.

Components include: an introduction to the notion of interculturality; a number of audio units for listening skills in an intercultural context; multiple choice quizzes on behavioural issues; intercultural dilemmas or critical incidents with proposed solutions in pop-up boxes. However, great vigilance is required if the latter are to be seen as questioning, rather than re-enforcing stereotypes. Much easier to compile, but less fun to do, are true-false questions, and definition-matching. I also created brief multiple choice thematically-based quizzes which convey underlying grammar points, at the same time as introducing students to the lexis and concepts required for in-class debate on issues where intercultural difference is particularly pronounced (the *botellón* phenomenon of under-age drinking in public places in Spain; attitudes to the family; the age at which young people leave home etc).

Throughout, the focus is on student involvement, and this includes feedback from students, which alongside my own monitoring, is fundamental to reviewing the materials and fine-tuning them in the light of experience. The opportunity to add to materials is both one of the great strengths of electronic delivery, and one of its weaknesses or dangers. In the case of my own materials, there is clearly scope for ongoing modification in the light of feedback; time is the main constraint here. Students are encouraged to suggest areas where they can see a gap in coverage, to report back on discrepancies, user-friendliness etc and to put forward ideas for possible improvements. In the event, although some feedback has been invaluable, other ideas, although sound in themselves, are not a neat fit with the way the materials are currently integrated, and could lead to a rather messy set of additions. Not all ideas for additional questions have been an unqualified success; the suggestions from one jubilant cohort, subsequently included in the exercises on offer, were promptly condemned by the next cohort as sexist, stereotyped and ‘unhelpful’.

The ethnographic classroom

From self-access we move on to the taught component, namely ‘Intercultural Learning for Residence Abroad’, and the skills and competences that can be taught to students peparing for their period of residence abroad. To enable undergraduate students to engage more effectively with the target language culture while on their Year Abroad, the decision was taken to make compulsory for all first-year languages students a one-semester (12-week) modified version of a module that had previously been delivered only as a two-term (18-week) module for students of French. The restructuring, refocusing, and incorporation into the teaching team of newcomers unfamiliar with the ethnographic approach was but one of the challenges facing Shirley Jordan who originally devised the module, and is current Chair of IALIC.

The structure of a weekly lecture in English, followed by seminars according to students’ main language of study was agreed as a viable formula, it having proved successful in other modules. The main issue that remained unresolved was whether the content would be compromised if the seminar were conducted in the foreign language, and the coursework likewise produced in the foreign language. Seminar-leaders agreed to differ; the argument that influenced most of us was that during their period of residence abroad, students are interacting in the target language and are required to send back ethnographic reports written in the foreign language. Furthermore, since the lecture had familiarised students with the principles of ethnographic study, the role of the seminar should be to build bridges between that theory and the ethnographic project to be conducted in the foreign country. This suggested that my role as seminar-leader was to provide the lexical and cultural framework in Spanish, which students could add to the conceptual framework acquired in the lecture. In the first seminar, having prepared my slides in Spanish, I took the risk of consulting my students. Mercifully they opted to be taught in Spanish, which is not to say that some did not weaken at times and attempt to contribute to the debate in English. Nonetheless, they understood the very convincing argument supporting the use of the target language, that the intended outcome of the module is the enhancement of the language-learning process, rather than the training of social scientists.

Terminology: from methods, concepts and themes to assessment

Students are confronted with a barrage of terms, relating to methods: participant observation (lurking and soaking), thick description, making strange, the interpretation of data. They are introduced to concepts, such as speech communities, social space, reflexivity, non-verbal communication, shared cultural knowledge, patterns of interaction, and the characteristics of a good informant. They are encouraged to pick out themes such as attitudes to authority, aspects of social organisation, perceptions as to what is edible.

At times one feels students may flounder given the volume of new material. However, what seems to keep them on track is the opportunity to pool their ideas, and the knowledge that what counts is their own ideas. The seminars which follow the lectures are therefore invaluable, particularly if one is able to keep the group size small.

The weekly ‘home ethnography’ exercises take students progressively through the range of skills that will be required of them on their Year Abroad. Participant observation is the basis of the first assessment, and most students find they can adhere to the guidelines, such as not letting themselves be influenced by prior knowledge, being mindful of the need for reflexivity. However, despite having participated freely in class, some students feel their own ideas are inadequate when committed to paper, and take a while to come to terms with the fact that on paper too, it is their own observations and interpretation that count.

The assessment based on a home ethnographic interview requires students to select an informant who is a native-speaker of the language of study, and in pairs to conduct an interview, transcribing part of it and annotating it to show reflection on the questions, responses and process.

The End-product and Feedback

The end-product is the Year Abroad Project, during which students are in e-mail contact with their project supervisor. In the last few weeks of the preparatory module, students begin to get excited about their case study, asking if certain topics will be suitable. In general they are, but at times it is necessary to remind students that they need to avoid generalities and stereotypes, look at specifics, and consider the characteristics they will look for in a good informant. Topics chosen in the past have included: the Navarra hockey team, prostitution in Jerez de la Frontera; post-school activities of primary-school children in Madrid; celebrating Epiphany in Spain, teaching swimming to handicapped children in Pamplona; symbolic classification in a supermarket in Zaragoza; interaction between visitors to the Reina Sofía art gallery etc.

Student feedback is eminently positive: here we come to the relationship between what teachers do and what students learn. Colleagues new to the ethnographic approach fear that we are overloading students, and we do our utmost to reassure students that all will become clear in the end. One week I was particularly convinced that my students would be lost, and distributed the specially designed activity that I hoped would get them back on board. In fact, they were puzzled as to why I had any reservations.

Students give every indication of engaging with the preparatory module. Feedback in 2004-05 was least positive about the format of course materials, there being only an online version of the module handbook. Nor were students in favour of the textbook, the main problem being the level of difficulty and the fact it did not map neatly onto the module. Feedback sheets also requested language-specific vocabulary lists; if this request came from a Spanish seminar, it would suggest that my attempts to provide contextualised vocabulary in the form of overheads summarising in Spanish the content of the lecture delivered in English, were not universally appreciated. For 2005-06 I therefore heeded this comment and issued an end-of-module vocabulary game and check list. Students tended to be positive about the methods used by the teaching staff, about the continuous assessment and the assessment feedback sheets; they also requested longer seminar sessions, found some lectures too abstract, but enjoyed the weekly fieldwork exercises and seminars, picking out particularly ‘the fact that everyone can get involved’, explore, and not just be taught.

In terms of strategies for assessing student performance, the Year Abroad Project demands that students bring into play all the skills and knowledge acquired in the module. It therefore assesses the written end-product, but takes into account the use made of the methods and concepts learnt, ability to unpack the data, to conceptualise and draw out themes, the extent to which a student has used his/her initiative to work round obstacles etc.

Embedding notions of interculturality in other classes?

A whole module based on interculturality is admittedly a luxury, but as demonstrated by Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2004) there are ways we can include elements of interculturality in language classes of different levels, abilities and experience of the target culture. By flagging issues we can raise consciousness and leave students to explore at their own level. As a firm believer that teachers best know their own classes, I am reluctant to make suggestiosn, but the following might spark off ideas of suitable materials for eliciting a response in the target language: HSBC video clips on interculturality; sets of postcards illustrating lifestyles in different cultures; sheets to fill in about food likes and dislikes, food that one would eat only under duress, or that one would be averse to seeing another person eat, followed by debate on the underlying reasons (religion/ family or cultural preference). Other possibilities are a table to be filled in about gifts, favours and compliments received and given in the past week, their symbolic value, the subsequent reaction and level of reciprocity involved; debate on appropriate dress for specific occasions, both everyday living, and rituals marking life-events. The above can be explored as 'home ethnography', harnessing the multiculturality of the classroom, but also allow for drawing on students' experience of Hispanic values, beliefs and customs *(Reyes* and the *santo* for gifts; *Primera Comunión* for rituals; *cochinillo,* the *botellón* and *tapas* for eating and drinking habits; attitudes to the *abuela* for family attitudes.

Crossing boundaries

Extending one's horizons is not easy. People seldom embrace cultural difference to the full; it is more comforting and reassuring to remain in one's own community and live in a 'ghetto' (Rosinski, 2003, xxii), so what we are asking our students to do is no small challenge.

Could the use of the ethnographic approach mean fresh life for languages? Could it alter the image of the language classroom? Could it mean fresh life for linguists? Could the incorporation of ethnography mean a new lease of life for linguists in general and teachers in particular? It is eminently appropriate for language learners as its emphasis on the local and specific helps learners integrate and function in the community and avoid the dangers inherent in focusing on national traits and stereotyping. It promotes the analysis of one's own and others' difference.

Objections include the hybridity of the approach of this inter-discipline, which in addition to being a weakness, is also a strength. Fashions come and go, but there is nothing to lose and everything to gain from catering for diversity of learning styles and preferences. Phil Turk said in relation to grammar acquisition (Language World, 2005), that he had tried all known methods, and come to prefer the 'Common Sense Method', which consists mainly of all elements of the others and works for him, and more importantly for his students. Meanwhile, a more serious shortcoming can be identified in that the focus on the micro means students do not gain a country-overview; this, though, can be countered by the argument that involvement in the micro may well lead on to an interest in the macro.

Can we afford to teach it? A module such as 'Intercultural Learning for Residence Abroad' certainly takes its toll on anyone teaching it for the first time, being costly in times of preparation time, and involving a high degree of risk-taking. However, the outcome has in our case been extremely positive, both in terms of opening new horizons to staff, enabling students to have confidence in their own views, and being preparation that genuinely whetted their appetites for the Year Abroad project.

Can it give new insights into language learning? The response to this may sound suspiciously upbeat. As someone who has always maintained that if the method works, use it, one might say the same of this approach, and rather more. Seldom have I seen such a dramatic swing in terms of motivation. There is an indisputable emphasis on everyday reality, a strong link to the life lived in the target language country.

Can it give new insights into the role of language learners? A positive response comes here too. Learners are forced into using the language; they listen, speak, interact, ask questions, record the everyday language generated by groups of users. It makes them observe and reflect, and gives them a reason for engaging in the life of the community.

Conclusion

Can we afford NOT to teach intercultural competence? Listening is agreed to be an important feature of intercultural competence. This means listening to others, but also listening to our own inner feelings, and our feel for the need for intercultural training; as linguists we are all too aware of the dangers of failed communication, and may even have recollections of the student who has the rules at his/her fingertips, but fails to communicate through being on the wrong wave length. A dramatic increase in the number of intercultural competence specialists was anticipated fifteen to twenty years ago (Smith, 2005). It has not happened. Maybe it falls to us as linguists to move a step closer to ensuring that it does happen, and that at every available opportunity we introduce threads of intercultural training into our classes. What better incentive for doing this than the approach of 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue? (European Commission, 2005).

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