

Moving beyond (critical) reflection towards diffraction: A composting guide for world language(s) education

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v3i2.40225>

Abstract

Professional and personal obligations have required us to engage in (critical) reflection as world language educators of Spanish, German, English and Indonesia. While we have sought to engage in nuanced and insightful examples of this, we cannot help but feel that our reliance on conventional strategies for (critical) reflection do not move beyond mirroring sameness and a corrective logic. As a result, we have turned towards Donna Haraway's compost metaphor to highlight the transemiotic, technoscience and non-linguistic data that we may previously have missed. In addition, we attempt Donna Haraway and Karen Barad's diffractive methodology for exploring the potential differences in our language practices and considering why these matter as a way to move beyond conventional (critical) reflection. Drawing on social media scroll-back interviews, we explore a range of alternative data (hesitation, affect, wonder, avoidance and shame-interest) that we sensed with(in) the entangled personal-professional conversations between ourselves and our Facebook timelines. Rather than suggesting a prescriptive method(ology) moving beyond critical reflection in world language education research, we instead offer our own intra-disciplinary example as a possible, experimental guide for others working in this space.

Keywords

Compost; Haraway; Linguaging; Diffractive; Social media.

Getting started: From (Critical) Reflection towards Diffracting

As world language¹ educators (WLEs), learners and researchers, we are continually made aware of the importance of (critical) reflection/reflexivity² in relation to our own language uses, ideologies and pedagogies by professional bodies, ourselves, and colleagues as well as the literature we engage with. In fact, our respective WLE training education programs ingrained in us the need for critically reflective world language educators who have the ability to introspect, collaborate and engage in lifelong learning (Wright, 2010, p. 803). We wonder if we can move beyond (critical) reflection/reflexivity toward (critical) diffraction instead.

Recent developments in critical reflection for WLEs have attempted to operationalise the process (Farrell, 2018), and account for educator's own positionings/subjectivities (Clark et al., 2014) using collaborative methods such as mediated reflective practice (Cerecero Medina, 2018) and dialogic reflection (Swanson et al., 2019). We have found inspiration from Walsh and Mann (2015) who suggest that WLEs reflective practice begins with a specific focus, and we have found this inspiration helpful for guiding us towards an exploration of our own (in)formal languaging practices on social media. While we continue to be inspired by the increasing complexity and creativity of such approaches, we cannot help but wonder if our continued reliance on these types of (critical) reflection practices might limit our possibilities for thinking differently and beyond any current positions that underpin our roles as WLEs, entangled with our other roles as students and researchers.

We also heed the warnings about current approaches to (critical) reflection for their tendency to mirror sameness from Barad (2007) and Haraway (1997); they suggest that reflection focus on reproducing the same from a fixed position which can lead to

¹ The term *world languages* has been used throughout this paper to refer to what have also been termed *foreign languages*, *languages other than English (LOTE)*, or *second languages*. *World languages* is more commonly used in the United States and is not unproblematic itself. For some, it may evoke Anglo-centric connotation as does world music. The Australian National Curriculum uses the term *languages*, but this may cause confusion whereas *foreign languages*, *languages other than English (LOTE)*, or *second languages* have negative connotations that associate languages such as Spanish and Indonesian as outside the community and alien to Australia while also ignoring the plurilingualism of speakers. Although *world languages* is not a perfect choice as it may evoke Westernised sentiments as does world music, at the very least it recognises the spatial and cultural diversity of languages.

² We recognise that the terms reflection, critical reflection, and reflexivity are associated with their own distinct definitions. However, we also note that these terms are often used interchangeably to describe the process which is used to look back at what has been done in order to draw meaning from it (Dewey, 1938). Here, we use critical reflection given this is what has most often been used in our experiences as WLEs.

“a reductionist way of thinking” (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 111). Such a way of thinking is of particular concern for us as WLE who are interested in multilingual words, grammar, and syntax but cautious of the ways in which these can be presumed to represent thought or correspond with an identity (St. Pierre, 2000). Barad and Gandorfer (2021) also argue that language (along with time and space) is limited in its expressibility. We have certainly felt this concern when repetitiously asked to produce written reflections about our teaching practice that end up recounting what happened (often in regards to the grammar mistakes of ourselves and our students) and attempted to represent our inner thoughts in words from our own singular viewpoints; we have felt limited by our own confining capacities to open up questions beyond ourselves and our grammar-informed notion of language that did not account for affect and more-than-human entanglements. In other words, we find it difficult to think differently within the current confines of reflexive practice/(critical) reflection³. Hence, in this paper, we make an attempt to move beyond (critical) reflection when exploring our languaging practices as WLEs in Australia in the hope of generating ways of reflecting and languaging differently.

Additionally, we are wary of the representational motivations that may underpin (critical) reflection by focusing on “individual existence, independently and prior to relationality with other humans and the more-than-human” where emotions and affect are static and grounded in human subjectivity to step back from one’s experiences and use words to signify this and one’s inner thoughts (Murriss & Zhao, 2022, p. 122). Instead, we prefer many of the tenets of a nonrepresentational ontology which highlights the “be(com)ing” that already exists in relation with one another “on the ‘edge’ of awareness” and acknowledges the affective capacities generated through remembering in-between human and more-than-human phenomena (Murriss & Zhao, 2022, p. 122).

In doing so, we have turned towards diffracting (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1988, 2016) as an alternative for bringing together the multiple linguistic, semiotic, digital, material, relational, political, cultural, and affective phenomena that entangle our languaging practices. In Haraway’s (2020, p. 466) words:

³ We have used the terms reflexivity and (critical) reflection throughout in contrast to diffraction as these are the two common approaches we have been asked to engage in/with as WLEs.

Diffraction does not produce ‘the same’ displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear but rather maps where the effects of differences appear.

Importantly, we consider there to be several distinctions between (critical) reflection and diffraction (see Table 1). Namely, we see (critical) reflection as tied to the identification of one’s flaws, normally via processes such as writing, which draws on language to represent thought and identify avenues for self-improvement (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). The teleological aims of critical reflection also trouble us, and, as such, we prefer the antiteleological aims of diffraction that are open to uneasy questions and incomplete answers.

Table 1. (Critical) reflection and diffraction/diffracting

	Knowledge production encompasses	Methodologies	Aims
(Critical) reflection	Developing self-awareness of own flaws; Considering how issues of (power) constrain action (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017); Intentionally identifying and checking own assumptions (Brookfield, 2017)	“Objective” representations of one’s inner thoughts, often, using words; intervention; personal involvement in events (Ryan & Webster, 2019).	To understand and make sense of experiences; accountability for one’s actions and “take more informed actions” (Brookfield, 2017, p. 5); Transform (Liu, 2015)
Diffraction/diffracting	Mapping intersectional, critical issues from a relational and multifaceted perspective (theoretically, ontologically, methodologically) (Murriss & Zhao, 2022).	Storying as one example although no set methodological preference; free of methodology (St. Pierre, 2019b); meaning-making with more-than-human and affective phenomena; re-turning to data; co-construction (Murriss & Zhao, 2022).	<i>No set outcome</i> ; antiteleological; Focus is on asking why these issues matter from different perspectives and putting these perspectives in conversations with one another; reconfiguring, playing, troubling, questioning; comfortable with not knowing, unanswered questions and incomplete answers (Murriss & Zhao, 2022).

As such, we see diffracting in this way as a strategy for moving beyond critical reflection. Whereas reflection often requires reporting, recounting, and repeating what occurred, diffracting focuses on troubling dichotomies and binaries to reconfigure and reimagine what might be or have been with a focus on relational and multifaceted perspectives (Barad, 2014). Additionally, we have turned towards diffracting in an attempt to move beyond the “representational trap of trying to figure out what a subject really means” (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2011, p. 116).

Thus, we began wondering how we might do a diffractive analysis and if a concept/metaphor might aid us in doing so as suggested by Lenz Taguchi & St. Pierre (2017). This questioning led us towards Donna Haraway’s (2016, p. 4) *com-posting* where we saw the potential for “making oddkin⁴; we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot *com-posting* piles. We become-with each other or not at all which has led us to ask further questions such as “How, with whom and with what can we add to our *com-posting* so that they diffract, rather than reflect and reproduce the same?” and “If this is an active, ongoing, and intra-actional process, are we perhaps *com-posting*?”. We see the potential for *com-posting* as a diffractive methodology given its capacity to “dissolves (sic) even our most stubborn dichotomies” like those of human/nonhuman, representational/non-representational and mind/reason (Bozalek et al., 2021, p. 115). *Com-posting* could also be considered a particular way of diffracting and mapping the interference of difference through the embodied processes of turning and (re)turning data, methodologies, and concepts.

Simultaneously, we are cognizant of the many complexities for *com-posting* with given the potential for so many oddkin; limitations, such as ingrained ontological and epistemological hierarchies preferencing conventional humanist methodologies, simmer beneath our exploration of diffractive phenomena/oddkin (St. Pierre, 2019b). These limitations are extended further into unfamiliar terrain given the social distancing restrictions and school closures currently surrounding us due to COVID-19 in Australia. This clearly presents added layers of complexity for doing research in this way but rather than succumb to these troubles, we have chosen to engage with our

⁴ Haraway (2016, p.3) describes oddkin as “situated technical project and their people” which we consider to include social media and one another in this project. She further argues that “making oddkin” requires trust, (re)imagination and a commitment to “stay with the trouble” of unclear, uncomfortable and impatient calls that the “game is over” and instead come together in unexpected collaboration and combinations (p.4).

response-abilities: our capacity to respond to those oddkin we are *able* to work with during this time and in this space. We consider those oddkin to include each other as WLEs of different languages (Spanish and Indonesian), social media and new materialist theories that incorporate a vast array of alternative data attempting com-posting as a conceptually guided method (Lenz Taguchi & St. Pierre, 2017). We combine social media posts and post-paradigm inspired diffractive analysis as a way to (re)imagine the doing of educational and linguistic research.

Layering a diffractive com-posting pile: Suggested matter for WLEs

The unfinished Chthulucene must collect up the trash of the Anthropocene, the exterminism of the Capitalocene, and chipping and shredding and layering like a mad gardener, make a much hotter com-posting pile for still possible pasts, presents, and futures (Haraway, 2016, p.57).

Critical theory: New materialism

In this paper, we consider an essential layer of a diffractive com-posting inquiry to be a possible approach for “adding affirmatively to what is always already there because texts are porous and without boundaries” (Bozalek & Murriss, 2022, p. 55). Although a number of approaches could be applied, a new materialist approach inspired by scholars who have chipped away at the humanist tradition that dominates conventional research practice has resonated with us. New materialist scholars assert that humanist conventional paradigms in qualitative research continue to promote essentialism and binaries, and, thus, are not adequate for interrogating the world (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2013). Instead, they argue in favour of a new relational ontology that “rejects representational and power-producing binaries such as language/world, symbolic/reality, culture/nature” grounded in relations and the in-between (Murriss, 2021, p. 7); this relational ontology also troubles the idea that “pre-existing, separately determinate entities of one kind or another that exist prior to the relations they are part of” (Murriss, 2021, p. 8).

Our preferred blend of new materialism has relational roots/routes stemming from the feminist philosophy of Donna Haraway (2016) and her *com-posting* theory. Extending on Karen Barad's (2007) conception of ethico-onto-epistemology, Haraway (2016) advocates response-ability, which she defines response-ability as "rendering capable" through becoming-with in multispecies collaborations (Haraway, 2016, p.16). She urges us to also seek out cyborg littermates with which/whom to make oddkin, which we interpret as a call to incorporate alternative non-human, more-than-human and digital phenomena into our research as a challenge to the humanist tradition problematised by new materialist scholars.

The concept of new materialism inspires us, as WLEs, to start to think differently in an attempt to disrupt the hierarchisation of language and languaging practices, including those forming part of our personal/professional response-ability for critical reflection. Thus, we have also sought to move beyond (critical) reflection and have been inspired by recent work turning towards diffraction (e.g. Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017; Gurney & Demuro, 2019; Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Mackinlay, 2016; Mitchell, 2017; Murriss & Bozalek, 2019).

Tech-tacular ones

Making a diffractive *com-post* pile for exploring "possible pasts, presents and futures" (Haraway, 2016, p.57) of our languaging practices requires tentacularity: entanglements with beings, or tentacular ones, be they human, or non-human: animal, technological, digital. However, the availability and accessibility to such tentacular ones for our project were bound by social distancing protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of this project occurred during discussions from our respective homes where we sat using Facebook Messenger chat. Thus, it soon became clear that now more than ever, technological entanglements through social media play a significant role in our globalised world becoming entangled with our everyday and professional lives (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Mercieca & Kelly, 2018). As such, our notion of *com-posting* includes past/present/future social media posts as examples of the more-than-human whilst also seeking to entangle different colleagues – in our case teachers of languages other than those we teach – in a cycle of collaboration, diffraction and becoming-with.

We noted the relevance of social media given the ways in which it blurs the boundary between personal and professional (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). The rise in legislation and professional codes of conduct regulating teachers' use of social media has contributed to the perception of teachers' social media use and education as something unprofessional and morally objectionable (O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015) - positioning social media in educational research as exactly the type of taboo-oddkin new materialist approaches turn towards. Moreover, the conceptualisation of language use on social media as "informal" (Godwin-Jones, 2018) has further marginalised online languaging practices, thus, playing into the notion that WLEs' social media languaging practices are invalid and inappropriate for school and research. We, therefore, hope to blur the lines between personal and professional languaging practices of WLEs through our attempts to explore our own Facebook timelines and underexplored personal, private lives (Krutka and Carano, 2017).

We also recognise the need to pay attention to motivations for exploring WLEs social media driven by personal and public policy. For example, the National Curricula for Languages in Australia encourages students and educators to understand, analyse, correspond, present, and compose texts using social media (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, 2020a, 2020b) meaning we have a professional response-ability to understand our own personal social media languaging practices. I, Danielle Heinrichs, as a third-generation German/Spanish heritage speaker, have come to realise the importance of social media for enacting languaging practices when geographically isolated from Spanish and German-speaking friends and family. I, Dewi Andriani, am a transnational Minangkabau/ Indonesian speaker, who migrated to Australia about 15 years ago. For me, social media is one avenue to interact with friends in the same space and to reach out to relatives/friends in other times/spaces to maintain an attachment with my homeland using multiple languages. Accessing our social media account also affords us a diffracted temporal experience: we wrote the posts in past moments unaware of their potential use in our research, and they also extend back further and deeper than our own memories including details of time, date, and location we have long forgotten.

We were also interested in social media as languaging is done differently in this virtual space (García, 2018; Seargeant & Tagg, 2014). By different, we mean beyond modes,

modalities and actors encompassed in conventional humanist research produced by human subjects, conveyed using named languages and limited to speaking and writing. As WLEs, languaging practices not commonly taught, nor held in high esteem, in the Australian National Curriculum for languages, textbooks or by international regulatory bodies are also those that we consider beyond conventional research. The inclusion of our own social media is also driven by the vast amount of time we spend there using multiple languaging practices in ways we do not in other areas of our lives e.g. offline, in the workplace or monolingual settings. We also both admit to being heavy users of social media and self-conscious about the ways we have used language there. Thus, we consider digging into our social media posts an opportunity for becoming-with the type of material semiotics that is “always situated, someplace and not noplacement, entangled and world. Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience (Haraway, 2016, p.4).

Alternative data / Compostable droppings

Continuing the layer of our diffractive composting pile as WLEs also requires us to rethink the types of data, or what Haraway (2016, p.28) may refer to as “compostable droppings”, we entangle ourselves with(in). We advocate for researchers to entangle themselves with(in) these alternative data from their sources as part of a diffractive composting inquiry in order to question “what counts as ‘data’” (Benozzo & Gherardi, 2019, p. 45) and focus less on “what is and more on...what might be and what is coming into being” (St. Pierre, 2019b, p. 4). We take the view that data are not out there, waiting to be discovered during research, but instead generated through/with/in research and relationality, such messiness becomes data (Benozzo & Gherardi, 2019).

Although it is impossible to name and list the specific types of alternative data, we might be sensitive to through a diffractive composting analysis, we have found it helpful to refer to the prior research for inspiration and examples. Some of the earliest work in this regard relates to what St. Pierre (1997) to as “transgressive data”; she identifies these as: emotional data, dream data, sensual data and response data and explains how they are out-of-category in that they move beyond words and/or language. More recently, scholars have added further suggestions to the pool of potential alternative data with similarly, more-than-language compostable qualities.

Benozzo and Gherardi (2019) conceptualise “not-yet” data as those which appear in the shadows of research and may be described as illegible, wonderous, disorienting, hesitant and worn out.

These are but a few examples of potential “compostable droppings” available that we propose for diffracting rather than only (critically) reflecting by attempting to map the effects of interferences between language, technology, WLEs and their affective responses. Hence, we suggest that dropping ‘not-yet’, shadow, affective, and troubling data is vital for layering a diffractive composting pile for WLEs that takes stock of multiple, entangled data.

Intra-disciplinary colleague(s)

As we layered our diffractive composting pile together, we were struck by the generative effects/affects of working with each other as intra-disciplinary colleagues. What we mean is that we have come together/apart as world language educators who teach/learn different named languages. This is opposed to the trend in (critical) reflection for WLE to group teachers by named language or to pair them with colleagues from completely different disciplines such as biology, physical education, or food technology. Given that, I, Danielle have spent 13 years studying Spanish and German and grew up speaking English whereas, I, Dewi have spent years learning English since high school, grew up speaking Minangkabau and teaching Indonesian in Australia, we consider our working together an intra-disciplinary pairing. Moreover, the feedback, insights and (re)turning of the ideas and concepts here have been further diffracted through the review process; therefore, we also suggest that anonymous colleagues (re)turning each other’s work might offer an additional layer of nuance to a com-posting approach. In doing so, we also argue that there is further potential for diffractive composting due to (mis)understandings, (dis)comfort and troubling affects when accompanied by a genuine intrigue to map the effects of the differences between our languaging practices and ask why these matter.

An experimental guide for diffracting the com-posting pile for WLEs

Making a diffractive *composting* pile with our suggested matter also warrants consideration of how to do so. We began with curiosity, seeking a method that would invite alternative data/compostable droppings whilst also allowing us to consider the effects of differences between our languaging practices and the past/present/future phenomena entangled with them. As a result, we turned towards social media scroll-back interviews (SMBIs) based on a novel method developed by Robards and Lincoln (2019). They describe SMSBIs method as a form of longitudinal narrative research involving a combination of in-depth interview and scrolling back through the interviewee's social media. Through the combination of interview and the scroll-back, we hoped to bring to life the digital traces and context of our languaging practices (Robards & Lincoln, 2019). We chose to use our Facebook timelines and asked each other to highlight examples of what we considered to be response-able languaging practices by drawing. Hence, we used scroll-back method in combination with an interview whereby we each took turns scrolling back through our Facebook timelines and pausing on examples of posts we considered illustrative of response-able languaging practices. At times we prompted one another for further details in the form of questions, and verbal and non-verbal reactions, but importantly, the interviewee maintained control of the scrolling. To avoid issues tied to institutional ethics such as privacy and consent, we opted to record audio-only rather than video record the screens due to the plethora of names and details of others that would have been difficult to remove/redact. Post-interview, we returned to our separate desks on levels 5 and 6 of our building to transcribe our conversations. After doing so, we sat with the transcripts, letting them sink in, turn, and break down before recompiling our initial scroll-back interviews through additional face-to-face and online conversations in which we explored the phenomena generated from this process focusing on the alternative data/compostable dropping, and asked why these matter for languaging and for WLE in Australia.

Turning (in)to a diffractive com-posting analysis

Drops of wonder

Dewi and I began scrolling through our Facebook posts looking for examples of what we considered response-able languaging. I stopped scrolling on a post containing a video I had shared from a popular Facebook page named *We are mitú* which is a community that describes itself as “100% American and 100% Latino...committed to creating authentic, culturally relevant stories” (We are mitú, 2020). I began by describing the video “Um...so this [post] is talking about Taíno culture which is one of the Indigenous cultures from Latin America yep...I think it’s in Spanish from memory and it’s talking about some of the words that come from Taíno that we still use today in Spanish” hoping to play the video and perhaps analyse the words we saw and heard as examples of cross-cultural linguistics and the concept of Spanish(es). Yet Dewi uprooted us from my planned path of conversation for this post by wondering aloud “What is Taíno?”. MacLure (2013) suggests that wonder presents an untapped potential in qualitative research data for disorienting the entanglement of data-researcher; we further suggested that viewing wonder as an act of affirmative engagement that transcends individuals might also constitute diffraction as opposed to the focus of critical reflection of affect as individuals' emotions and feelings to be neutralised. This was the case as our conversation continued in another direction with a discussion of which languages were used in South America – Dewi wondered more out loud about the linguistic genealogy of Latin America “The national language is Spanish?”, “Some dialects?” which I responded to with *post*, relaying titbits about Quechua, Mapuche and English in the Latin American context. All the while we both glanced back at the now still video showing a Taíno woman in traditional dress and holding a traditional instrument. I too felt Dewi’s curiosity about this post having devoted many years to Latin American studies and being the one to initially share it. At this point, I am reminded again by MacLure (2013) of the way in which wonder is relational and can be thought of as mutual affection brought about by virtual and actual “intra-action” (Barad, 2007). Yet we never know where this wonder originates from nor to whom it belongs (Maclure, 2013). Thus, we consider this affective intra-action brought about while wondering about language histories shared through Facebook posts as an example of *com-posting*. Dewi’s wonder (re)oriented our

conversation, or in other words, turned the com-*posting* by wondering about the social media *post* I had shared; this affected the pace and rhythm of our conversation as I responded with *post* and generated the possibility of a conversation about language without talking about linguistics. Upon (re)reading this part of our scroll-back conversation, we are struck by our response-ability to engage in wonder and curiosity to tell the stories of our social media posts including more-than linguistic features of languaging, or in Haraway's (2016, p.39) words "multimodal semiotics". Through such affective storytelling, Haraway (2016, p.150) argues that com-postists are able to think-with one another – human and nonhuman - as a powerful practice for "comforting, inspiring, remembering, warning, nurturing, compassion, mourning and becoming-with"; we see affective storytelling in stark contrast to the ethics underpinning critical reflection whereby one must control their emotions in order to accurately represent the world (Murriss & Zhao, 2022). This inspires us to move beyond stereotypical conversations with intra-disciplinary colleagues about the linguistic features of one language or another and to instead wonder (or invite others to wonder) "Where did/do our languaging practices come from?", "Why do they matter?" and "What stories do they/we tell?" We also suggest that the practice of wonder and affective storytelling might offer WLEs a strategy for diffraction as an alternative to reflection by (be)coming into conversation with one another and social media data through wonder, and curiosity.

#first drops of shame-interest

Scrolling through my Facebook timeline, the first post that appeared showed photos of a fundraising dinner in which I had been tagged by an Indonesian friend who had written the post in English as she has lived in Australia for quite a while. It was not a surprise reading my Indonesian friends' posts in English, especially posts from those who had lived outside the country or were majoring in English at university. However, while scrolling through some of their posts, I sensed a feeling of shame from inside of me after I spotted errors and subsequently found myself interested in mentioning these to Danielle. But before doing so, I paused, wondering why I felt this shame-interest (Mayes & Wolfe, 2018) all at once, unsure of whether to delve into this example or not. I reconciled that such a feeling may have been triggered by my perception of

an imbalance in power relations between English native speakers and non-native speakers (Holliday, 2006), and also between the researched and the researcher. Entangled (in)between these roles, I remained stuck for a moment with this shame-interest, conscious of the ethical issues associated with exploring shameful topics such as error-making for several reasons. How might acknowledgement of my own shame in taking interest in the errors of a non-native speaker affect Danielle, our readers, and students? Would my shame-interest, in its contagiousness (Wolfe & Mayes, 2018), reinforce language hierarchies and binaries even though I simultaneously hoped to dismantle these in my own classroom and praxis? Eventually, my interest won, and I described this post, the errors, and my own shame in doing so with Danielle. She responded with sympathy and an anecdote of having been in a similar position herself a non-native speaker of Spanish/German leading us to point out how problematic the sustained practice of error correction can be. As such, our conversations about these posts allowed us to take stock of the ways in which colonial linguistics mandating a corrective logic and perfectionism (Makoni, 2013) pervaded our innermost thoughts and everyday languaging practices despite our personal/professional advocacy of more open and creative practices such as translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2013) and transemioticizing (Lin, 2015). Was this messy shame something that would forever stick, or could it be then, as Mayes and Wolfe (2018, p.3) contend that, our performativity of shame is “not fundamental to identity, but relational and contextual”? I came to see how our collective interest in shame may not generate only negative emotions but productive encounters to question language hierarchies whilst also disrupting traditional research practices which exclude affect; here we draw on the understanding of affect as “the capacity to affect and be affected” (Mayes & Wolfe, 2018, p.2). In this sense, I consider it a response-ability as a world language educator to invite shame-interest into conversation as part of the material-semiotic composting Danielle and I hope to evoke. Further, we see this example of relationality that generates messy, sticky affects that we explore through speculative questioning as aligned with our diffractive com-posting and different from critical reflection which aims to offer certainty and accuracy through clearly defined next steps and solutions.

Drops of agency and avoidance

(Re)turning to my timeline, I continued scrolling past the error-filled, fundraising post though. Yet, once again, I felt my shame (re)merge although in a different form as I tried to maintain the newfound agency I was afforded as I controlled the mouse, something less commonly afforded to those classed as the participant/researcher. As I scrolled back, I found myself actively avoiding particular posts I considered shameful, feeling content with this avoidance supporting my sense of agency. On the one hand, the potential for me to do this speaks to the traditional notion of agency associated with human intentionality (Barad, 2007). On the other hand, the social media and position of the researcher also hinted at their own nuanced forms of agency in response to mine. Danielle, who was positioned as a researcher as I scrolled, had more power to chase the matter that she wanted to know as she too could see the languaging practices on my timeline. Initially, I attempted to avoid some of Danielle's questions about posts I would have preferred to avoid. Avoidance was a strategy to avoid being humiliated over posts where I'd seen errors in using the language myself. Yet she unassumingly asked me to go back, and that was when my face began to burn, and I sensed my discomfort. As I could not escape being caught in the matter on my timeline that Danielle was interested in, I eventually confronted my errors. I explained to Danielle, "I am a language teacher, I tend to find the errors in the writing... That's why I am afraid to post something because I am worried people would judge me from the language I used". I admitted that I was afraid to post in English as it is not my first language. Danielle might not have focused on the errors, but I did. I further explained that even though they are considered informal non-academic texts, I carefully checked the spelling, expressions, and grammar, especially when communicating in a language, again, because I was writing in a language that was not my native language. I would make sure there were no mistakes in terms of spelling and grammar. I sometimes spotted errors after I posted something, and I would edit them away. I found myself wondering why I made these corrections as I scrolled back through my timeline. I asked myself whether this was a good thing or a bad thing, and why it might matter either way. For me, making a mistake in a language that is not my native language incites feelings of shame when I am interrupted from avoiding them, but I consider this to be in ways that are relational, generative, performative, ethical

and contextual (Mayes & Wolfe, 2018) as, during the interview, they were visible for Danielle to question. Thus, Danielle and the cyborgian, digital medium of social media interrupted my agency of avoidance. This has led us to understand avoidance as a form of agency but to reconceptualise agency in line with Barad's (2007) understanding of agency not as foreclosed, but rather as the ongoing (re)configuring in material-discursive intra-actions that extend beyond human to the nonhuman as well. I further wonder if this fear of making errors and the agency of avoidance that is affected by this becomes a source of alternative data/ compostable droppings.

When (re)considering my avoidance and shame around my languaging in my social media posts, I become less concerned with whether or not this is a good or bad thing and instead begin thinking about what the avoidance and shame might do. Like Ahmed (2014), Mayes and Wolfe (2018) further point out that shame is not only a negative affect but that it also produces action. I noted this as during the scroll-back interview, things that I initially tried to avoid, became matters we talked about intensely. In addition, the relationships between researcher and researched, between native speaker and non-native speaker were entangled in the matters of avoidance and shame-interest disrupting traditional notions of agency as an individual property. In other words, avoidance and shame-interest (re)generative of agency that is active rather than inactive in that shame is relational-by generating the feelings of discomfort in others as well as avoidance as it did when I attempted to sidestep Danielle's question in our scroll-back interview. Perhaps in seeking strategies to avoid being humiliated, we may afford all phenomena agentic intra-action and diverge from the representational ethics of critical reflection that sees only humans having the capability to "choose to avoid harm and be virtuous" (Murriss & Zhao, 2022, p. 93).

Drop #round2 into shame-interest

Reading over Dewi's first example I am rather embarrassed to admit my intrigue in the shame she describes as I can sense in myself a shameful tinge of *Schadenfreude* as it is for once not me making mistakes in another language nor attempting to challenge monolanguaging norms that prevail even within our own language classrooms. Yet it is this type of interest in shame (shame-interest) that Mayes and Wolf (2018) describe as an ethical response-ability in educational research. They consider shame-interest

essential for moving beyond (critical) reflection for the ways in which it invites relationality, vulnerability, and attunement to faltering power relations. So rather than filling in the deep hole of my shame-interest, I am sticking with the troubling possibility for Dewi's shame and the affirmative possibilities my shame-interest in it might evoke (Mayes & Wolfe, 2018). Thus, I have been left wondering if I too have performed shame in our social media scroll-back interview about response-able languaging practice, and if so how and why does this matter. Digging through the interview transcript once again I was taken by a shame-interest-generating example as I recalled stopping on a post with a music video of a German-Colombian-Polish band named *Culcha Candela* whose music is a blend of Berlin-house and reggaeton. "There's this band here -they were um...*Culcha Candela*, They're...I think they are Latin American, but they live in Germany, and they sing in German, and they put a bit of Spanish into their music". I had selected this post for the ways in which the band used translanguaging strategies in their songs, and for the ways in which I identified with them as members of youth culture, non-native speakers of various languages and lovers of reggaeton. Later in our interview, we stopped on another post with a photo I had taken of Paula Rivera-Rideau's (2015) book *Remixing Reggaetón* and commented "And then I've got this book that was so hard to track down. *Remixing reggaetón*". "Reggaeton gets a pretty bad name" I clarified. At the time, I hadn't noticed the entanglements of these two posts and my subsequent comments as they were spatially separated by pages of transcripts and temporally separated by years of other Facebook posts. As I sit in the shadow of shame-interest, slowly mulling over the meaning of this temporally/spatially in-between, I am finding it hard to resist the urge to turn this into some kind of data albeit I am not sure what. Whilst *Sehnsucht* (German for a yearning for ideal, alternative experiences) seems an apt description of the affective response generated by my shame-interest in reggaeton, it doesn't quite capture the complexities and nuance of heritage language speaker identity politics I know lay beneath this (Little, 2020). Benozzo & Gherardi (2019, p.149) describe this affective response as part of the "zone of indeterminacy before the 'data' get formed, i.e. in that area of not-yet-data". Drawing on Manning (2016), they emphasise the possibility for affective not-yet-data to produce "different conditions in which subjectivity can be revealed and knowledge can be produced" through the process of slowing down both acting and interpretation (Benozzo & Gherardi, 2019, p. 149). Discussing this example in

conversation with Dewi whilst scrolling back through my Facebook timeline, I had the opportunity to slow down and wait for the affective 'not-yet' data to become. It has now been 7 months since our initial conversation, and we have yet to determine exactly what this data may be. "Perhaps it is precisely in the realm of play, outside the dictates of teleology, settled categories, and function, that serious worldliness and recuperation become possible" (Haraway, 2016, p.23). Thus, we suggest that staying with the trouble of this unknowing is another phenomenon generated by our scroll-back interviews conducive to a diffractive composting pile by virtue of its anti-teleological intra-actions.

Food for thought

In conversation with one another through our social media timelines, we have sought to move beyond the sameness mirrored in past (critical) reflective practices for WLEs through our experimental composting methodology that is continually be(com)ing. Throughout the *com-posting* process, we visited and revisited posts on our timelines to ask ourselves what constitutes response-able language practices in an attempt to diffract our ways of thinking with/of/about this. Rather than seek out themes, we instead chose to focus on those differences that mattered, particularly the alternative data/compostable droppings we saw as fruitful seeds germinating affective, embodied responses. We acknowledge then, that our example is only that, an example. Rather than leave WLEs with a prescriptive guide for doing/thinking up their own diffractive composting piles, we hope our example plants the seeds of future work in this space through the following questions: What other concepts as method might generate diffractive practice beyond (critical) reflection for WLEs? How might we (re)imagine data and language outside the constraints of teleological categorisations for diffractive composting? Who/what else might we invite into conversation for more fruitful WLE diffractive composting? We suggest that turning towards increasingly popular yet disregarded social media platforms such as TikTok might be a starting point here especially given the recent work showing its relevance for language learning (Lee, 2022). We also suggest that "unthinkable" methodologies that draw on different "worlds, people, data, analytical tools, interpretations, practices, and settings...in new, unpredictable and constantly changing ways in senses,

experiences, discourses, images, and texts” might provide fruitful sources for further diffractive composting (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 68). We also encourage future research to (re)imagine, generate, and play with alternative affects that are perhaps yet unfelt/unknown/unnamed but move beyond the commonly noted psychologised affects noted in current language education research such as foreign language anxiety.

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