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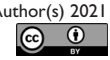

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Abstract

This article is structured around four questions related to the arts, language and intercultural education. Are the claims for the value of the arts over-stated? Does the use of the arts in the service of non-art outcomes run the risk of distorting the art form itself? Is there a danger that incorporating the arts in language education will distract from its central purpose? Are there any risks in employing the arts to support the teaching of interculturalism? These questions are used as a focus for discussing theoretical perspectives in the arts, including justifying the arts, theories of art, the importance of form, the concept of 'aesthetic experience', 'learning in' and 'learning through' the arts. These issues are examined in order to illuminate practical implications related to the use of the arts in the context of language and intercultural education. The article highlights the way in which theoretical perspectives can help widen pedagogic horizons.

Keywords

aesthetics, arts, intercultural, language, Wittgenstein

I Introduction

This article will consider whether the arts, as well as theoretical perspectives in the field of arts education, have a contribution to make to language learning, intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue. The aims of language teaching have broadened over the years from a narrow emphasis on functional goals to the inclusion of the development of intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship. This widening of perspective has been paralleled by an increased interest in the use of the arts in the teaching of language and interculturalism. The relevant theoretical issues that will be addressed in this article will be considered in relation to four questions. Are the claims for the value of the arts overstated? Does the use of the arts in the service of non-art outcomes run the risk of distorting the art form itself? Is there a danger that incorporating the arts in language education

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will distract from its central purpose? Are there any risks in employing the arts to support the teaching of interculturalism? Questions of this kind are useful because they can bring conceptual clarity to the fog that can arise when making the case for the value of arts in education. The positive enthusiasm that motivates arts advocacy is not always matched by sufficient lucidity about aims and competing priorities.

II The value of the arts

The first question asks whether the claims for the value of the arts are overstated. A cursory glance on the internet reveals claims that the arts in education, amongst many other outcomes, can improve problem solving, resilience, well-being, teamwork, confidence, school attendance, emotional intelligence, success in life, and performance in academic subjects. More specifically, in the context of language and intercultural education, it is claimed the arts can strengthen motivation, create enjoyment, develop vocabulary, increase knowledge of other cultures, enable freedom of expression, promote peace and create harmony. The intention here is not to question the truth of these claims but to ask whether such over-generalizing can become counter-productive, lacking in sufficient focus to inform practice in the classroom. For example, it is often more appropriate to consider the impact of specific art forms (drama, dance, music, visual art) rather than formulate justifications based on the generic term 'art'.

Wittgenstein (1958, p. 17) used the phrase 'craving for generality' to identify a common source of philosophical confusion. The 'craving' in question refers to the tendency to assume that a term such as 'art' refers to the same entity across all uses. The term 'craving' with its connotations of a deep-seated urge is well chosen because the inclination to generalize can be seen as both natural and necessary; without this ability we would struggle to understand, theorize or to communicate. But the word 'craving' also suggests that this process can get out of hand, when the formation of generalized rules and a 'contemptuous attitude towards the particular cases' takes thinking in the wrong direction (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 18). In the case of the arts, a craving for generality can be seen in the attempt to formulate explanatory theories. The problem here is not in theorizing but in the attempt to provide a theory, a definitive account of the arts that draws narrow, restrictive boundaries to form definitions. Attempts to offer this kind of precision are invariably found wanting, as will be illustrated in the following brief description of some key theories.

The theory of form argued that the defining characteristic of art was 'significant form' (lines, shapes, colours, rhythms, etc.) that could evoke emotional response. This view had its origins in the thinking of Kant (1928) but was given its main formulation by Bell in 1913. The theory designated art appreciation as the rarefied contemplation of form and was thought to have separated art too much from life's mainstream. It was therefore short-lived. In contrast, the theory of self-expression – often associated with Tolstoy (1995) – still has resonance in education. In its most extreme formulation it claims that artists in the act of creation pour forth emotion into a work in order to evoke a similar response in the percipient. The criticisms of this view were wide-ranging, and included the observation that many artists do not attest to such emotional perturbation in the act of creation (Lyas, 1997, p. 59). More nuanced theories of expression (e.g. Collingwood,

1938; Croce, 1992) rejected this view of the creative process but were still criticized because they tended to focus too much on inner experiences when providing accounts of art. Representation theories (that art's main defining characteristic is that it reflects reality) went out of favour with the advent of modern visual art, and in any case did not give a satisfactory account of all the art forms, not least music. Aesthetic attitude theories (that focused on the way art is perceived or contemplated) directed attention to the audience or spectator as opposed to the art object or artist, but the attempt to describe a distinct kind of attitude which demarcates the aesthetic from other types of experience was not convincing (Stolnitz, 1969). Institutional theories suggested that a work can be classified as art if a group of informed people confer the status of art upon it but were criticized as being circular (Danto, 2004; Dickie, 1983).

This very brief summary does not do justice to the more subtle arguments, claims and counter-claims associated with each theory but is enough to point the way forward, that the resolution of the challenge is not in uncovering the correct theory but rather in abandoning the search. The process of evaluating theories in order to choose the most persuasive is deeply embedded in academic discourse and higher education teaching (despite lip-service to postmodernism), but forsaking this craving can be liberating. In aesthetic theory it means that all of the theoretical positions, instead of being rejected in the pursuit of a more convincing idea, can be used to illuminate understanding. In the context of education, teachers who were inclined to turn literature lessons into a form of social studies to discuss issues needed a reminder of the importance of form to balance the preoccupation with content; the concept of 'aesthetic attitude' can highlight the importance of responding to art as a teaching objective to balance the emphasis on making art; theories of representation can help explain the power of an art form like drama but when their limitations are realized can lead the way to teaching methods that use imaginative, non-naturalistic approaches. Abandoning the search for a theory also means that 'art' can be seen as an open concept that changes across contexts and through history (Weitz, 2004). The 'open' view of art paves the way for eroding the distinction between high and low art, and admits of new, hybrid art forms brought by the advance of new technologies. The less dogmatic approach also helps the realization that explanations of art that claim to be universal are often western and Eurocentric.

Kuwor (2017) provides a detailed description of the Agbadza dance from the south-east corner of Ghana, with its structure ('preparation', 'main motion' and 'climax', each with different meanings and significance), intricate series of movements, use of varied and specialized drums, and educative songs addressing social issues in the community. He also draws attention to the holistic nature of the dance and its centrality in the community life. The climax movement of the dance, 'represents kinaesthesia as an effective tool in resolving disputes in the society' (Kuwor, 2017, p. 50). The article makes the telling point that early colonizers and anthropologists significantly misunderstood African dance, using as they did the wrong lens through which to view it. Examples of this kind provide further evidence of the limitations of individual theories of art when they aim to provide universal explanations.

In the context of language and intercultural education, therefore, it is often more helpful to look at justification in relation to different art forms and specific contexts. That does not mean abandoning any generic talk of 'art' at all (for that, in itself, would be

tantamount to trying to posit a 'correct' theory) but to be aware of the dangers of over-generalizing. That is why small-scale empirical research projects are valuable because they highlight particular cases and contexts. Such projects are often accompanied by disclaimers that the results are not 'generalizable', but one of the strengths of this kind of research lies precisely in the fact that it deals in specific instances, and is alert to the influence of context. It is also important that practices in arts education are not immune to criticism, and are subject to scrutiny through empirical enquiry; generalized claims about the value of 'creativity' and 'imagination' can be used as a form of protective cover, insulating poor processes and outcomes against criticism.

Focusing on specific art forms is not the only way to break down generalized claims into more pedagogically useful categories. The distinction between 'surface' and 'depth' can also help (Shusterman, 2002). The word 'surface' refers to 'impassioned immediacy of experience' that is often associated with encounters with art, and when applied to arts in education highlights that learning can be made more intense and immediate when the arts are employed in the learning process. The use of the arts may bring pleasure and enjoyment through heightened sensation that increases the motivation and commitment of the learners. The concept of 'depth' looks beyond experiential immediacy to embrace outcomes more associated with meaning and context. It acknowledges that cognition is invariably highly embodied and sees the need to integrate understanding, feeling and social engagement. It reinforces a more holistic view of learning that acknowledges the importance of bodily interaction. The use of the term 'surface' is not meant to imply 'superficial' or 'unimportant'. All teachers will attest to the value of alighting on forms of pedagogy that bring enjoyment to the classroom. However such outcomes may be better seen as contingent benefits of the activities rather than intentional teaching aims that are more integral to the process. This kind of distinction can help to inform practical teaching. For example, the use of drama in the language classroom may be fun but when employed in its richest forms beyond simple role play it can help learners understand that language can conceal as well as reveal meaning. The use of visual art may be motivating but can also enrich learners' experiences of language when it is seen as more than just an embellishment but as a way of reinterpreting language by making new connections and noticing differences.

In answer to the first question then, claims for the value of the arts can be over-stated. This is understandable given the powerful impact that the arts can have in education. The tendency to over-state the case for the arts tends to happen when a craving for generality shifts attention too much away from particular cases and contexts. That is not say that generalized statements about the arts should be outlawed, nor it is an attempt to censor claims about the arts that, in the right context, may be appropriate. The point is rather to highlight ways in which over-stated, generalized claims can have negative consequences and limit horizons. From a tactical perspective, arts advocacy can become counter-productive if the claims are seen to be overblown. More significantly, from a classroom perspective, over-generalized claims can reduce discrimination and criticality. A more focused conception of the value of particular art forms and activities can lead to better understanding of their potential, and result in more purposeful teaching.

III The arts and aesthetic experience

Does the use of the arts in the service of non-art outcomes run the risk of distorting the art form itself? This question may appear to be only of interest to researchers and teachers of the arts as subjects in their own right. After all, if the arts are a useful pedagogical tool that has the potential to enhance learning in a subject, it may not matter to language teachers whether the art form is distorted in the process. It will be argued however that this is a short-sighted view, that a closer consideration of how the art form might be affected has the potential to strengthen teaching.

The view that arts should be celebrated for their intrinsic worth and not used in an instrumental or functional way to teach other subjects draws on both practical and theoretical perspectives. The practical arguments have a strategic dimension. If the arts are incorporated into other subjects in the curriculum there may be a danger of weakening the case for separate arts provision. This was an argument advanced by Hornbrook (1989, p. 41) against exponents of 'learning through drama'. There is also the view that the arts should be taught by specialist teachers; to assume that a teacher of any subject can incorporate the arts successfully into their teaching may be to devalue the art form. Furthermore, employing the arts in the service of other subjects may imply that some subjects are more worthwhile than others. A number of such arguments against what has been called the 'learning through' approach arise from an understandable insecurity about the status of the arts in education. A complementary set of arguments has been used to advance the case against learning through by arguing in favour of learning in the arts, i.e. the arts should be taught for their own intrinsic worth and not to fulfil extrinsic aims.

The case for learning in can been associated with the 'art for art's sake' movement that arose in the 19th century. This view sought to separate art from moral, political and social concerns and in turn can be traced back to theories that were advanced in the 18th century when the term 'aesthetic' was first used (Osborne, 1968, p. 100). This perspective viewed the appreciation of art as the disinterested contemplation of form and consigned art to a separate realm where it was cut off from life's mainstream. Described in this way the theory can seem very old-fashioned and irrelevant to modern concerns, fostering as it did elitist notions that set art on a remote pedestal (Dewey, 2005, p. 4). In the context of education, a more inclusive conception of art, as opposed to this separatist view, is more likely to accept the integration of arts into the wider curriculum.

How is this interpretation relevant to classroom teaching? The separatist account, for all its limitations and seeming irrelevance to contemporary life, because it derived from formalist theories, is nevertheless a valuable reminder of the importance of form in relation to aesthetic experience. The significance of form can be easily diminished when the arts are employed to further non-art outcomes, and this can happen when the concept of 'aesthetic experience' is used in a limited way. Trying to define precisely what aesthetic experience is (as with concepts such as 'art', 'creativity' and 'culture') can easily induce 'mental cramp' (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 1). It can be more informative to look at the fluid nature of the term and see that it leans in different directions (Shusterman, 2008). The concept works both 'inwardly' in the sense that it refers to feelings, sensations, heightened awareness, but it also works 'outwardly' in relation to the object of attention (painting, sculpture, piece of music) or the practice (of drama, dance, etc.). If attention is only

paid to the 'inward' aspect of the concept, this can constrain the pedagogic horizons if the aim for art is limited to a vague notion of stirring up feelings. This 'inward' justification can easily be devoid of sufficient focus or cognitive element. The inclusion of the 'outward' dimension, the attention to form, can provide more balance and inject greater depth to the teaching.

This has a direct relevance in the language classroom, and can be illustrated in relation to small-scale examples from the teaching of drama. As suggested above, drama is often valued in the classroom because it provides experiences that are engaging, fun and playful. That much is true but this justification alone does not give enough attention to the role of the teacher beyond providing experiences that are loosely termed 'aesthetic'. Drama can easily be reduced to narrow forms of simulation and role play (e.g. buying an item in a shop) that do not probe the content in any depth. Acting out a similar exchange with sub-text can open up new dimensions. For example, does the tone change if the buyer has reasons to be nervous, depressed, over-confident, angry? Awareness of elements of the dramatic art form (e.g. tension, focus, tone, mood, contrast) can help to develop the activity by including different layers of meaning.

The use of tableaux (or still image) is increasingly common as a drama activity in the classroom because it is relatively easy to manage (Neelands and Goode, 2015, p. 28). However it is often used in a way that seeks to replicate a scene in a form of flat simulation, rather than explore dimensions of meaning. For example, depicting a family at the breakfast table to explore exchanges of language is a concrete activity that may motivate learners. It is fine as far as it goes but such an activity can be deepened by showing two scenes: one, the reality and the other as the mother would like it to be. A further dimension can be brought by articulating the thoughts of the characters. Depth when using tableaux can also be achieved by using contrasting scenes; including the thoughts of the characters to throw light on the feelings; injecting a sub-text; or revealing tension beneath the surface of the scene depicted. This means recognizing the elements of form and their impact: slowing down time and creating depth of meaning that goes beyond simple representation.

A greater awareness of artistic form in relation to aesthetic experience can enhance classroom practice and lead to more varied activities: are poems performed and given their full resonance or are they just read and studied? Is language combined with appropriately chosen music to enhance its meaning? Are words juxtaposed with pictures not just as representations but to highlight different interpretations of language? Are picture books with very young children chosen for their imaginative uses of language? Is content transposed from one art form to another? Ludke (2018) describes the positive benefits of singing and song activities for language learning, with one of the groups which was the focus of the research creating a composition of several songs for a musical theatre piece about a school trip to Paris. The Forge arts agency in the North East of England has developed a project for primary schools significantly entitled *Seeing things differently* that uses photography to support literacy. The work, sponsored by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, has many facets but a key element is the use of visual form to explore ways of teaching narrative skills, authorial purpose and creative decision making when writing.[1]

The concepts of 'learning in' and 'learning through' then provide a useful orientation towards theory and pedagogy, but the categories can be challenged on the grounds that

they are formulated too starkly both in relation to the use of term 'learning' and the dangers of excluding other types of engagement with art. There may be a problem with the term 'learning' depending on how it is interpreted. If the concept of 'learning' is seen as equivalent to 'natural growth' this may serve to diminish the significance of the impact of the teaching, much in the way a commitment to providing 'aesthetic experiences' may do the same. This view of learning as 'development' however tends to belong to a bygone era when the approach in some classrooms lacked sufficient purpose. In the contemporary education scene it is more likely that learning is interpreted too narrowly as the acquisition of propositions expressed as prescribed outcomes. The current preoccupation in many countries with precise, easily assessable learning outcomes that are highly reductive does not sit easily with the sort of rich learning associated with the arts. It is not however a matter of necessarily looking for alternatives to the word 'learning' but of being alert to the way uses of language may limit vision and understanding.

The other problem with seeing 'learning in' and 'learning through' as a binary distinction, is that it may exclude the sort of engagement with artistic endeavour that does not fall conveniently into these categories. When a group comes together to rehearse and perform a play, present an exhibition, choreograph a dance, or create an arts festival then the focus is on the intrinsic value of the art form (more akin to 'learning in') but the potential benefits in terms of building community engagement, developing language competence, and, depending on the group and the context, promoting intercultural dialogue, are considerable (more akin to 'learning through'). Frimberger and Bishopp (2020) describe a project with young refugees who were making a film to support other young arrivals in Scotland. They highlight the complexity of the moral challenge and rightly point out the dangers of making too many generalized claims about the impact of such work (for example in relation to claiming that participants are 'empowered') but the detailed description of the project conveys a strong sense of its impact brought about by engaging in an art project with a common focus.

The use of the arts in the service of non-art outcomes can distort the art-form itself by neglecting the significance of form as an important element of the aesthetic experience. This does not mean having to revert to formalist, separatist theories but it does mean recognizing that terms like 'aesthetic' and 'aesthetic experience' can be used loosely in the context of education in ways that reduce the importance of the role of the teacher in the learning process.

IV The arts and language education

There is always the possibility that using the arts may form a distraction from the goals of language education (the third question). For example, there may be occasions when the pursuit of quality in the singing, dancing or other art forms becomes an end in itself at the expense of the language learning. Such cases can be avoided by sensible, balanced teaching. However, underlying the more generalized statement that the arts are a distraction from language learning, it is possible to discern implicit theories about language education, and language and meaning.

The generic term 'language education' has been used here to include both first and second language learning because the distinction between them is not important for the

purposes of this discussion. The difference between the aims of first and second language learning has tended to be over-emphasized. On this view, broad aims were ascribed to first language learning (personal growth, cognitive development, communication, aesthetic learning) and narrower, more functional aims to second language learning (communication). A crude way of exposing the inadequacies of this view is to express it as follows: someone learns a second language in order to do what they can already do in a first language. Here there is no acknowledgement of the potential for cognitive, emotional, social, intercultural development in all language learning.

Pedagogical approaches to language teaching have gone through different developments over the years, but the broad change of focus from the structures and forms of language to meaning and use was significant. This development has been underpinned by different theoretical formulations including, communicative competence (Hymes, 1967), constructivist and socio-cultural theories (Vygotsky, 1978), functional uses (Halliday, 1973), language as system and discourse (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). The discussion in this article will consider different conceptions of language through the work of Wittgenstein. Other theorists have also recognized the dynamic and fluid nature of language and its role in constructing knowledge, and Wittgenstein is perhaps less fashionable. However, the fact that he modified his views about language and meaning helps to underline the radical consequences of his later thinking (which is often underappreciated). His thinking also explains the inextricable integration of culture into language learning, and helps to make the connection with art. His views have significance not only for practice but also for how we think and talk about concepts such as ‘art’, ‘culture’ and ‘language’.

Wittgenstein’s first answer to the question ‘how does language have meaning’ was to say that it does so by representing or picturing reality. The starting point is attaching names to objects, and then formulating more elaborate propositions that mirror what is happening in the world, much like a map relates to the terrain it is depicting or a symphony is reflected in a musical score. At first this seems to be a compelling view. However, it is not always possible to see how the sentences we use day to day clearly form a picture of what is going on in the world. Wittgenstein’s solution was to claim that our ordinary language often conceals this relationship and therefore needs to be analysed, broken down into constituent elements, in effect creating an ideal form of language. Language can then become transparent, logically cut and dried, where the relationship between language and that to which it refers becomes clear (Wittgenstein, 1961).

This account is appealing because it accords with an intuitive sense derived from everyday experiences: that language is transparent and attaches names to objects, experiences, feelings and so on. At the dinner table when we ask someone to pass the salt we do not expect to end up with the ketchup due to lack a lack of transparency in language. Language does seem to operate according to rules. It is easy therefore to be convinced by the view that language is a closed system of signs, that a proper account of language should be ‘scientific’. On this view cases of ambiguity and uncertainty in language are aberrations departing from ‘proper’ uses: before we can say anything sensible in academic discourse we have to ‘define our terms’; we expect to able to formulate strict

definitions that keep us on the right path; we expect that works like 'art', 'culture' and 'context' ought to have defined meanings if we want to use them in the 'right' way.

Wittgenstein's later thinking realized that his earlier work was mistakenly extrapolating from one type of language use to apply to all cases. We use all sorts of different language games or language practices (giving orders, describing an object, reporting an event, cracking a joke, etc.) and it is a mistake to try to erode their differences in one explanation. He abandoned the logical, representational way of looking at language and instead placed emphasis on 'use' in context. It has become common-place to assert the importance of language use in teaching but the implication is often that meaning is somehow residing elsewhere, that it is dormant or latent and is animated when put to use. Wittgenstein's view is more far-reaching. As Moi (2017, p. 35) has said, the slogan 'meaning is use' as used by Wittgenstein is difficult to grasp. She points out that the force of his view is there is no 'meaning' in the traditional sense, no 'it' that a word means, that adheres to words in isolation from their use. We have to abandon the notion that true meaning lies somewhere between the words and our understanding of them, 'as if there were a gap or a "relationship" between words and their meaning' (Moi, 2017, p. 35). Wittgenstein's view was that philosophical problems can be dissolved by attending to the way language can deceive, for example by over-generalizing or trying to establish essential meanings. We are better off looking at how words operate in the language, and considering what the consequences are of using them in particular ways.

The consequence of this alternative view is that context and culture do not just become receptacles for meaning but are absolutely central to the generation of meaning. Wittgenstein used the term 'form of life' to capture the sense that meaning emerges from cultural practices, not as a reference to national cultures associated with specific languages, but in terms of shared human activity. The centrality of culture to language and meaning has important implications, one of which consists in substituting 'an *intellectual* grasp of meanings, with a *practical* understanding' (Gebauer, 2017, p. 4). This rich, contextual view of meaning does not translate in a simple, formulaic way into pedagogic practice. In language teaching there may be a place for rules, grammar, exercises, memorizing and training. What is important however is that the way language is understood, and the explanation of meaning that informs practice, does not reify logic, order, certainty and precision at the expense of use and context.

An obsession with order and certainty, combined with an intolerance of ambiguity can, in an extreme manifestation, influence ways of being in the world. The main character in the short story *You should have seen the mess* by Muriel Spark (1994) is a young woman who is obsessed with cleanliness and order to the extent that it limits her social life; she cannot empathize with others or come to terms with what she sees as the chaos around her. She has a chance of happiness with, rather pointedly, a young artist, but cannot tolerate what she sees as his messy way of living, embodied in her memory of 'the paint oozing out of the tubes' in his room. The character of Flanders in *The Simpsons* tries to be unfailingly courteous and kind but lives his life in a moral strait jacket; he rewrites the end of *Harry Potter* for his children so that 'the witches' get their come-uppance.

Language learning needs to be seen not as a purely abstract, cognitive, cerebral process but one that is embedded in action, emotion and aesthetic sensibility. One value of

drawing on arts practices in the language classroom lies in this area of helping to create integrated, holistic contexts for learning. These are not based on a narrow notion of pure cognition but are embodied and multisensory, and recognize the importance of the body and feelings.

On this view it may be tempting to claim that the value of the arts lies in being able to bring the real world with all its complexities and authentic uses of language into the classroom, as if the contexts supplied by practice in the arts is the next best thing to 'real' experiences. However this account misses the central paradox that art is, in a sense, both 'real' and 'not real' at the same time. This is where the separatist view of art, for all its flaws, has another helpful contribution to make, even though the aspect of this formalist theory that sees the making and appreciation of art as something separate from moral, economic, political, etc. considerations is clearly mistaken. Where the theory can be illuminating, however, is in the tacit recognition that art creates its own space; it metaphorically, and often literally, draws a frame around the art object or experience that, in some sense, does separate it from the hurly burly of life – it is in that sense it is 'unreal'. The concept of 'entertainment' is often undervalued in academic writing about art. However, as Shusterman (2003, p. 298) has argued, we can associate the concept entertainment with notions of sustaining and refreshing, as well as deepening concentration, that 'the self is sustained and strengthened by being freed from attention to itself.'

The advent of modern and conceptual art brought tales of various sculptures and other art works being accidently discarded from museums as rubbish by zealous cleaners (Carey, 2005, p. 27). In the film *The square* the curator of an art museum is interviewed by a young woman (played by Elizabeth Moss) who asks him to explain a piece of pretentious verbiage taken from the museum website. He pauses and falters but eventually mumbles something about whether placing an object in a museum, for example the bag she is carrying, makes it art. Her bemused expression and uneasy response underlines the satire. Despite the humour in this exchange, there is an underlying truth that treating something as art (whether it be a painting, poem, novel or whatever) is tacitly to 'frame' it in some way; it is to make a selection, to place it in a different sphere, to ask it to be perceived in different ways and to invite fresh questions. As Wittgenstein (1998, p. 7) says, the work of art compels us to see it 'in the right perspective', and that 'without art the object is a piece of nature'. That does not prevent the art work itself from being banal, inconsequential, or uninspiring; it is not necessary to adopt a relativist position that all art is of equal quality.

The framing metaphor provides a further insight into the way engagement in art can contribute to language learning. Paradoxically art can reveal complexity precisely because it frames, selects and separates. A drama, for all it may be very dense and involved, always has a beginning and an end, is always contained. The language used in real life contexts is often full of resonance, connotations, underlying sub-texts and complexity. At the heart of the 'language game' which is the creation of the drama is the key element of fiction or make-believe that paradoxically simplifies the situation in order to examine human motivation and intention more explicitly. The use of visual art, poetry, song, or dance in the language classroom can introduce a productive form of slowing down, as there is more potential to dwell within the words and meaning. The arts can create contexts for language uses that are both rich and 'limited' in productive ways.

Smith (2017) draws on Wittgenstein's later thinking to highlight the value of learning slowly, in contrast to the obsession with quick fixes and accelerated learning that is prevalent in much contemporary modern education.

There is a superficial sense in which the arts may detract from language learning. However, the emphasis on meaning, use and embodied experience highlights the rich potential for the arts in the language classroom. The centrality of culture in relation to language and meaning is a key element in making this connection.

V The arts and interculturalism

The fourth question asks whether there are any risks in employing the arts to support the teaching of interculturalism. These risks arise mainly when the arts of other countries are introduced with a view to learning something about the culture. O'Farrell (2015), while supporting the value of arts education for interculturalism, warns against the dangers of unintentionally reducing any culture to the level of stereotype. He also provides examples of drama teachers enacting established rituals drawn from other cultural groups without sufficient awareness of the potential negative impact of such work. Acuff (2018, p. 1) has described how multicultural art education can become superficial, in that 'art teachers guide students through art projects like creating African masks, Aboriginal totems, and sand paintings, all without communicating the context of the art'. Well-intentioned classroom practices may serve to reinforce an impression that what is unfamiliar is amusing, exotic or even repellent or may foster over-generalized perceptions of other cultures. This was also one of the criticisms directed at some of the early programmes designed to foster intercultural communication. A consideration of these criticisms can throw further light on employing the arts to support the teaching of interculturalism.

Traditional intercultural training courses that prepared people to visit other countries based on behavioural dos and don'ts have been widely criticized. They often presented national characteristics in fixed categories that were over-generalized and ran the risk of fostering notions of 'us' and 'them'. The categories employed were often based on quantitative research which, unless deftly handled, leads to rudimentary distinctions and, under the guise of objectivity, conceals underlying values assumptions. Intercultural training based on these models, by reducing simple social actions to causal explanations based on cultural rules and customs, stripped away the depth and complexity that is found in human interaction. (It will be argued that the arts has the potential to restore this dimension.) Such approaches reduce human encounters in such a way that gift-giving, for example, is not seen as an act of human generosity but only as a cultural custom, a symbol of status or as a function of being in a collectivist culture (Tynan et al., 2010).

It has been suggested by some writers that the very use of the term 'culture' within theories of interculturalism can bring risks particularly when used to refer to national cultures (Holliday, 2010). When describing communication between people, the terms 'culture' or 'interculturalism' may direct attention to certain aspects of the encounter while concealing others that may be more significant, for example issues of power, social deprivation or other injustices. When culture is seen as the determinant of behaviour, this can serve to reduce notions of individual agency and downplay the attendant moral

implications. Over-generalized assumptions can influence the way people act (e.g. the lecturer who assumes that Chinese students are reluctant to contribute in class may unwittingly cause this to happen). A preoccupation with culture and the intercultural may focus too much attention on differences between people instead of acknowledging similarities (Dervin, 2016).

Warnings of this kind of the potential dangers in over-generalizing are helpful. What is less helpful is a compulsion to spot instances of 'othering' and 'essentialism' in the de-contextualized language used by other people. This is in effect to subscribe to a 'representation' view of language and meaning because it assumes that meaning, intention and impact can be ascribed to utterances that are abstracted from the language game in which they are used. Not all generalizations, including those related to culture, are harmful. Whereas a 'craving' for generality may be misguided, generalizing itself is both a natural and necessary part of understanding. Nor is it realistic to insist on prioritizing similarities between groups of people if differences are clearly in evidence. What is important is the underlying moral perspective, and the attitude that is taken towards difference. This is where the inclusion of the arts in teaching can be helpful.

As discussed earlier in this article, theories which sought to define art in narrow, strict terms were not tenable. That does not however mean it is impossible to say anything at all to elucidate the concept of art. First it helps to distinguish between art and the aesthetic. The term 'aesthetic' is, confusingly, both wider and narrower than 'art'. It is narrow in that it is often taken to focus on the formal aspect of a work: the rhythms, colours, texture, etc. It is wider in that we can apply the term to aspects of nature, a sunset for example, that we would not normally designate as art. The term 'art' is more usually reserved for what is made intentionally by human beings. In this sense engagement with art, in a simple yet profound sense, is to engage with humanity, a tacit recognition that what is before us has been created by others. Recognition of common humanity is at the foundation of creating and responding to art, but beyond that, art largely deals in particulars.

It was suggested earlier that considerable caution has to be exercised if the arts are used to learn about other cultures. Such risks can be mitigated by the use of critical and participatory approaches. de Bruijn (2019) has described an approach to the use of folktales in the classroom that seeks to avoid promoting reductive notions of cultural difference. This means thinking about the tales less in terms of representation (tales representing other cultures) but by encouraging participation so that all children are given 'the opportunity to share their diverse knowledge and experiences during the reading' (de Bruijn, 2019, p. 329).

The potential value of the arts for developing intercultural competence is not confined to the exploration of arts from other cultures. When the teaching of the arts is used to contribute to the development of a positive, enquiring, empathetic attitude to difference, then this is a very real form of intercultural education. The model of intercultural competences developed by Byram (1997) goes beyond knowledge and skills to embrace attitudes and values. It has at its heart a deeply moral intention. To acquire intercultural competence involves being able to 'decentre', to be able to question what is often taken for granted. An intercultural attitude is about curiosity, openness to others and a willingness to relativize and critique one's own values, beliefs and behaviours or to

defamiliarize the familiar. An important element is to be able to see things in new ways. This is where art in its various forms can contribute, when it is taught in a way that fosters a generous and enquiring attitude that finds in the consideration of difference and diversity a constant source of inspiration, delight and constructive challenge.

VI Conclusions

The four questions that have formed the structure of this article have been addressed separately but there are themes that cut across them. The tension between the particular and the general is relevant to making, creating and theorizing about art, but also to the development of intercultural competence. The avoidance of any form of generalization about culture is both unrealistic and unnecessary. However, it is important to foster an awareness of the possible negative consequences of over-generalizing, and to seek to develop a positive attitude to difference. The arts can support these aims. This has in turn consequences for how the concept of teaching is understood. The use of aesthetic experience as a way of enlivening the classroom is fine as far as it goes, but there is a more transformational potential in the use of the arts when the concept of form is taken seriously. This has implications for the role of a leader or teacher whether as a teacher of art, as a teacher of language drawing on art forms in the classroom, or a community worker creating art in the community. What teaching means in this context is diverse, and includes, for example, directing attention to some aspects rather than others, setting tasks, demonstrating, explaining, questioning, challenging, prompting, providing background contextual information, making links. Above all, it requires careful judgment on when and how to intervene and support learners in the process of arts, language and intercultural education.

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1. https://www.intheforge.com/portfolio-item/seeing-things-differently (accessed August 2021).

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