Is there a place for forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies in the foreign language classroom in higher education?

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Abstract

In this article we describe an online project in the foreign language classroom in which Argentinian and British university students communicated across the globe to address a topic of human rights violations. The aim of this article is to answer the question of whether there is a place in language education for forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies. This focus is new in the field. We begin with an overview of intercultural citizenship education in language pedagogy, followed by an outline of the pedagogical intervention and case study. We continue with a description of theoretical developments in forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies as the framework of the study and provide an analysis of the data from the project with these lenses. Findings indicate that students displayed varying affective, physical and intellectual forms of emotional investment as they mediated interculturally with their interlocutors and the ghosts of those who suffered from human rights abuse in the past. To do this, they engaged in what we call critical remembering, i.e. remembering wrongdoings through a decolonising human rights educational approach. We conclude that it is possible for language teaching in the higher education sector to meet the educational aim of developing

learners' democratic competences by combining intercultural citizenship with forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies.

Keywords: higher education; forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies; intercultural citizenship; foreign language learning

Introduction: Intercultural citizenship in language education

Our point of departure in this study is Byram's conceptualisation of intercultural citizenship in foreign language education (Byram, 2008, 2014; Byram, Golubeva, Han & Wagner, 2017; Porto & Byram, 2015a,b; Porto, Houghton & Byram, 2018; Porto, 2018a) that postulates that intercultural citizenship in language teaching should encourage learners 'to act in transnational communities' (Byram, 2008: 206) using their foreign languages. As language learners engage in dialogue with others transnationally, they together identify, critically reflect and act upon an issue through community engagement. The transnational dialogue can be either through documents and artefacts or in person, whether face-to-face or virtual.

The foreign language classroom is particularly well placed to address global issues that impact on the lives of people living in different parts of the world, such as those relating to social justice, democratic life and the prevention of human rights violations (Nussbaum, 2006; Osborn, 2008). Byram et al. (2017: 257) note that 'topics that are sensitive in nature (…) are at the heart of all citizenship education, including education for intercultural citizenship'. An important starting point for this type of education lies in its potential for learners across the globe to use their foreign languages to unite their forces to stand up for humanity and to take action at the local, regional, national and international levels. Foreign languages provide learners with a powerful tool to engage in intercultural dialogue for the

promotion of democracy and human rights with a view to instigating change. This is one aim of intercultural citizenship education in language learning. Empirical studies of intercultural citizenship set in foreign language education contexts are recent (Byram et al., 2017; Porto, Houghton & Byram, 2018), with ours being one of them, developed in 2013 between Argentinian and British university students. In this study, we addressed the topic of the 1976-1983 military dictatorship in Argentina and demonstrated students' growth in self with an enhanced intercultural awareness, development in criticality and social justice responsibility, increased sense of identification with a transnational community, improved commitment to civic and social engagement (Porto & Byram, 2015b; Yulita & Porto, 2017) and language development (Porto, 2018b).

The basis for our point in this article is the observation made almost two decades ago by Byram (2001) concerning the inescapable ethical, moral and political duties and responsibilities of language education, which he developed theoretically in the notion of intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008, 2014) and then tested empirically (Byram et al., 2017). We are particularly concerned with the duties and responsibilities of language education to contribute to the development of democratic societies based on human rights principles – concerns we share with others (Council of Europe, 2016; Nussbaum, 2006; Osborn, 2008). Here, however, we propose a new lens, never explored in language education theory before, related to forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies as an opportunity to address these concerns in the language classroom. In order to answer our research question – 'is there a place for forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies in the foreign language classroom in higher education?', we re-assess the project and our data with relevant literature related to theories of forgiveness. It should be noted that these theories belong to a different field, namely social and political philosophy, social justice and related areas and they are usually considered in the context of history, social studies and citizenship classrooms. We are

not historians, philosophers, or sociologists, but foreign language educators contributing to the field of language teaching with a novel perspective, i.e. theories of forgiveness. As such, this article has the potential to influence wider pedagogic practices and research in the field.

We begin with an overview of the pedagogical intervention, followed by a description of the case study and the theoretical framework used for our data analysis.

Pedagogical intervention

The pedagogical intervention was an intercultural citizenship project undertaken between September and December 2013 on the theme of the last military dictatorship in Argentina in the midst of the 1978 Football World Cup held in the country at the time. This was a sensitive topic for the Argentine students due to the crimes and human rights abuses committed by the military junta to eliminate political dissent. It was also significant for the British students because of the importance attributed in the literature to the analysis and reflection on the universality of human rights violations that individual cases trigger (Osler, 2015). The task-based project, described in detail in Porto and Byram (2015b) and Yulita and Porto (2017), consisted of four phases: research, awareness-raising, intercultural dialogue, and citizenship. A wiki was used as a virtual classroom.

All students researched the topic using media in the foreign languages that they were learning in their degree courses (English in Argentina and Spanish in the UK) (research phase), analysed and reflected on the human rights abuses at the time (awareness-raising stage), communicated via Skype to design a bilingual leaflet collaboratively (intercultural dialogue phase) and engaged in civic action by disseminating the leaflet to the public in order to raise awareness of human rights violations locally and globally with the aim of facilitating change (citizenship stage).

This project, together with another one based on the Malvinas/Falklands conflict, reported in Byram et al. (2017) (Porto & Yulita, 2017) are the only two projects framed within intercultural citizenship theory in language teaching that address highly political topics and consequently lend themselves well to the forgiveness framework described next.

Troubled knowledge

In our project, the link between intercultural citizenship and forgiveness theories is the notion of 'troubled knowledge', defined by Zembylas (2013b:177) as the 'knowledge of a traumatized past such as the profound feelings of loss, shame, resentment, or defeat that one carries from his or her participation in a traumatized community'. Knowledge of this kind is for Zembylas (2017a: 661) 'difficult (…) not only because of the traumatic content of knowledge, but also because the learner's encounter with this content is emotionally and conceptually unsettling'. When this knowledge is addressed pedagogically, the representation of trauma in the curriculum, and the learners' encounter with that trauma, can lead to feelings of uncertainty and disruption. The inclusion of troubled knowledge in teaching can deeply affect learners, who may experience feelings of loss, resentment, revenge and despair. According to Zembylas (2015, 2017a), the pedagogical treatment of these discomforting feelings can 'create openings' (Zembylas, 2017a: 662) for trauma to be reclaimed from the past and for individual and social transformation. Therefore, from this perspective, pain can be pedagogically valuable as a non-violent way to develop peaceful post-conflict societies.

This idea has been proposed in a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Boler, 1999; 2004; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012; Zembylas, 2015, 2017b), whereby educators and students alike are challenged to move outside their 'comfort zones' in order to create possibilities for self and social transformation by focusing on conflict, social injustices, human rights violations and feelings of anger, grief, hatred and resistance amongst others. Here is the link we see with the principles of intercultural citizenship education. What

discomforting pedagogies and intercultural citizenship education have in common is the emotional investment, or in Zembylas' words, the 'affective disruption' that 'might offer some sort of 'repair', healing and more humane relations with others' (Zembylas, 2017a: 672). Both intercultural citizenship and discomforting pedagogies highlight the relational aspect, i.e. people interacting with others using languages and other means, 'acknowledg[ing] emotion as a crucial aspect of political struggle for change and solidarity' (Zembylas, 2017c: 496). Both educational approaches aim at 'nurtur[ing] relational values such as care, compassion, respect, and solidarity' (Zembylas & Bozalek, 2017:3), leading to social and civic engagement with others, and 'action-oriented empathy and solidarity' (Zembylas, 2017c:497).

Pedagogies that delve deeply in the complexities of emotional investments of (post) traumatic episodes are at odds with traditions of higher education, which has historically been associated with reason, logic and a dispassionate, rational and objective search for truth (Barnett, 2011a,b; Hey & Leathwood, 2009). This paradigm has been challenged in an explosion of literature theorising the highly contested place of emotion in education (Boler, 2004; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Blackmore, 1999; Clegg & David, 2006; Dewaele, 2013; Hooks, 1994; Freire, 1994; Strelan & Covic, 2006; Zembylas, 2017a, c; Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2004). Although the role of emotion in education has achieved greater prominence and has now become the focus of scholarly interest and research, Zembylas (2017b) acknowledges that empirical evidence of difficult knowledge being addressed in higher education is scarce (Leibowitz et al., 2012; Zembylas, 2012), and there are no empirical research studies to date in the field of language learning and teaching with students carrying difficult emotional knowledge. It has been recognised that pedagogical research on historical trauma is in need of theoretical and empirical attention (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008) and while our study was not initially designed with this framework, but rather with an intercultural

citizenship perspective, we argue and demonstrate that it offers an empirical contribution. Our foreign language classrooms and the Skype conversations the students held as part of the online project became learning spaces which fostered the expression and sharing of 'troubled knowledge'.

The Argentine dictatorship as difficult knowledge and a niche for forgiveness pedagogies

The Argentine dictatorship is an example of troubled knowledge which, interestingly, Zembylas (2013a) uses to illustrate his theory. During the 1976-1983 dictatorship, the military junta committed crimes and human rights abuses to eliminate political dissent, including abductions, killings, torture and 'disappearances'. These wrongdoings are examples of a 'dehumanizing evil' (Wolfendale, 2005: 345), i.e. victims were seen by perpetrators not only as objects but also as inferior and subhuman. It is estimated that 30,000 people disappeared in these times, of which 9,000 are verified cases (CONADEP, Argentine National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons). About 500 children, born in detention centres where the mothers were being tortured, had been stolen and illegally adopted by families. There are active human rights organisations like *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* and *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* which search for the biological family members of these children and have restored about 128 so far through DNA genetic testing.

The Argentine students who participated in this study belong to the post-dictatorship generation, who had been born with democracy approximately twelve years after the end of the 1976-1983 military junta. As such they are not primary victims (the disappeared) or secondary victims (families and friends of the disappeared), but 'tertiary victims' because they experience a 'collective loss' as a group that is 'extended to community and society' (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002: 103). Because they lack first-hand experience of the dictatorship, they get acquainted with this trauma of the past through history lessons at school and public

remembrance practices and rituals such as particular memory sites and the commemoration of the National Memory Day for Truth and Justice every 24th March in honour of the victims of the dictatorship, echoing the day of the military coup in 1976. They have also adopted 'their elders' memories as their own' (Kaiser 2005:173), passed on to them through stories from their parents and teachers, images and messages from school, television, films, songs, street demonstrations and other media[1]. The problem, as Zembylas (2013a: 74) points out, is that 'honoring the disappeared victims through remembrance practices that rely too much on a liturgy of facts fuels the mass themes of history and works to contain trauma into a fact-laden learning environment'. It becomes a 'spectacle pedagogy' described as:

> the (public or school) pedagogy that transfixes the ghost of the disappeared into a *spectacle*. The ghost of the disappeared is a spectacle when it becomes an image or a story that is ''ontologized'' in certain ways that are fact-laden (…) Consequently, (uncritical) spectacle pedagogy structures our attention to the stories and images of the disappeared in an identical manner, focusing on facts and information. (Zembylas, 2013a: 76, his emphasis)

A 'spectacle pedagogy' legitimates one story 'through its narrativization', making the disappeared 'simple objects of and for knowledge' (Zembylas, 2013a: 74), attempting to give closure to the traumatic past through unequivocal facts and information, 'spreading

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1   The commemoration in the media
        https://www.infobae.com/politica/2018/03/24/la-movilizacion-por-el-dia-de-la-memoria-la-verdad-y-la-justicia-desde-el-drone-de-infobae/
        https://www.clarin.com/politica/24-marzo-dia-nacional-memoria-verdad-justicia-actos-haran-plaza-mayo-obra_0_rJXyFdRtG.html
        http://www.telam.com.ar/tags/13056-24-de-marzo/noticias
        In the site of the Ministry of Education of the Nation
        www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/documentos/EL000191.pdf
        In sites that offer educational resources for teachers
        https://www.educ.ar/recursos/15165/dia-de-la-verdad-la-memoria-y-la-justicia
        In labour unions (in this case, 'trabajadores del estado', i.e.workers of the state)
        http://ute.org.ar/24-de-marzo-dia-nacional-de-la-memoria-por-la-verdad-y-la-justicia/
        In national universities
        http://www.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/institucional/areas/mrycfahce

knowledge so that disappearances will not happen again', leading to 'instrumentalist perspectives of memory' (Zembylas, 2013a: 83). In this case, Zembylas (2013a) argues that the disappeared become ghosts that remembrance practices try to exorcize. The word 'ghost' has a metaphorical sense because, as the whereabouts of most of the disappeared is unknown, the Argentine society 'is still haunted by the utter failure to have a tombstone and a name for each of its *disappeared* victims' (Zembylas, 2013a: 69, his emphasis). Consequently, the Argentine society is haunted by the ghosts of the disappeared, which come to life every 24th March in each commemoration. Zembylas (2013a: 79-80) then argues that:

> a society that has experienced disappearances (…) must come to terms with the specters of the disappeared, the traces left by them in the stories and images that are circulated, the societal habits of remembering and forgetting that are no longer noticed, and the public or private rituals that still take place to recognize the victims.

Therefore, Zembylas' take on 'discomforting pedagogy' does not involve ghost exorcism by attempting to remove the disappeared from our memory. Nor does it involve using a traumatic historical period as an object of study. For him, it involves coming to terms with the spectres of the disappeared through the creation of 'public and school pedagogies that engage with the inherited stories and images of the disappeared without devolving into spectacle' (Zembylas, 2013a: 82). The author proposes that forgiveness pedagogies can achieve this aim by allowing students to relate affectively with the ghosts, usually in ways that are disturbing and demanding. This thus becomes a 'pedagogy of hauntology' which includes 'any form of pedagogical work that engages and sustains ''encounters'' with the ghosts of disappeared victims' (Zembylas, 2013a: 82). This pedagogy can be enacted by engaging with spectrality in the classroom, i.e. having conversations with the ghosts of the disappeared (or 'hauntings') through personal, familiar, communal and national histories, art

and literature (Zembylas, 2013a), as well as through translanguaging (Zembylas & Bozalek, 2017). Here is where we see the link between Zembylas' ideas and intercultural citizenship theory (Byram et al., 2017) for our pedagogical intervention encouraged 'spectrality' in Zembylas' sense of the term. Our students used their foreign languages not only to mediate interculturally between interlocutors, community groups, resources, languages and ideas, but also to engage with art and literature in order to communicate with the spectres of the disappeared, which in itself constitutes another form of intercultural mediation. Therefore, we contend that intercultural citizenship in language education is well placed to create the openings proposed by Zembylas.

Forgiveness pedagogy, understood as the creation of learning spaces that 'aim to restore humanness and foster empathy, non-violence and social justice' (Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011: 254) has a key role to play in discomforting and hauntology pedagogies. It encourages learners to engage emotionally with the spectres of the disappeared in order to 'forgive' and the assumption is that forgiveness is a worthwhile outcome in posttraumatic societies (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002). Some authors (Govier, 1999, 2002; McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000; Wolfendale, 2005; Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011) stress that forgiveness should not be confused with pardoning, condoning or forgetting, neither with mercy or amnesty. Rather it involves 'interrupt[ing] the spectacle' (Zembylas, 2013a: 86), coming to terms with the spectres and articulating 'an alternative vision that is motivated by the *infinite obligation to the other* — in this case, the ghost of a disappeared victim' (Zembylas, 2013a: 81, emphasis added).

The question for the Argentine students is 'what reasons can victims of dehumanizing evil have for forgiving those who have so severely wronged them?' (Wolfendale, 2005: 348). Because 'the perpetrators of dehumanizing evil are faceless, nameless and vanished' (Wolfendale, 2005: 354), any kind of forgiveness in this context can only become

unconditional (i.e. not conditional on the existence of a concrete perpetrator) or unilateral (Govier, 2002; Wolfendale, 2005), where the 'work of forgiving need not involve the offender in any way' (Kohen, 2009: 404). It is instead aimed at restorative justice: 'it is important to forgive, then, for one's own good and in order to embrace the idea of restorative – rather than retributive – justice' (Kohen, 2009: 417). Restorative justice is a form of empowerment for the victims (whether primary, secondary or tertiary) because it provides dignity and a sense of moral good about oneself (Kohen, 2009), linked to 'the kinds of moral agents we strive to be' (Wolfendale, 2005: 344). It involves a process of attitude change that allows for the recognition of the humanness of the 'faceless, nameless and vanished' offender or wrongdoer as part of Zembylas' 'infinite obligation to the other' mentioned earlier.

> Forgiveness involves a change of attitude toward the perpetrator so that we no
>
> longer consider them to be irredeemable. Instead, we view them with the respect
>
> due to all rational beings (Wolfendale, 2005: 359).

Forgiveness as attitude change based on such moral agency (Wolfendale, 2005) is a 'process not an event' (Govier, 2002: 43), it is long and hard

> forgiving a perpetrator of dehumanizing evil would be an incredibly hard task, a
>
> process that might take years (Wolfendale, 2005: 360)

and it has the potential of breaking the cycle of anger in the hope that trauma may be healed (Zembylas, 2017a).

For all students alike, but particularly for the British students, the relevance lies in the opportunity not only to analyse and reflect on human rights violations contextualized in particular cases (Osler, 2015) such as the Argentine dictatorship, but crucially to engage in 'critical scenes of dangerous memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 145) through witnessing rather than spectating (Zembylas, 2013a). Witnessing here 'means having an affective encounter with massive unthinkable disaster or victimization' and 'the witnessing

experience is shattering one's worldview' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 146). It is not a question of focusing on the victim or the victimizer, but rather on oneself, 'understand[ing] and feel[ing] differently the world' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 147). As both Argentine and British students engaged in transnational communication using Skype, or 'dialogues of witnessing (…) through collaborative efforts of interpretation and reinterpretation' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 147) to address these 'dangerous memories', they created a community of memory and 'the practice of witnessing within a community of memory involves an active involvement of its members with the affective politics of past memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 147).

In this article we argue and show that these pedagogies are not exclusive of history, social sciences and citizenship classrooms (see for example Zembylas, 2013a), but have a place in foreign language education too. We view forgiveness as an outcome resulting from the development of competences, such as empathy, moral responsibility, solidarity, emotion regulation, analytical and critical thinking skills (Barrett, 2017, personal communication). These competences are part of the foreign language classroom framed within intercultural citizenship theory (Byram et al., 2017) and are mobilised, even if not achieved, when the process of forgiveness is initiated as in our project.

We link forgiveness with the value of peace, as a competence to be fostered not only in post-conflict educational contexts such as the post-dictatorship generation in Argentina, but also in all contexts, considering the agitated world affairs of current times. The purpose of fostering peace and forgiveness lies in building a future based on more humane relations with others (Zembylas, 2013a). For forgiveness to be transformative, the 'dehumanizing evil' (Wolfendale, 2005) must be remembered, but it must be left in the past (Galtung, 2001). This does not mean forgetting. It means dealing with it so that a democratic and peaceful future can be built. Theoretical developments and empirical studies (Eisikovits, 2004; Enright,

Rhody, Litts & Klatt, 2014; Galtung, 2001; Shechtman, Wade & Khoury, 2009; Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011) have found that forgiveness pedagogies can be one of the ways in which emotions relating to (post) trauma can be reduced. These studies indicate that forgiveness can lead to improved psychological well-being, better academic performance and reduced behavioural problems.

Finally, here we provide an empirical contribution to the theory of discomforting pedagogies whereby the students developed a 'very different sense of the critical' with 'bodily' and 'out-of-body' experiences (Luke, 2005: 26-27). Luke develops two takes on the 'critical' based on the tenets of Critical Pedagogy. One is 'a form of embodied political anger', noting that for the 'critical to happen', there must be some 'discomfort'. For Luke, being critical involves the 'bodily experience of oppression', of having been the object of 'symbolic and physical violence'. However, this 'bodily experience' remains just that until it is reflected upon through an 'out-of-body experience', whereby individuals step outside of themselves to engage in 'an intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task' to critically examine their experiences of being the objects of violence and abuse.

The case study

The research question in this case study (Mertens, 2015; Yin, 2013) is:

> is there a place for forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies in the foreign
>
> language classroom in higher education?

The number of participants totalled 99, of which 23 students were UK-based undergraduates enrolled in a Spanish Honours language degree (20 British, 1 Italian, 1 German and 1 Belgian) and 76 were Argentinian undergraduates, future teachers and/or translators of English. Most of the research participants were female (10 male and 89 female) in their late teens and early twenties, with competence in the foreign language at B2/C1 level (*Common*

European Framework of Reference). Twenty-three mixed nationality groups were formed, each consisting of four or five students, one UK-based student and either three or four Argentine students.

A wealth of conversational and documentary data was collected. Conversational data comprised Skype conversations (synchronous communication) totalling 230 hours (10 hours per group) and chats in the wiki (asynchronous communication). Documentary data comprised 23 collaborative leaflets, one per group; and individual reflection logs. In this article we focus on the Skype conversations, which were recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis took over a year and followed the guidelines and procedures for content analysis in Corbin and Strauss (2014) and Mertens (2015). We began with a holistic overview of all data types to focus then on the Skype conversations, whose transcripts we reread to obtain a global gist and made informal annotations and comments. There was an initial deductive or *a priori* phase in which we relied on key concepts from the literature and traced any relevant references to students' emotional investment in 'troubled knowledge' in order to identify the ways in which post-traumatic experiences were understood, expressed, referred to and lived. For the purposes of data coding during this phase, we identified the main ways in which this happened and used them later for devising a coding scheme which we applied to the whole body of data. We coded the data by separating it into pieces corresponding to natural breaks and assigning a code that corresponded to an emotion, such as anger, grief, loss and frustration. After that there was an inductive or data-based phase, during which we coded emerging themes and sub-themes, unique perspectives and commonalities. The process led us to identify two main discourses prevalent in the data, namely *emotional investment* and *critical remembering,* and we categorised themes and sub-themes under them. We also wrote descriptive, narrative and interpretive vignettes and highlighted multiple examples, which we then used not only to document the analysis, but also to illustrate

findings. We also addressed validity, reliability and triangulation issues but cannot describe them here in further depth for reasons of space. It should be noted that each data analysis phase (holistic, a priori, data based) consisted of at least three cycles: one by each of us independently and a third one to come to agreements and resolve discrepancies by discussion. When we were not able to resolve incongruences and negative cases in this way, we invited a colleague to act as an expert external examiner.

Confidentiality and ethical issues were addressed. Students signed informed consent forms to allow disclosure of their productions and pseudonyms are used here. Data are presented *verbatim*, i.e. without language corrections, and in the language used by the students, except in cases where the students used the Spanish language, where our translations into English are provided.

Findings and discussion

We found two dominant discourses in the data: (1) *emotional investment* and (2) *critical remembering.*

Emotional investment

Our analyses support the affirmation that the representation of historical trauma in our pedagogical intervention addressed 'difficult knowledge' or 'dangerous memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) of the dictatorship pedagogically by facilitating the learners' encounters with that trauma through affective engagement, for example feelings of uncertainty and disruption (Zembylas, 2017a). We traced these emotional encounters with trauma linguistically in the transcribed Skype conversations, revealed through the use of particular adjectives and phrases. For instance, in the following extract, the expressions used (highlighted in italics), such as 'terrible times', 'very tragic', 'terrible', 'very violent', 'the

15

worst', 'ugly times', indicate the shock and horror experienced by the students as they discussed the crimes perpetrated by the military officers during the dictatorship.

> ARG1: They were kidnapped and killed with complete disregard to their age. They even took babies away from pregnant women, then the mothers were killed and the babies were given in adoption.
>
> UK: And ... did they kill all the pregnant women?
>
> ARG1: Yes, they were all killed. They killed anyone who was against them. They were *terrible times* (...) It was all *very tragic* (...) It was *terrible* ... It wasn't a good government. They resorted to repression and to killing people. It was *very violent*. (…)
>
> ARG2: But the *worst* thing was that they were not always killed. They were tortured until they reported the names of other people who they could kill. Today people talk about the things they used to do with electricity. Sometimes they were put to sleep and thrown from planes into the River Plate. They were *ugly times* ... shots were heard in the streets.
>
> (Skype conversation translated from Spanish into English, Group 17, emphasis added)

The learners' emotional attachments ('terrible', 'tragic', 'violent', 'ugly') were strongly entangled with the traumatic historical circumstances of the human rights violations that took place ('they were kidnapped and killed', 'took babies', 'repression', 'they were tortured… the things they used to do with electricity', 'thrown from planes'). In this way, the approach to human rights education in our setting was contextualised and historicised critically, i.e. it was

not based on 'a priori universal principles detached from the historical and cultural context' (Zembylas, 2017c: 494).

In another piece of data a student physically reacted to the intense dismay she felt by the cruelty and savagery of the torturers by clearing her throat to stop herself from crying: 'how can you repay life back. It is like too much (*clears throat*)' (Skype conversation, Group 23, emphasis added). This physical form of emotional involvement is what Luke (2005) refers to as 'bodily experience'.

By contrast, the UK-based student in this group underwent a more distant experience, and his question 'did they kill all the pregnant women?' is evidence of his attempt to understand the topic by gaining more knowledge about it. Similarly, the following statement he made during the same Skype conversation also reveals his distant and rationalised approach to the historical period, or in Luke's words, an 'out of body' experience.

UK: *I know* some stuff and *I know there was a dictatorship and people under control…and people disappearing, people being killed*.

(Skype conversation, Group 17, emphasis added)

This student's understanding of the historical period manifested 'solely in terms of revealing and mastering unknown facts and stories about the past and its victims' (Zembylas, 2013a: 70) shown in the repetition of 'I know', or an approach at the level of 'spectacle' (Zembylas, 2013a).

However, during the several Skype conversations that this group had, this same UK-based student was able to shift his approach and began to display signs of being emotionally disturbed, a necessary first step in pedagogies of discomfort (Boler, 1999; 2004; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012; Zembylas, 2015, 2017b). This happened as the group was talking about a picture showing the military dictator Videla

smiling during the World Cup final. The following extract shows the UK student beginning to perceive the dictatorship as 'creepy' and 'scary', just as the Argentine students did, and concluding that it was 'a time of blood, secrets and deaths' (evidence in italics) – an affective form of involvement with this past.

ARG2: He [Videla] was like expressionless and the very first expression people could see, or was able to see, was at one point in a football match. I think it was the final, he's like really happy.

UK: Yeah.

ARG1: I think he was cheering up.

ARG2: Yeah. He was with a huge smile and *for me it was like…really scary.*

UK: *Creepy. Yeah, scary.*

ARG2: Yeah. *It was like…wow.*

UK: Yes, *scary face.*

ARG1: He was touching the cup and he saying 'hi' to all the football players… *that was awful.*

ARG2: It was *really scary* (…) *it's so creepy.*

(…)

ARG2: *It was terrible*. And I don't know if you have seen it, the pictures of that time but it's like they use something so important for us as it was football to cover the *tragedies and the killing. That, for me, was the creepiest thing about them.*

ARG1: Yes, they used football to cover *these atrocities* that were happening.

(…)

ARG2: You know that I really thought that nobody could touch the cup except the winner team, and now I see Videla touching it with *his 'bloody' hands.*

(…)

UK: This is what I've said in my Spanish language class, that it was *a time of blood, secrets and deaths*.

(Skype conversation, Group 17, emphasis added)

This extract shows how emotionally disturbed all students were, Argentine and British alike, ('scary', 'awful', 'terrible', 'creepy', 'tragedies', 'the creepiest', 'bloody') as they examined a photograph of Videla, the military dictator, lifting the trophy after the final with a smile. This emotional disruption happened as students conversed on Skype, or in other words, as they engaged in 'dialogues of witnessing' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008), away from 'spectating' (Zembylas, 2013a).

At the same time, the intercultural dialogue allowed the Argentine students to distance themselves from the familiar reality of dictatorship and name it as 'psychological violence':

ARG1: …and probably the only reason why they are alive is because it happened when things weren't quite developed yet. What he [this student's father] remembers is that they made everyone stand up facing a wall and they shoot to the sky or the floor, so they pretended they were about to kill everybody, like execute everybody.

ARG2: *That's psychological violence. You can't see anything but you hear they are killing people around you, so you presume you are the next.*

(Skype conversation, Group 2, emphasis added)

This piece of data provides evidence of Luke's (2005: 26) 'different sense of the critical', which involves not only the 'bodily experience' of violence and abuse, but also the 'out-of-body experience' of critical analysis through the 'use of metalanguage'. In this context, metalanguage means a more abstract, cognitive form of language. The 'bodily' experiences of violence and abuse can be perceived in the students' use of adjectives, such as 'scary', 'creepy', 'terrible' and 'awful' to express their strong emotions. 'Out-of-body' experiences can be gleaned in the 'use of metalanguage', such as 'psychological violence', 'atrocities', 'tragedies', and 'it was a time of blood, secrets and deaths' as the students intellectualised their emotions.

This critical awareness encouraged the Argentine students to seek a solidarity bond with their UK project partners. The following extract provides evidence of empathy as an Argentine student encourages a UK student to de-centre by placing him in the shoes of the disappeared ('how would you have felt'). By challenging the emotional investments of the British peer, the Argentine student was promoting 'action-oriented empathy and solidarity' and the extract is an example of 'the different ways in which feelings of empathy are evoked in the classroom and have differential implications for those who suffer' (Zembylas, 2017c: 497) ('people were being tortured', 'it must have been horrifying').

ARG3: How would you have felt if you, your family and friends had lived during those times of torture and disappearances?

UK: If I had lived in those times?

ARG3: Yes, that's what I mean, in the times in which people were being tortured, made to disappear and often killed.

UK: *I would feel very angry with the government, but at the same time I think I would have felt fearful of what was going on around me, because I don't want to*

die, I don't want to be made to disappear, I don't want my family to disappear.

Naturally, I wouldn't have liked to have lived in such times.

ARG3: We feel the same here, because we're young and we hadn't been born in those times. We know this because it is the history of our country.

ARG2: Yes, it must have been horrifying to have lived with the fear of being made to disappear.

(Skype conversation translated from Spanish into English, Group 17, emphasis added)

In the process of de-centring, the UK student displayed feelings and emotions of fear and anger (in italics in the extract, 'angry', 'fearful', 'I don't want to die'), a 'bodily experience' of this dictatorship period; whilst at the same time the Argentine students distanced themselves from their emotions towards a more intellectualised and rationalised perspective on the dictatorship ('it is the history of our country'), an 'out-of-body experience'. This new perspective emerged due to the online intercultural engagement during the project. The following Skype conversation offers evidence of the shift that the Argentine students experienced and the difficulty that such de-centring, distancing and perspective-taking involved for them while they were simultaneously aware of 'their responses toward suffering' (Zembylas, 2017c: 497) ('others had to suffer for us to be aware of this').

ARG1: I'm glad we were born with that [democracy], but others had to suffer for us to be aware of this. It's very sad. And *I've never **understood** why all this started*, until I was in senior year in High School.

ARG2: There's where you **learn** the reasons were mostly economical and *it had civilian support, which is a thing that, as a kid, you can't really **understand***. *It's*

*hard to wrap up your **mind** around the fact that people such as yourself would*

support these ideas. At first, at least, lots of people did.

(Skype conversation, Group 3, emphasis added)

The italicized extracts in this previous conversation and the highlighted words in bold show the intellectual challenge that the dictatorship period posed to the Argentine students, and the difficulty to use the 'mind' to 'understand' and 'learn' the reasons for the brutalities and atrocities, or 'dehumanizing evil' (Wolfendale, 2005), committed during this dark period in history. The difficulty may stem from the realisation that there were many sides to the dictatorship besides the one-sided, instrumental, partial and fact-based version, or 'spectacle', learnt at school (Zembylas, 2013a) ('I was in senior year in High School'). Its civilian support was one of these sides, which was unknown to the Argentine students ('it had civilian support, which is a thing that, as a kid, you can't really understand') and functioned as 'dangerous memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008). This is evidence of their shift from a 'bodily' to an 'out-of-body' experience of this dictatorship period, fostered by their contact with the UK-based peers. This intellectual difficulty and challenge was shared by the British students who expressed confusion by the fact that some families in Argentina illegally adopted babies of disappeared parents ('it was rather weird', 'what could they have thought'), as the following extract reveals:

UK: *I thought it was rather weird that* there were certain families that paid for

babies. *What could they have thought? Why would they do that?*

(Skype conversation translated from Spanish into English, Group 13,

emphasis added)

Overall, the project allowed for intense emotional investments, which involved varying

forms of physical, affective and intellectual reactions. In their discussions, students fell into

the trap of creating binaries, whereby the military officers ('they', 'themselves', 'the military') were constructed as 'evil' and the people of Argentina ('us', 'our national identity') as 'victims'. All students, and in particular, the Argentine students, for whom the dictatorship period was part of their national history, displayed notions that dichotomised 'us' and 'them'. In the following Skype conversation, two students discussed the view that the military officers had robbed the Argentine society of their identity by using the Football World Cup as a cover for the dictatorship:

ARG1: *And that is something very evil, to use something that people love, such as football in this country, for evil purposes. That is pretty serious too*, because I'm not a big football fan, but I know that many people are…

(…)

That, I think, is a very serious cultural appropriation. The military took something that was part of our national identity, even if some people don't care that much of it, *and took it to themselves*.

(…)

They took it from us, they took from everybody the pride to hold the World Cup, because in the end it was "yes, we had a World Cup in Argentina, but…." There's a giant "but": everything was arranged, *people were being killed at the exact same moment matches were played… They took that from all the football-loving community in the country.*

ARG2: *Players were actually public victims because they were forced to play in order to entertain the population.*

ARG1: *Yes, the military took something that these players loved and devoted their lives to and used it for evil.*

(Skype conversation, Group 3, emphasis added)

Stenberg (2011: 350) points out that 'post-traumatic' moments are events in which we are 'more likely to abide by reductive binaries and black-and-white solutions'. As we glean the 'troubled knowledge' that students shared in this piece of data, their descriptions of the violence and cruelty marked by the 'unprecedented historical trauma' (Worsham, 2006: 170) of the military dictatorship as a backdrop of the 1978 Football World Cup provide evidence of their initial binary thinking. The military officers ('them') and the people of Argentina ('us') are positioned at both ends of the spectrum. *They* were 'evil', *they* committed 'pretty serious' crimes, *they* stole our pride, *they* are the thieves - these are the messages implicit in their discourse by the repetition of 'they took it from us' and 'they took it to themselves'. In direct contrast, the people of Argentina, and in particular, the World Cup football players and fans, are referred to as *we*, the 'football fans'; *we*, the 'football-loving community'; and *we* (the footballers), the entertainers and 'public victims'.

However, being positioned in a temporary transnational 'community of memory' that enabled 'dialogues of witnessing' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008), the exploration of conflict (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012) allowed students to transcend dichotomies (Albrecht-Crane, 2005; Zembylas, 2013b, 2017b) and invest the historical past with their emotional engagement with traumatic episodes. The students' trajectories of affective, physical and intellectual involvement with 'critical scenes of dangerous memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) are captured by the two-way journeys from 'bodily' to 'out-of-body' experiences about the dictatorship that we have illustrated in this section. In this way, our intercultural citizenship project became a decolonising form of human rights education in Zembylas' (2017c) terms, because it was contextualised beyond Europe and because it reclaimed the historicisation, contextualisation, multiple perspectivity, criticality

and partiality related to the Argentine dictatorship in particular. Our project enacted 'the decolonisation of human rights in HRE' [human rights education] because it 'offer[ed] possibilities of approaching human rights from a critical emotional orientation' (Zembylas, 2017c: 495) that confronted students with the ghosts of the disappeared in truly felt ways, beyond spectacles, as witnesses.

This was possible through the exploration of conflict (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012) as the students were challenged 'to move beyond their comfort zone into new and unfamiliar territory and into states of dissonance and discomfort' (Santoro & Major, 2012: 309). The past the students discussed on Skype, which was a 'dehumanizing evil', challenged their 'comfort zones' (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012) and fostered feelings of resentment, hatred, anger and fear. This is consistent with the need to focus on feelings of this kind in discomforting pedagogies (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas, 2007; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012). Being positioned in a temporary transnational community, all students delved deeply in the complexities of emotional investments of post-traumatic episodes. The forms of affective, physical and intellectual emotional investments illustrated in this section, which the students experienced as part of their journeys from 'bodily' to 'out-of-body' encounters (and vice versa) with this issue of human rights abuse, are evidence of the process. Through a discomforting pedagogy, the project allowed for a space where anger, hate, grief, frustration and fear could be expressed, and in so doing the students engaged in the first stage of restoring 'humanness', in Zembylas and Michaelidou's (2011: 254) terms, by fostering 'empathy, non-violence and social justice' as a way to heal trauma.

We should also note that sometimes the exploration of conflict that the project fostered did not lead to this restoration of humanness and forgiveness. One example comes from a group of students who were analysing a photograph of the military dictator Videla for

the bilingual leaflet they were collaboratively designing for distribution to the public. As they were preparing the leaflet, they discussed a placard message that read 'Never forget. Never forgive'. Here we see these students reflecting on how difficult it is to forgive the perpetrators of these crimes:

> ARG: So as you can see, in this collage that we made you can see pictures of... There is like... There are pictures of the World Cup, pictures showing Videla (the main dictator in 1976) saying hi to some of the football players, pictures of the stadiums and *pictures that say "Ni olvido. Ni perdón" [Never forget. Never forgive] to show that maybe, there are people who want to forget what happened, but the relatives of the victims... They just don't forget, and they don't want to forgive the people that did what they did, because they knew what was wrong.*
>
> UK: Yeah.
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 2, emphasis added)

During this Skype conversation, the students were choosing photographs of people holding placards with the message 'Ni olvido. Ni perdón' [Never forget. Never forgive] inscribed on them as indicative of the enormous challenge humanity faces in forgiving human rights abuse. While sometimes the online project contributed to alleviating the students' feelings of anger, resentment and sadness for the disappearances as a base for a new beginning, this extract illustrates that forgiveness had not yet happened for this group ('the relatives of the victims... They just don't forget, and they don't want to forgive'). However, because forgiveness is a long and hard process (Govier, 2002; Wolfendale, 2005), this is not significant. What matters is that they mobilised the necessary disrupting emotions for the process to begin.

Critical Remembering

By critical remembering, we mean examining and applying 'dangerous memories' of the past (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) to the present in the hope that the future may be transformed (Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011). It involves overcoming social and historical amnesia and distancing from pardoning, condoning, forgetting (Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011; McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000), mercy and amnesty (Govier, 1999, 2002). The students explicitly highlighted the importance of remembering the past ('to know what happened', 'to bear in mind') and also acknowledged the transformational role of memories in the reconstruction of a better future ('avoiding happening again'). In the following Skype conversation extract, the role for formal education is foregrounded in this endeavour ('teaching children', 'the topic has to be dealt within the schools').

> ARG1: I think it's important to … about this topic. *To know what happened in the past, and to avoiding happening again.*
>
> UK: Yeah, yeah, of course.
>
> ARG2: Yes, I also think that it is important *to bear in mind* how… I don't know how to say it.
>
> ARG2: I think that *we don't have to forget*, and as [ARG1] said, *it would help us to avoid to commit the same disaster again.*
>
> UK: Yeah, it would … I think *by teaching children … schools, it would like… It makes everybody aware.* So, and everybody would be really shocked by it, so.
>
> ARG2: Yes! I also think that *this topic has to be dealt within the schools*.
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 7, emphasis added)

These students valued the role of education as a way to promote a democratic culture, which for them meant not forgetting, but teaching children about human rights, raising awareness in society ('it makes everybody aware') and implementing topics such as this one in the school curriculum in order to create a solidarity bond, as a global community, with the victims so that their sense of justice and dignity can be enhanced. As one of the students explained, forgiveness does not mean forgetting ('we don't have to forget'); it means dealing with past memories so that a democratic and peaceful future can be built ('it would help us to avoid to commit the same disaster again').

As Zembylas (2013a) warns, remembrance practices and rituals in society and pedagogies in schools can become instrumental, facts-based memories of the past, or empty remembering, in which case the ghosts of the disappeared become 'spectacles'. By contrast, this project enacted a pedagogy of hauntology that 'interrupt[ed] the spectacle' (Zembylas, 2013a: 86). It did so by encouraging the students' emotional involvement with this past, their engagement with inherited stories in critical ways, for example by delving into the individual and personal cases of the disappeared. As Zembylas (2013a: 84, his emphasis) explains, 'whereas there can be reasons for disappearances under a dictatorship', i.e. instrumental, explanatory versions of history, 'there can be no reason for *this* individual's disappearance nor any understanding of why *that* family who lost a loved one experiences rage and resentment over the process of (re)conciliation in the country'. The citizenship phase of this project, during which students engaged in civic action in the community, was an opportunity to 'invit[e] spectrality' (Zembylas, 2013a: 83) into language education and one group of students decided to travel 500 km from their university in La Plata to the city of Lincoln to interview a 95-year-old man whose son had disappeared. In this way, they engaged with *this* particular disappearance and approached it in its partiality, multiperspectivity, contextuality

and historicising, or what Zembylas (2017c) refers to as critical, decolonising human rights education.

Another example of this kind of critical remembering comes from a group of Argentine students who visited the Memory Museum in La Plata, accompanied by their language teacher, and later discussed with their British peer the role of artistic forms of expression with a similar transformative power in the present.

> ARG1: We talked about *some artistic manifestations that were in honour of the missing people*.
>
> ARG2: *"El siluetazo"* for example.
>
> ARG1: We went to a museum and we really liked it what these artists did.
>
> ARG3: *Those artists painted or draw the shape of people in the street to represent the missing people*.
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 13, emphasis added)

They discussed the political movement 'el siluetazo', an artistic initiative which used silhouettes of man-sized bodies pasted on the city walls representing the disappeared during the military dictatorship ('those artists painted or draw the shape of people in the street to represent the missing people'). This form of protest was expressed by giving life and names to the bodies of the disappeared using paper shapes of passers-by in the streets ('they wrote the names of some disappeared person'), or a form of inviting spectrality through art:

> ARG3: And sometimes *they wrote the names* of some disappeared person.
>
> ARG1: So these paper shapes were all over the city. *They were demanding justice and truth and this was a different way of protest*.
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 13, emphasis added)

These students considered that remembering the past through art is 'a different way of protest' intended to 'bring awareness to what has happened' – a point made by the British

peer. The previous extract, together with the following one, provide evidence of the students taking their responsibility of humanising justice, ('they were demanding justice and truth', 'going on the streets') contributing to the collective memory ('in honour of the missing people'), and dealing with the remembrances and narratives of the painful past as a remedy for traumatic memories or, as Olick (2007:31) puts it, as soothers of the 'psychic wounds of history'. Keeping the past alive in the silhouettes is a form of inviting spectrality and living with the ghosts of the disappeared (Zembylas, 2013a) ('they didn't disappear', 'they are still present').

> ARG3: And showing that the disappeared people, *in a way they didn't disappear*.
>
> ARG2: *They are still present*.
>
> UK: It's really interesting that *still, so many years afterwards, still protest, it's very good they are still going on the streets*.
>
> ARG2: Actually *in 2010.*
>
> UK: So recently there is more and more done to talk about the history *and to bring awareness to what has happened*.
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 13, emphasis added)

The students also commented on a form of 'action-oriented empathy and solidarity' (Zembylas, 2017c:497) during the visit to the museum as some visitors offered their bodies as silhouettes, literally embodying the disappeared ('they lend their bodies'):

> ARG1: There were students from universities and even people that were passing by decided to participate and *they lend their bodies* so these artists outline their shapes.

Keeping the past alive was pervasive in the data and important for all students alike, Argentine or UK-based, in order to restore 'the humanness that is often lost in troubled societies', a key concept in forgiveness pedagogies (Zembylas & Michaelidou, 2011: 250). In the following example it is particularly important to note that the call not to forget comes from a UK student ('to remember them', 'maintains that period', 'must not be forgotten', 'should be remembered'). This group expressed:

UK: *…the website desaparecidos.com with the photos to remember them*. I think it is very important because *it maintains that period…* what was important, I mean, what was significant.

ARG: Yeah.

UK: Disappearance and tortures that happened in that period.

ARG: Yes, yes.

UK: I think that *it's the part which must not be forgotten*. While all the other circumstances, like the fact that they tried to divide everything, *should be remembered* as the government's attempt to create the mystification of the situation.

(Skype conversation, Group 23, emphasis added)

This same group later established a relationship between the dictatorship period in the 1970s and the more recent disappearance of people during democracy. They discussed the disappearance of Julio López, a witness who testified in court against the dictators of the time and disappeared abruptly soon after testifying in 2006. López had been illegally imprisoned and tortured between October 1976 and June 1979 and during the trial he provided the names

of over sixty military officers and policemen involved in torturing and killings in those times. Remembering the past acquired a strong significance for this group:

> ARG1: I think that *the fact that Julio López disappeared a few years ago, maybe that's kind of proof that it isn't over, yeah, it isn't over at all* and people are still about it.
>
> ARG2: *There are a lot of people murdering those who know things, and nobody does anything about it. It happens every day*… Mariano Ferreira and some others.
>
> ARG1: I mean it is not said aloud or in the press but I think that *inside we know that this hasn't finished and they still have, the power to make us feel like…*
>
> ARG2: *We're still repressed. Just like then, we don't have any freedom of saying anything*…so…
>
> (Skype conversation, Group 23, emphasis added)

Spectrality became present in this conversation by naming the disappeared during democracy (Julio López and Mariano Ferreira) and engaging emotionally with their inherited stories – individual, partial, contextualised, historicised. Just as spectrality became present for this group, there was no 'spectacle' (Zembylas, 2013a) because the students were not 'spectating' (Boler, 1999), i.e. they were not satisfied with voyeurism, anonymity, and passive empathy, but rather engaged in restorative justice through 'collective witnessing' (Boler, 1999; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) involving reflective participation. The students highlighted the fact that social injustice is still present ('it isn't over'; 'it happens every day'; 'this hasn't finished') whilst acknowledging a lack of action in society to stand up for humanity ('nobody does anything'; 'we're still repressed'). However, through the design of the leaflet for distribution to the public, this group engaged in 'collective witnessing'

(Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) beyond reflection by taking concrete civic action in their community. Other groups engaged in different forms of civic action for instance by talking to family and friends, interviewing neighbours, talking to passers-by in squares, giving talks and sharing posters and information with university students at the local School of Medicine, and working with student teachers at a teacher training college on how to teach this historical period with primary school students (see Porto & Byram, 2015b; Yulita & Porto, 2017).

Concluding remarks

This article shows empirically that it is possible to realise the ethical and moral duties and responsibilities of language education in higher education to contribute to the development of democratic societies based on human rights principles with forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies. This framework is totally novel in foreign language education theory and pedagogy. The Skype conversation extracts analysed here are instances of 'dialogues of witnessing' within a 'community of memory' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 147) formed by the Argentine and British students. These dialogues show 'the strong emotional investments of troubled knowledge in post-traumatic situations' and highlight the 'importance of foregrounding rather than backgrounding the complexity of difficult emotional knowledge and its pedagogical implications' (Zembylas, 2013b:176). Our intercultural citizenship project created an enabling environment on Skype in which foreign language learners addressed human rights issues in the context of the language classroom, and this is different from existing work that circumscribes this type of pedagogic work to the history, social sciences and citizenship classrooms. In our study, intercultural dialogue provided the Argentine students, who were tertiary victims, with the opportunity to bring the ghosts of the disappeared to life, emotionally engaging with their 'spectrality', and in this way delving into the 'troubled knowledge' or 'dangerous memories' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008) inherited

from the traumatised past (Jansen, 2009). At the same time, the communal and collective dimension of forgiveness (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002) invested the British students with a strong emotional engagement with this troubling past, as witnesses (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008), illustrating Osler's (2015) point that an individual case, such as the Argentine dictatorship in this instance, can become a springboard for a human rights approach in language education. Overall, this pedagogy of hauntology involved the beginning of a process of forgiveness as an empowering tool for all students.

In this article we have provided empirical evidence that contributes to an understanding of how undergraduates deal with anger, resentment, hate and unforgiveness in the context of a perturbing human rights issue in their *path* towards forgiveness. The word *path* is important because it indicates that we are dealing with a hard, painful process that may take several years (Govier, 1999, 2002; Wolfendale 2005). As Zembylas and Bekerman (2008:148) argue, forgiveness 'is not a panacea' and may eventually never happen. Equally important, this study emphasises the importance of 'acknowledging the value of disruptive and discomforting pedagogies in higher education' (Zembylas, 2017b: 40) by showing that theories of intercultural citizenship, forgiveness and discomforting pedagogies can be effectively combined in foreign language education in university settings. Furthermore, in the realisation of a pedagogy of hauntology through this project, we have been able to enact a new, critical, decolonising form of human rights education as described by Zembylas (2017c) by focusing on the contextualized, historicized, partial and subjective lived experiences of these students' encounters with spectrality, or the ghosts of the disappeared, and where the 'dangerous memories' of this past were not reproduced in detached historical knowledge, but embodied in multiple perspectives through critical emotional engagement.

Finally, addressing (post) conflict trauma through education requires a reflective, thoughtful and ethical approach to the mitigation against the perpetuation of trauma

(Zembylas, 2013a, 2015, 2017a, b,c), realised in our study at the micro level of the classroom as Zembylas and Bozalek (2017) suggest. This approach involved the ethical challenge to invite spectrality into the pedagogical intervention rather than simply 'spreading knowledge so that disappearances will not happen again' (Zembylas, 2013a: 83). The creation of safe learning environments whereby students feel able to approach their teachers with issues relating to the emotions that emerge as a result of pedagogical approaches encompassing the unavoidable 'affective impact of a traumatized past' (Zembylas, 2017: 663) become increasingly important (Zembylas, personal communication, February 2018). But while the 'encounter with this content is emotionally and conceptually unsettling' for all, it can also be healing because this affective disruption and discomfort becomes transformatory by offering repair, a sense of restorative justice and a sense of humanity in the face of death, torture and disappearance.

Acknowledgements

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