

## **Recalibrating the Language Classroom for Deeper Learning: Nurturing Creative, Responsible Global Citizenship Through Pluriliteracies.**

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### **Abstract**

In *Beyond CLIL: Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning* (Coyle & Meyer, 2021), the traditional role of language teaching and learning is brought into question. We propose an alternative paradigm that places the language teacher as a disciplinary specialist who contributes significantly to the development of learners' pluriliteracies repertoire. In this article, we suggest ways in which language teachers can reconceptualise their "subject" as one that is of central importance and value in our post-truth world. We posit that this requires not only an epistemic repositioning of the language classroom but, crucially, a profound and deliberate recalibration of the component parts of language-as-discipline. This involves connecting languages, cultures and literatures in ways that foster textual and epistemic fluency leading to deeper understanding and empathy. From this perspective, the "language-as-literacies classroom" has the potential to become an inclusive space for deeper learning whilst developing creative, responsible global citizenship.

### **Keywords**

*(Pluri)literacies, Modern Languages as discipline, Deeper Learning, Global Citizenship Education, Epistemology, Cultural Consciousness*

## 1. Introduction

In response to global concerns and the expected future demands for our young people, there have been radical shifts in current educational thinking. It is widely acknowledged that both subject as well as language teaching and learning must adapt to meet the global demands of society (OECD, 2019a). Education systems across the globe are inundated with reforms that aim to achieve a more socially just and multiculturally sensitive experience throughout schooling and beyond. Such high-profile policy priorities include *school improvement; raising the level of achievement; closing the attainment gap; skills-based learning; agile leadership; digital literacies*, etc. If we consider language learning, recent research studies and publications have significantly expanded the dialogue focussing on the roles of languages and learning, offering important insights from 'alternative perspectives' on how language classroom practices may provide a 'legitimised contribution' to the education of young people (Coyle & Meyer, 2021; Kramsch, 2022; Lütge, Merse & Rauschert, 2022).

According to McIntosh & Mendoza-Denton (2020, p. 1), the COVID-19 pandemic revealed numerous facets of “the linguistic and political emergency in which language finds itself today”. For Kramsch (2022, p. 17) this emergency “manifests itself in the very knowledge we impart as language teachers”. This is because the way language is conceptualised has shifted considerably. She identifies five fundamental changes in our increasingly multilingual, multicultural communities rooted in ‘social realities’: the widening gap between linguistic signs and the other signs they represent – exacerbated by ‘cultures’ becoming increasingly fractured; the commodification of language exponentially used for instrumental purposes such as mobilization; the decentring of language as the primary symbolic system and the normalisation of social media and multimodal communication in everyday life; and the interconnectedness between language and socio-cultural realities i.e. words and the rapidly changing social trends typified for example in woke language and jargon. Kramsch goes on to argue that in order to confront this crisis, foreign language education has to re-imagine itself by rethinking its mission and its practices:

(...) we have to be mindful that the post-corona challenge is not only to make foreign language learners proficient or competent in using foreign ways of speaking and writing, but rather to implicate them in the lives of others who don’t speak and don’t think like them, who don’t see the world like them and yet on whom they depend and to whom they are answerable. (Kramsch, 2022, p.31)

Clearly, such a call for compassion, tolerance and global responsibility far transcends existing goals and paradigms in language education such as intercultural communicative competence or plurilingualism which have informed and affected language policy across and beyond Europe through papers and frameworks like the Common European Framework of Reference (2001). Critical global citizenship education (GCE), with its emphasis on "social justice, multiculturalism, critical awareness of global power imbalances and its belief in the transformational power of education" (Starkey, 2022, p. 72), may be the concept in current thinking that most closely aligns with the principles and values outlined above. However, it is worth emphasising that the term global citizenship education is highly contested and has been criticised as a

a lofty, idealistic goal, that risks being reduced to a meaningless metaphor, or being co-opted by corporate interests that speak global English and for whom globalization really means the Americanization of the planet. (Kramsch, 2022, p.24).

What is required, therefore is a careful analysis of the construct of global citizenship education (GCE). In their critique of some interpretations of GCE, Simpson and Dervin (2019, p. 676) advocate the necessity to focus 'on unpacking and contesting concepts, relations and positions rather than falling into the trap of assumptions and generalisations about how things are or how they ought to be'. We suggest, therefore, that it is a collective responsibility to investigate how the current paradigm of language education has to adjust in order to align with implications embedded in ideas associated with global citizenship education. In this context, we find Kramsch's guiding questions especially helpful:

1. How can FL education educate the global citizen through a performative view of language as a social semiotic and language use as a border crossing?
2. How can it teach single languages multilingually?
3. How can it develop students' empathy and ability to put themselves in other people's shoes?
4. How can it practice decentering and reflexive practice?
5. How can it decolonize its relationship with digital technology?

(Kramsch, 2022)

In this article, we propose ways in which language teachers can reconceptualise their 'subject' in light of these five pertinent questions so that the language classroom becomes an inclusive space for developing creative and responsible global citizenship in a post-truth world. As we have argued before (Coyle & Meyer 2021) this shift towards deeper learning

requires an epistemological re-positioning of the language classroom which places the language teacher as a disciplinary specialist who contributes to developing learners' personal growth through enriching their (pluri)literacies repertoire in significant ways. This re-positioning will then permit us to recalibrate individual components of *language-as-discipline*, i.e., literatures, cultures, and languages, which is key to outlining a new paradigm for the language classroom: language learning as deeper learning for creative and responsible global citizenship.

## 2. Towards language-as-discipline

At first glance, the case for a shift towards disciplinary literacies in the language classroom appears straight-forward: if lifelong learning skills are indeed essential for today's young people and deeper learning – inextricably linked with disciplinary literacies (National Research Council, 2012, Guerriero, 2017) – involves ways of developing transferable knowledge skills essential for lifelong learning, then the language classroom needs to explore ways of promoting deeper learning by embracing disciplinary literacies.

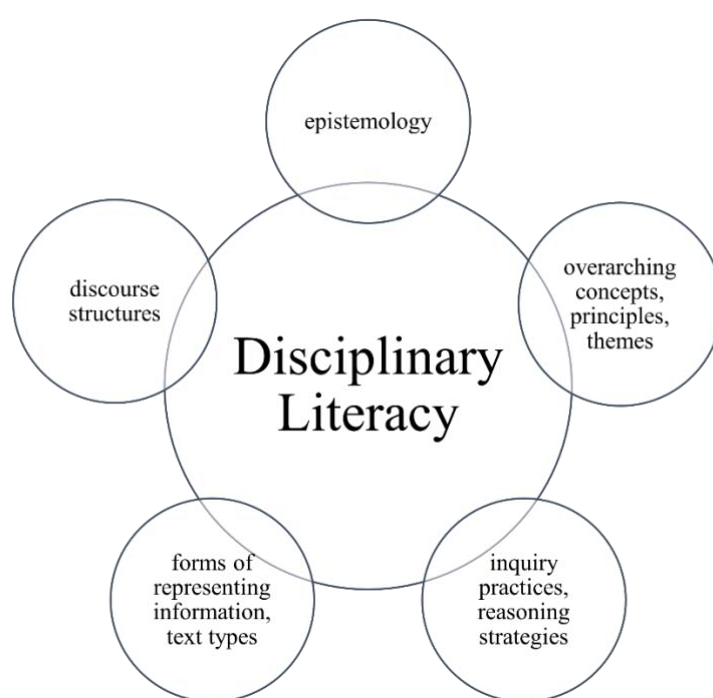
Deeper learning has been defined as “the process through which an individual becomes capable of taking what was learned in one situation and applying it to a new situation” (National Research Council, 2012, p. 5). The reason why there is a such a strong focus on transferable knowledge and problem-solving skills is that these are considered to be the key requisite of lifelong learning which is widely viewed as the quintessential 21 century skill.

In previous publications we have made the case that deeper learning rests on three pillars (Coyle & Meyer, 2021). The first pillar represents what we have coined the *mechanics of deeper learning*. These include all the various elements of knowledge building and refining skills for demonstrating understanding via the complex processes of internalisation and automatisisation. The second pillar focusses on the *drivers of deeper learning* – the affective characteristics which foster commitment and achievement guided by teacher mentoring. The alignment of mechanics and drivers of deeper learning make it possible to design learning progression or *trajectories for deeper learning* (pillar three) through literacies development.

However, the question of what exactly constitutes disciplinary literacies in the context of language learning is considerably less straightforward. For McConachie and Petrosky, disciplinary literacy “involves the use of reading, reasoning, investigating, speaking and writing required to learn and form complex content knowledge appropriate to a particular discipline” (McConachie and Petrosky, 2010, p. 16). Putra and Tang (2016, p. 269) argue that disciplinary

literacy encompasses “the ability to use specialised language and practices valued and used in a given discipline to navigate and participate in the discipline”. In other words, subjects such as chemistry, geography, history, physics, or mathematics have made significant strides in defining and specifying the role of disciplinary literacies and deeper learning in their contexts (see Coyle, Meyer & Staschen-Dielmann, 2023, for a comprehensive review), similar considerations for language education are emerging (Taveau, 2023).

Goldman et al. (2016) identify five higher-order characteristics which, when combined comprise disciplinary literacy. Their research provides a framework for outlining how distinct disciplines acquire, analyse, evaluate, and communicate knowledge and understanding:

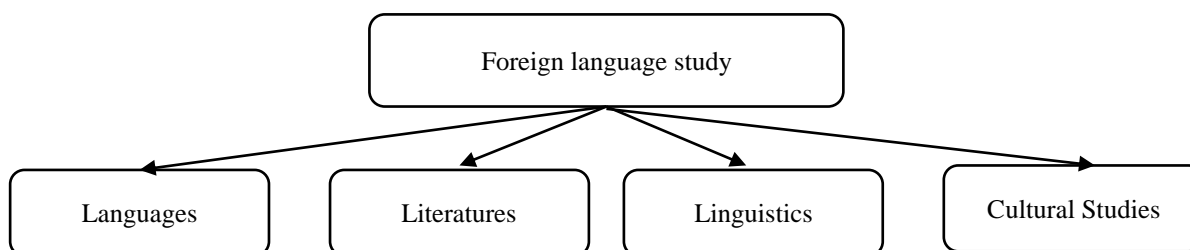


**Figure 1:** Core constructs of disciplinary literacies (based on Goldman et. al. 2016)

Each discipline is governed by epistemological frameworks which determine “what counts as relevant phenomena to study, the methods to use, the amount and types of evidence required, the causal relationships to consider, and the value and meaning of the research findings” (Brister, 2017). Thus, establishing what constitutes epistemology in the case of language-as-discipline learning is an essential first step towards recalibrating classroom practices required to open pathways for determining and achieving the defined goals embedded in that discipline. To do that, we begin by examining how language study is conceptualized at the tertiary level to see how this can inform language-as-discipline in secondary school contexts. This is essential because there is evidence suggesting that the vision that informs initial teacher education programmes

will have a significant and enduring effect on teachers' beliefs and the way they conceptualise language learning and teaching in primary and secondary education (Griful-Freixenet, 2021, Mateus et al., 2021, Reynolds et al., 2021).

Foreign language study is typically considered to have four subfields. These subfields are language, literature, linguistics and culture or cultural studies:



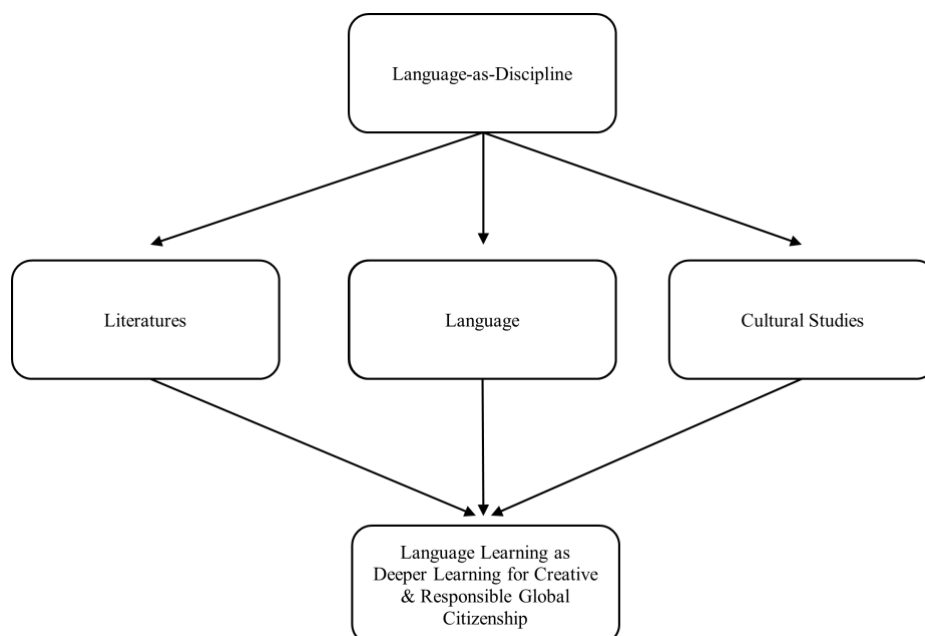
**Figure 2:** Foreign language studies

However, as Swaffar (1999) points out, the fact that most foreign language programs consist of these four or similar subfields, does not automatically turn them into disciplines *per se*. Instead, what is required is orienting the subfields toward a shared disciplinary vision. We question whether such transdisciplinary visions have yet been developed and disseminated. This of course affects language classrooms in schools because without an alignment of epistemological positioning built on a shared vision, modern language teachers across different sectors are destabilised. Whilst it is acknowledged that modern language learning and teaching is now distinct from the Classical tradition, the characteristics of modern languages as an academic discipline remain fluid and contentious impacting on the professional identity of language teachers across monolingual and multilingual contexts:

(...) how is it different from other humanities and social sciences: literature, history, sociology, to name but a few? For unless we can define a characteristic academic discipline for Modern Languages, it will be subsumed by other disciplines. The scope for this is only too apparent in the light of recent reductions in degree programmes and redeployment of staff. Is French history anything more than history? Is Spanish linguistics anything more than linguistics? (Pountain, 2019, p. 246)

In order to offer a significant contribution to those educational goals outlined previously, language learning needs to develop a shared vision of language-as-discipline. First, this requires an epistemic repositioning, second, a recalibration of its subdisciplines and third, a pedagogic approach to transform classroom practices in alignment with the vision. This process will offer language classrooms ways of becoming dynamic ecological spaces for

global citizenship education (Figure 3). We will now consider what such ecological spaces signify.



**Figure 3:** Language Learning as Deeper Learning for Creative and Responsible Global Citizenship

Starting with the fluid construct of global citizenship, we acknowledge that this is open to wide debate. Rysen & Katzarska-Miller (2013) define global citizenship as “awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act.” Indeed, we would emphasise the importance of nurturing that sense of responsibility. According to UNESCO (2018), Global Citizenship Education as a multi-dimensional construct (see figure 4) aims “to empower learners to engage and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive secure and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2018, p. 6.).

Core conceptual dimensions of Global Citizenship Education	
<b>Cognitive</b>	To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national, and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.
<b>Socio-emotional</b>	To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences and diversity.
<b>Behavioural</b>	To act effectively, and responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

**Table 1:** Core Conceptual Dimensions of Global Citizenship Education (based on UNESCO, 2018)

And yet, on further examination, this implies the need to ‘critically analyse discourses about the global and intercultural and their multiple uses in such models: What ideologies? By whom? For what (real) purpose(s)? What contradictions? Whose voice is silenced in these models?’ (Simpson and Dervin, 2019, p. 676). We argue, moreover, that language education in its current state is ill-equipped to support defining such goals without first embracing a much more holistic approach to teaching and learning. This is why we now take as a ‘point de depart’ each of the three subdisciplines underpinning language-as-discipline and propose ways of recalibrating them to support language learning as deeper learning for responsible global citizenship. While we are fully aware that each of these recalibrations represents a deliberate choice, we argue that when such choices are made transparent, a more coherent vision of education emerges alongside the role that language-as-discipline classrooms play to support that vision. We suggest that one of the reasons why previous attempts at innovating language learning has not led to sustainable change is that such a holistic recalibration has not been made or nor been made apparent.

### 3. Recalibrating language

In *A Language as Social Semiotic-Based Approach to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* Coffin and Donohue make the case for the centrality of language within the teaching and learning process which hinges on the “developing capacity of students and teachers to harness the meaning-making resources of language efficiently and effectively in relation to purpose and context and to expand their language and meaning-making repertoires as necessary.” (Coffin & Donohue, 2014, p. 2)

Language as a social semiotic system connects language with the notion of *semiotic mediation* in which language is seen as a tool that facilitates conceptual development. This provides opportunities to expand learner’s potential “to make new meanings about the world and so develop new ways of being, seeing, thinking, and acting” (Coffin & Donohue, 2014, p. 4). This expansion occurs during the process of semiotic mediation where teachers and learners work together to reconfigure not only the learners’ conceptual knowledge structures but also the teachers’ understanding of the learners.

Whilst their focus is on the linguistic semiotic system, Coffin & Donohue point out that language is not the only semiotic resource, suggesting that academic knowledge “is shaped not only *in* and *through* and *with* language but *in* and *through* and *with* other semiotic resources.” (p. 6). This resonates with Kramsch’s arguments (2022) regarding the digitization of semiotic



resources. Moreover, they reject reductive views of language learning which focus on the correction of linguistic errors and views language as challenging and problematic. Positioning language as social semiotic, therefore, is an epistemological choice which will heavily impact on the view of language we adopt:

While it is true that these language features interfere with communication to some extent, the relationship between language and communication is much more profound than these corrections imply. Meaning is being made at every level in all the assignments that teachers respond to. In order to respond to language use from this broader perspective of language as a meaning-making resource, a model of language of much greater complexity than one that focuses on formal error correction is called for.” (p. 23)

In addition, adopting a functional approach to language offers novel ways of conceptualising language learning progression seen as increasing learners’ meaning making potential. Such potential becomes visible through

- a) the ability to critically evaluate and extract information from increasingly complex texts in all relevant digital and analogue modes.
- b) the growing command of relevant plurimodal text types and genres along a continuum which includes primary (colloquial) as well as secondary (formal) discourses.

From this perspective, progress manifests in the quality of language use at a number of levels (discourse, sentence, lexico-grammatical) aligned with genre conventions of the subjects. It further shows in the breadth of obligatory and optional genre moves and, crucially, in the depth of understanding (conceptual, cultural, (inter-) textual etc.) expressed in those moves which we have described in more detail elsewhere (Coyle & Meyer, 2021).

Clearly, embracing a global citizenship agenda requires a much broader underlying perspective of language than the one currently found in many classrooms. To successfully master the intricacies of the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of global citizenship, learners need to be equipped with and master the use of relevant semiotic tools which guide and expand their ability to understand and critically evaluate their meaning-making across cultures, subjects and languages. This is far removed from current ways of measuring ‘successful’ language learning.

#### 4. Recalibrating culture

There have been countless definitions of culture(s). However, “none of them are adequate, for how can one define that which makes up almost the totality of human experience?” (Landis, 1972, p. 54). And yet, for centuries it has been assumed that a fundamental element of language instruction is intrinsically related to the ‘culture’ of the target language country. This essentialist premise, in our opinion, has numerous flaws to be addressed: the idea that culture is singular and static, that concentrating on one major target language country is sufficient, and that a community of speakers of a language is indicative of one shared culture.

This raises the question as to the extent to which current approaches to teaching and learning focus on identities and underpinning values culturally embedded that reflect the growing demands of multilingual and multicultural learners in increasingly diverse settings. When pedagogic approaches are founded on the premise that individuals create meaning through their own cultural tools and fundamentally can be supported in ways of reading the word and the world to create critical understanding (Freire, 1970) this moves away from applying externally verified cultural norms. Gay’s (2010) notion of *culturally responsive teaching* is predicated on enhancing learners’ cultural understanding and developing inter-cultural awareness and criticality. She recommends:

seeing cultural differences as assets; creating caring learning communities where culturally different individuals and heritages are valued; using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families, and communities to guide curriculum development, classroom climates, instructional strategies, and relationships with students; challenging racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression; being change agents for social justice and academic equity; mediating power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class; and accepting cultural responsiveness as endemic to educational effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups. (Gay, 2010, p. 31)

Gay’s positioning suggests the need for a far broader understanding of literacies than previous language-based approaches. The work of the New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) has had a substantial impact on contemporary language learning theories. Considering the plethora of communication channels and growing cultural and linguistic diversity in the contemporary world, the New London Group emphasises the significance of multiliteracies, which enable students to become agents capable of deconstructing and reconstructing meaning

through tasks that encourage fundamental active and critical participation. In a similar vein, the Douglas Fir Group (2016) supports a transdisciplinary approach to language learning and use that aims to extend learners' meaning-making resources and identities by encouraging:

(...) profound awareness not only of the cultural, historical and institutional meanings that their language-mediated social actions have, but also . . . of the dynamic and evolving role their actions play in shaping their own and others' worlds. (p. 25)

Both groups emphasise the need for teachers to go beyond promoting cultural awareness in language education and instead promote what we refer to as *cultural consciousness*. In contrast to cultural awareness, cultural consciousness, coined by Jackson (1975), prioritises learners' active participation in utilising cultural resources appropriately. This viewpoint is rooted in the critical literacies movement (Street, 1995; Luke, 2000; Janks, 2013; Panos, 2017), in which all learners are provided with opportunities to reflect on and perceive themselves in relation to various cultures and languages (Pratt and Foley, 2020). This resonates with Freire's (1970) view of literacy as the ability to construct and deconstruct knowledge through dialogue – thereby providing a pathway for problem-solving.

The role of critical literacies has had a significant impact on the development of pedagogic principles (e.g., in EAL (English as an Additional Language) classrooms) in settings where teachers are responsible for enabling migrant learners or those who are not proficient in the language of schooling to learn in mainstream classrooms. According to Pratt and Foley, critical literacies enable learners to comprehend how one's culture and language shapes the perception of oneself, of the world, and of our relationship with others (Pratt & Foley, 2020).

From this perspective, texts are recognised as cultural tools that must be analysed and interpreted with great care to uncover and challenge inherent power relations and social inequities. Janks et al. (2014) additionally emphasise how texts shape identity. They illustrate the ways in which language and discourse can be used to construct identities and create inequalities. In a similar vein, Holland et al. (1998, p. 128) recommend the use of cultural resources or artefacts that resonate with or challenge the students' perspectives. They believe that this promotes the creation of inclusive and self-aware “safe” environments that connect meaningfully across languages and cultures. Lea and Street (2006) conclude that when such pedagogic processes are situated within an academic literacies framework, learners will collaboratively and jointly investigate the variety of “genres, modes, shifts, transformations,

representations, meaning-making processes, and identities involved in academic learning within and across academic contexts” (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 376).

Re-orienting the language classroom towards raising cultural consciousness in learners will allow us to reconceptualise the role of text (used here as a collective noun) in language classrooms and open critical pathways for deeper learning:

When text is the currency for critical understanding and cultural consciousness; when text communicates ideas and concepts which are relevant, challenging and thought-provoking; when text provides the space for mediated learning and meaning making; when text evidences linguistic progression through learners’ increasingly nuanced construction and use of language forms and their interpretation – then, the language classroom affords potential for deeper learning. (Coyle & Meyer, 2021, p. 151)

This is consistent with Goldman et al. (2016), who emphasise the necessity of providing learners with opportunities to engage in complex tasks and activities to reach an *intertextual level* of understanding by developing their capacity to:

coordinate diverse – and sometimes contradictory – information and perspectives from multiple texts, accounting for authors’ intent, evaluating evidence presented in the text, and judging the relevance and usefulness of each text for the task at hand (p. 4; our emphasis).

To return to our previous argument, developing cultural consciousness thus not only requires re-conceptualising the roles of text but, equally importantly, challenges underlying models for decoding text in the language classroom. Transitioning from a surface understanding of text towards appreciating text as discourse that shapes cultural consciousness in learners necessitates a shift from traditional approaches to comprehension to an intertext model of reading.

## 5. Recalibrating Literature

Traditionally, connecting literature with language learning evokes the study of the literary canon, prioritising great works comprising novels, stories, plays, poetry and so on. Moreover, the study of such art forms is often seen as the preserve of more advanced students. However, as Carter (2007) notes, the gradual displacement of such a bounded interpretation of literary texts has opened the door to recalibrating literature as providing authentic, accessible multileveled

and multimodal text which requires learners not only to understand what a text means, but how it comes to mean what it does (Short, 1996). By providing a window into examining the human condition and what Kramsch (2022) refers to as ‘social realities’, literature seen as comprising a wide range of text-types provides a multi-perspectival canvass for garnering curiosity, creativity and ownership through resources which are relevant to learners, open to dialogue and critical debate. Such texts encourage learners – any age or stage – to understand the value of challenge, uncertainty and criticality. Of course, readers can also be encouraged to respond creatively to texts. Pratt and Foley refer to this as *taking action and countertexting* emphasizing that action is multifaceted ranging “from a conversation to a question, from an email to a protest rally, and from an essay to a debate” (2020, p. 123). Adopting these approaches to teaching literature offers valuable opportunities for developing democratic action that values individual creativity and responsibility as a means to engage learner agency, motivation and understanding of a sense of self.

Drawing on these perspectives, literature promotes non-binary meaning-making opportunities and experiences for learners when content and form work together to develop deeper understanding of what creative and responsible global citizenship entails. That is, in the language-as-discipline classroom, literature provides a locus for study of wide-ranging fiction and non-fiction multimodal texts where developing skills of analysis, interpretation, argumentation and creativity are underpinned by values of equity and social justice.

It is perhaps Goldman et al.’s work (2016) that has provided a significant and less abstract means of reinforcing language-as-discipline by offering a conceptual framework across the three disciplines of mathematics, science and literature. They focus on reasoning and argumentation which they consider fundamental to learning in any discipline. This realigns the study of literature with other disciplines and creates opportunities for all learners to advance and develop their literacies skills (in this case focussing on reading and reasoning) as their language proficiency increases proportionally. They argue that whilst texts may be read, they are also discussed, debated and enacted, deconstructed and reconstructed – thereby encompassing all the traditional language skills and more.

We suggest that this realignment may be key to reconceptualising language learning as a discipline. Learning to read and reason or argue, for example, using a wide range of non-fictional and fictional texts in and across languages while moving from single text to a multi-text model, transforms the language classroom into a disciplinary learning environment where language skills are progressed in line with critical literacy skills to promote cultural consciousness. Goldman

et al. detail the analytical skills involved in interpreting text ranging from expressing points of view and multi-perspectival meaning-making to critically examining features of figuration (irony, symbolism, argumentation) and problems of structure at both the macro or genre level and the micro level (language choice, alliteration and so on). The skills this requires, whilst including the ‘traditional’ language skills, go way beyond in terms of providing students with a more relevant understanding of how to interpret text. These texts might be set in past-times, contemporary society or futures, in personal, community or local issues, global crises or imaginary spaces but will involve creative, critical interpretation and examination of students’ own beliefs and moral imperatives – all of which we argue imply transparently moving towards a more visible or shared understanding of what being and becoming responsible global citizenship might mean at very different levels for very different learners.

Furthermore, when the relationship between texts is brought into the frame, as learners develop increasingly critical skills, intertextual meaning-making offers ways of moving beyond a surface understanding of literary texts towards uncovering textual meaning at the discourse level. In addition, putting fictional texts along non-fictional and increasingly digital texts such as websites, podcasts, tweets, posts, short videos etc., from different and contested point of views offers organic ways of teaching learners how to evaluate information online to promote their critical digital literacies (SHEG, 2016; 2022).

And yet, we fully concur with Kramsch that learning languages for creative and responsible global citizenship calls for more. What is needed is “a model of FL education that explains how the learning of foreign signs can change learners’ perceptions of reality and understanding of history,” a way of going beyond language “to engage multiple meaning-meaning making systems and subjectivities within a critical pedagogy that strives for social justice and a linguistic human rights agenda” (Kramsch, 2022, p. 27-28). Her notion of empathy is rooted in social anthropology, encompassing more than a set of skills and challenging learners to take “an emotionally and epistemologically decentring stance” which demands

the willingness to step out of one’s usual way of feeling, reasoning and talking about things and enter “someone else’ problem” – and to understand what makes it a “problem” for that particular in the first place.” (p.33)

We believe that harnessing the potential power of intertextual reading for empathy might be the most significant contribution that a recalibration of literature towards responsible global citizenship could offer the language-as-discipline classroom. It is

important to note, however, that intertextual reading for empathy and respect, for example, needs to account for the fact that, ultimately, each text is informed by different epistemological frameworks. Therefore, the potential of intertextuality rests on the learners' ability to successfully navigate, relate, argue, bridge, or agree to disagree with the epistemological positions which inform or are represented by those texts to avoid epistemological conflicts and misunderstandings (Brister, 2017). We call this **epistemic fluency**. In the language-as-discipline classroom, the focus is on the intersection of different epistemological positions and how they shape meaning-making. This does not imply or require mastery of each discipline. Rather, what is needed, is an awareness that different epistemological positioning exists which impacts heavily on meaning and interpretation. This is different from *epistemic knowledge* as used by PISA (2018) which describes

(...) an understanding of the function that questions, observations, theories, hypotheses, models and arguments play in science; a recognition of the variety of forms of scientific enquiry; and understanding the role that peer review plays in establishing knowledge that can be trusted (OECD, 2019b)

Focussing on epistemic fluency, empathy and respect, language-as-discipline classrooms offer spaces for intellectual and personal growth where learners are taught how to navigate plurimodal texts. Providing challenging and relevant topics in a wide variety of genres and epistemological positions offer learners authentic opportunities to practice decentring and responding creatively and responsibly. This way, language pedagogy could indeed develop “an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities” as envisioned by the New London Group (Cazden et. al, 1996, p. 72)

## 6. Putting the pieces together: Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning Languages

Before we discuss the specific contribution of the language classroom to the pluriliteracies repertoire of learners, we need to specify our understanding of the term. As a pedagogic approach, Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning (PTDL) embodies an ecological conceptualisation of dynamic, complex, and sustainable literacies across disciplines, languages, values, cultures, and our digitalized world. Consequently, the term pluriliteracies refers to:

1. **An explicit focus on disciplinary literacies in all subjects of schooling:** Since deeper learning is a domain-specific process, education needs to find ways of promoting subject

literacies in all subjects of schooling by focussing on subject-specific ways of constructing and communicating knowledge, so that learners can become pluriliterate in the sense of acquiring subject literacies in several subjects of schooling.

2. **Pluriliterate language use:** In a global world, learners need to be able to successfully and adequately communicate knowledge across cultures and languages. Therefore, an equally important facet of the ‘pluri-’ in pluriliteracies embraces and extends to being literate in several subjects and languages.
3. **Textual fluency:** Communication is increasingly plurimodal or hybrid in nature and reliant on multiple analogue and digital channels of communication and semiotic systems. Being able to critically evaluate sources is key to global citizenship and will prepare young learners for the world they will inhabit through understanding the need for social justice and democratic cultural competence. Therefore, being pluriliterate also entails the ability to critically navigate, evaluate and produce a wide variety of plurimodal texts and text types.

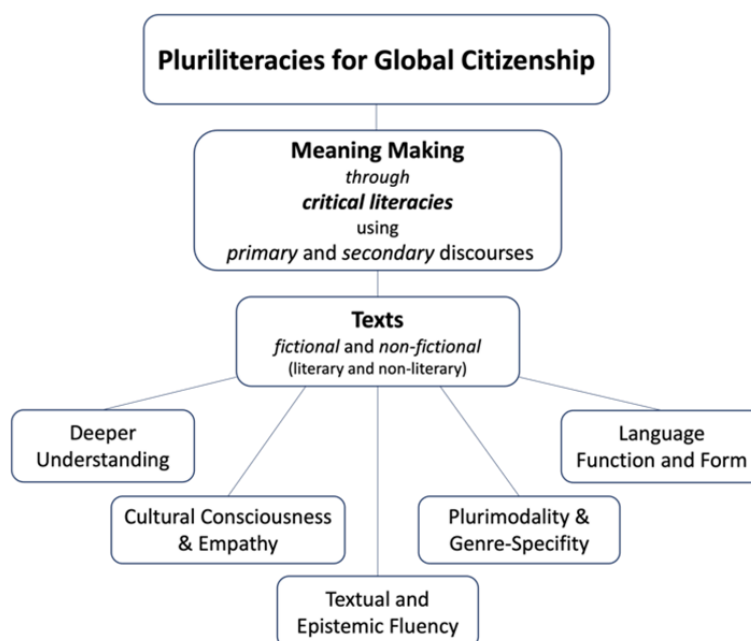
(Coyle & Meyer, 2021, p. 41/42)

In a language-as-discipline classroom, learners will be taught to understand “what it means to be researchers of language, image, gesture, spaces, and objects, exploring such issues as what counts as language, whose language counts, and who decides, as well as exploring ways texts can be revised, rewritten, or reconstructed to shift or reframe the message(s) conveyed.” (Vasquez et. al., 2019, p. 307). This embraces textual fluency, cultural consciousness as well as epistemic fluency.

We believe that a shift towards literacies will enable the language classroom to contribute significantly to the pluriliterate repertoire of learners: First, it can substantially increase learners’ textual fluency in an additional language and thus empower them to critically navigate a broad range of plurimodal texts and text types. Second, an explicit emphasis on cultural consciousness provides educators with the opportunity to place contemporary issues such as poverty and social justice at the top of the classroom agenda by embracing an openness around the decolonisation of the curriculum, the dominance of western white politics, and global urgencies around the planet, energy, and technology, all of which have been deemed too sensitive or politically charged for classroom discussion. Third, learning to explain and argue such highly complex, contentious, and culturally charged issues from multiple perspectives and sources will open pathways for deeper understanding not only of the underlying concepts but also of how language is



used to shape those discourses and to affect the audience. Moreover, encouraging students to explore imaginary worlds, engage in creative discourse and weave together semiotic resources is fundamental to developing learner identity and sense of wellbeing and belonging (Jewitt, 2008). Such an understanding is key for educating for emotional decentring and empathy. This will reposition language teachers as powerful change agents and transform the language classroom into a hub for responsible global citizenship:



**Figure 4:** Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning (PTDL) in the foreign language classroom

## 7. Futures thinking: embracing a new paradigm of language learning and teaching

Having focussed thus far on making epistemological arguments for recalibrating and validating language-as-discipline, such thinking cannot simply be ‘applied’ to language classrooms. A starting point for considering how practices can support ecological growth – owned by teachers and learners – suggests that working towards epistemic and textual fluency as building blocks put deeper learning at their very core. Rethinking how to design tasks and activities has led to the development of a new task model (deeper learning episodes). To assess the quality of deeper learning episodes, we have introduced the construct of task fidelity, a set of evidence-based criteria to evaluate the degree to which such tasks promote deeper learning through design principles. High task fidelity is fundamental because it provides learners with opportunities to experience:

- Relevance (personal and practical)
- Practical knowledge-building and knowledge-using, the doing or application (inquiry, problem-solving etc) according to subject-specific practices
- Development of subject-specific literacies discourses and practices (literacies)
- Linguaging and demonstrating learning across subjects and languages
- Co-construction of transparent transfer pathways (abstraction, contextualisation, relational transfer and schema-building)
- Mentoring learning and personal growth (dynamic scaffolding, feedback and assessment)
- Increasing awareness, engagement and progression across all activity domains
- Critical reflection, revision and self-improvement through deep practise
- Assessment for deeper learning cycles and praxis.
- Partnership working in a collaborative Learnscape  
(Coyle & Meyer 2021, p. 131/132)

Practices informed by these principles demand a significant move beyond communicative and linguistic goals. The focus shifts from learners ‘consuming’ pre-determined primarily monolingual content to learners using their plurilingual repertoire to engage critically, creatively, and responsibly with life issues affecting them on a local, national and global level.

So, what does this mean for a language-as-discipline curriculum? Borges and Pavi’s (2011 in Borges, 2014) paper defining the semiotic-ecological syllabus provides a useful locus for further discussion. They draw on van Lier’s (1996) work advocating that language curriculum development must take account of moral as well as intellectual and practical principles based on practitioner knowledge of language education. Whilst this may lead to variance in actualising practices, it embodies an ecological approach to curriculum design that “places a strong emphasis on contextualizing language into other semiotic systems”. Borges and Pavi go on to usefully identify two axes that help conceptualise a semiotic-sociological curriculum: a horizontal axis, which “forges links between different subjects, exploring cross-curricular themes, and dealing with global linguistic problems and issues” and a vertical axis, which offers “deep and rich language experiences throughout the child’s academic career, and building usable and lasting language skills” (Borges, 2014, p. 52). This resonates with the arguments put forward throughout our paper. In fact, establishing language-as-discipline position the

language classroom in line with other curricular subjects providing rich opportunities for both disciplinary-focused and transdisciplinary work where two or more subjects look at the same issues through their disciplinary lenses to encourage a deeper, multi-perspectival understanding. These suggestions enable us to transcend bounded dichotomies inherent in earlier conceptualisations of language learning and to move into a new paradigm of language-as-discipline embodied in deeper learning for creative and responsible global citizenship. In such a paradigm, content learning and language learning are inseparable components of meaning making.

Borges (2014) outlines the challenging stages demanded by thinking through new paradigms. By addressing and recalibrating the epistemological, disciplinary and practical dimensions of language-as-discipline, we have attempted to move from addressing deeply philosophical questions about language learning, to justifying pedagogic approaches and finally to formulating suggestions for designing classroom practices.

We know that positioning language-as-discipline is complex, contentious and as previously stated, open to wide interpretation. We welcome this. We have also chosen to emphasise the creativity and the responsibility that embodies a global perspective and ‘the provision of insights, ideas and information that enable students to look beyond the confines of local and national boundaries in their thinking and aspirations’ (Pike, 2008, p. 469). It may be that the successful transformation of the principles and processes presented in this paper, hinges on the ontological opportunities it opens up for all learners and teachers. Such affordances involve ways of confronting, reflecting on and understanding better our own thinking, ideologies and identities/selves. It’s now for educators, academics and practitioners together to heed the urgent calls for change. We hope this paper will encourage further dialogue.

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