

Cosmopolitan speakers and their cultural cartographies

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Language learners' increased mobility and the ubiquity of virtual intercultural encounters has challenged traditional ideas of 'cultures'. Moreover, representations of cultures as consumable life-choices has meant that learners are no longer locked into standard and static cultural identities. Language learners are better defined as cosmopolitan individuals with subjective and complex socio-political and historical identities. Such models push the boundaries of current concepts in language pedagogy to new understandings of who the language learner is and a refashioning of the cultural maps they inhabit. This article presents a model for cultural understanding that draws on the theoretical framework of Beck's Cosmopolitan Vision and its related concepts of 'Banal Cosmopolitanism' and 'Cosmopolitan Empathy'. Narrative accounts are used to illustrate the experience of a group of students of Arabic and Serbian/Croatian and their use of the cultural resources at their disposal to construct their own subjective cosmopolitan life-worlds. Through the analysis of learners' everyday cultural practices inside and outside the educational environment, the scope of the intercultural experience is revisited and a new paradigm for the language learner is presented. The Cosmopolitan Speaker (CS) described in this article is a subject who adopts a *flâneur*-like disposition to reflect on and scrutinise the target culture. Armed with this highly personal interpretation of reality, CSs will be able to take part in their own cultural trajectories and imagine and 'figure' their own cartography of the world.

Introduction

The impact of transnational and global cultures is a topic of heated debate in the sociolinguistics literature (Beck 2006; Blomaert 2010; Pennycook 2006; Zarate, Levy, and Kramsch 2008) and in language teaching (Block and Cameron 2002; Byram 2008; Fenouillet and Ros i Solé 2011; Gray 2006; Risager 2007). This article aims to extend this discussion by focusing on the specific role of the language learner and the development of a cosmopolitan identity in this new transnational 'global order' (Blomaert 2010).

The rise of language learners' mobility, the new opportunities for intercultural encounters through increasing and ubiquitous networked interconnectivity and the possibility to elect alternative life-choices outside national boundaries has meant that learners can no longer be locked into reified and fixed cultural identities. Moreover, this article argues that research on language learners' identities and subjectivity has opened up new avenues to grant language learners greater dynamism and subjectivity and to go beyond

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standardised cultural canons and prescriptive interpretations of cultures. Although learners have personal histories rooted in particular geographies and individuals are still regulated by national organisations, today's constant global and transnational cultural flows (Appadurai 1996; Risager 2006) and society's *superdiversity* (Vertovec 2007), has meant that language learners have become sophisticated 'cultural mediators' who feel compelled to reject standard prêt-à-porter versions of the culture.

This article positions language learning between the social and personal by elucidating new appropriations of culture(s) by language learners. In such understandings, language learners draw both on their past social histories and their future personal desires. Following recent critical thinking on the role and place of transnational and intercultural encounters in language pedagogy (Kramsch 2009; Risager 2007; Starkey 2011) and the transferability of the concept of the *Cosmopolitan Outlook* (Beck 2006) from sociology to language pedagogy, I propose to add a new dimension to the concept of Intercultural Competence (Byram 1997), which builds on the notion of the Intercultural Speaker (IS) (Byram and Fleming 1998). I will call this new dimension, the Cosmopolitan Speaker (CS).

The notion of the IS was built on the understanding that there is a fundamental difference between cultures (even though there is always some common humanity between them). Language learners acted as mediators between cultures to help the two cultural groups understand each other and build relationships. There was a clear difference between the speakers' own culture and 'the other'. As Byram and Fleming (1998: 8) explain: 'this intercultural speaker (Byram and Zarate 1994) is able to establish a relationship between their own and the other cultures, to mediate and explain difference –and ultimately to accept that difference and see the common humanity beneath it'.

In contrast to this, the CS is defined by their multiple cultural alliances and the development of a nomadic and borderless lifestyle. Language learners need to be inscribed within the sociological phenomena of *superdiversity* (Vertovec 2007) which highlights the complexity of today's multicultural and multilingual cultures. According to Vertovec, new immigrant populations are made up of socially and culturally complex individuals who cannot be pigeonholed in particular ways and are not necessarily segregated into closed-off communities. Rather, they often cohere and participate in different communities simultaneously, which can be local as well as transnational (in their countries of origin or in the diaspora). Similarly, today's language learners and multilingual subjects (Kramsch 2009) also carry out their cultural encounters in a world impregnated with a variety of multicultural products and meanings.

These new understandings of multiculturalism will be explored through the analysis of ethnographic-style data and narratives of students of Arabic and Serbian/Croatian in adult language centres in the UK. I will interpret this data in the light of four aspects of Cosmopolitanism derived from Beck's (2006) theory of cosmopolitanism and will propose that the language learner should be envisaged and developed as a CS. This conceptualisation of the language learner will put forward the idea that the objective of language learning is not only a way of learning how to communicate in another culture but also a way to develop new cultural identities through the experiencing of different linguistic and cultural repertoires.

Methodology

Increasingly, second language acquisition (SLA) research has been concerned with the development of identity in the learning of additional languages. The use of narratives and ethnographic-style research has been the preferred methodology to investigate how learners experience new feelings and the construction of multiple selves through the

second language (Coffey and Street 2008; Kinginger 2004a; Kramsch 2002; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2001; Piller 2002; Ros i Solé 2004, 2007). It has even been argued that the use of the narrative genre allows the researcher to tap into learners' more personal and reflective worlds for which there may not be space or time in classroom practices to show 'how learners make sense of the language learning experience' (Pavlenko 2007: 164). The use of learners' first person accounts, such as diaries, gives us privileged access to data related to language learners' more private and personal knowledge of the target language. In this study, the narrative accounts of the lives of six language learners were interpreted, reflected upon and given coherence.

The tool used to extract these narratives was diary writing based on existing methods for eliciting these narratives, i.e. McAdam's (1993) model and the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* pilot project by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2007). To supplement the main data of students' narratives, I conducted open-ended interviews (Silverman 2006) with six participants (Table 1) to elicit more information on their ways of engaging with the curriculum and contrasted this with their development of personal spaces and their more private lives. The participants were from three different educational institutions: a university's department of East European and Slavic Studies (for the study of Croatian) which has a long history of close connections with governmental bodies and policies, an Adult Continuing Education Centre (for Catalan) and a University Language Centre (for Arabic). This article will draw on four participants: Weronika, Olga, Mary and Antonia.

In order to help uncover some of the more personal interests and motivations of language learners, i.e. a uniquely constructed trajectory woven together from their memories, day-to-day lives and socio-cultural experiences, my analysis approached the data in a 'holistic' way, by building their portraits with their personal histories, feelings, desires and ambitions. The analysis of the data therefore does not present representative cases. Rather, through the analysis of *telling cases* (Mitchell 1983), the ethnographer is interested in the general principles found in the data and how they were manifested in particular contexts.

In the data, language learning is manifested as an exercise in personal development in which multilingual subjects reflect on their position in the world, pursue their own desires and explore their subjectivities. The development of an awareness and sensibility for cultural and linguistic matters is preferred to pragmatic objectives. Learners dwell in language and inhabit and explore new worlds that liberate them from the tediousness of their familiar

Table 1. Summary of participants.

Name	Language	Data used	Profile
Weronika	Croatian/ Serbian	Interview Diary	Female, 20s, Polish born, educated in Holland and in Germany, postgraduate student. Intermediate level.
Nadia	Croatian/ Serbian	Interview Diary	Female, 20s, English with Croatian mother, postgraduate student. Intermediate level.
Olga	Croatian/ Serbian	Interview	Female, 20s, English, postgraduate student. Intermediate level.
Antonia	Arabic (MSA)	Interview Diary	Female, 30s, Romanian born, journalist by profession, now a postgraduate student. Post-Beginner.
Mary	Arabic (MSA)	Interview Diary	Female, 30s, English, administrator in government building. Post-beginner.
John	Catalan	Interview Diary	Male, 50s, businessman, speaks Italian and French. Beginner.
Marie	Catalan	Interview Diary	Female, 30s, professional, speaks Spanish and Italian. Beginner.

surroundings. They re-visit their daily practices, cultural values and ethical challenges. As Kinginger (2004a, 2004b) points out, language learners can use language to elevate themselves from the mundane details and ‘catastrophes’ of everyday life.

Imagined cultural encounters

For a long time, and in particular, with the hegemony of pragmatic versions of communicative language teaching in the 1980s (Leung 2005, 2010) and the focus on skills in language teaching, the use of literature was limited to the provision of ‘authentic texts’ (Kramersch and Kramersch 2000). Despite this, there are some good examples of how literature can be a powerful resource for assisting in constructing language learners’ personal cultural worlds (Cook 1997; Kramersch and Kramersch 2000). As Kanno and Norton (2003) have suggested, learners are able to construct their linguistic identities through ‘imagined communities’ by imagining themselves as bonded to their fellow compatriots across time and space. Literature can be a platform for the development of these imagined communities. As Kramersch (2009) suggests, learners can tailor the target culture to fit their histories, their minds and their bodies in a sort of ‘auto-couture’ and the reading of fictionalised accounts can provide such personalised experiences. In this chameleonic process, the learner can even become romantically enamoured with the idea of the ‘other’ and what it means to dwell in the culture(s) rather than trying to reproduce it or consume it unquestioningly. Thus, the ‘other’ becomes an idealised or fictional representation, even if this representation is triggered by a flesh-and-blood individual (Kramersch 2009: 15). Thus, the reading of literature (whether fiction or non-fiction) set in the target culture can create an imagined ideal community in the learners’ mind.

In my study, the use of literary accounts of the target culture featured in many of the language learners’ narrative accounts (both in their diaries and interviews). The first illustration comes from a student of Croatian who talks of how *Illyrian Spring*, a fictionalised travel account of the Balkan region, fired her imagination. In the novel, a woman embarks on a trip to the Dalmatian coast. She has a romantic disposition and uses the cultural encounter as a source of personal liberation and a journey of self-discovery. Olga recounts how *Illyrian Spring* became a source of inspiration to study Croatian.

It actually started when my mum gave me a book that was written in the 1930s/40s about this woman travelling through. ... It’s called *Illyrian Springs*, sort of along the coastline. So I had this kind of romantic notion. And then also Yugoslavia, this socialist history [...] It’s this woman, it’s fiction. I think it was written in the 30s or 40s [...] She is kind of this upper class woman who gets really fed up with her husband so she just walks out of her family and she is going to Greece and she sets off by train and she travels all the way through but she gets to Illyria and Dalmatia. And she never gets any further. And she meets with these amazing characters. She has this fantastic love affair and all this sort of stuff. So I just had this incredible romantic view [...]

References to travel and travel writing by language learners are not an uncommon occurrence in language learning. These are often expressed as metaphors of learners’ desire to create alternative worlds of escapism and fantasy.

An example of such romanticised imaginings comes from Mary, a student of Arabic, who talks about a list of books that nurtured her passion for the Middle East. A particular travel story stands out. This is the story of the experiences of an aristocratic lady in the nineteenth century who left the monotony and familiarity of her surroundings for a life of exhilaration and adventure.

I've got a book. No, it was a TV show about Lady Hester Stanhope. It was a comedy, but it was loosely based on her life. Her husband died, so she had no money. So she decided to leave the country and they went off to the Middle East. She was buried [...] near Damascus, where is that? Palmira! She is buried in Palmira. And she was a very famous British [...] 200 years ago. She just took her maid and went off and bought some camels and went exploring. I'm really interested in women who have done this. And I have a lot of literature and travel writing about people's adventures in the Middle East and I find it. ... I want to go and do that. That sound like fun. I know it would be a very different experience even, to a few years ago.

This extract reveals the significance of the exotic, the fantastical and the imagined for the language learner, who is thus best conceptualised as a romantic traveller of spiritual journeys of self-transformation. Like the alter-ego characters in accounts of travel writing, the language learner travels through the knowledge of the 'other' culture and gains new moral meanings and aesthetic sensibilities by accessing imaginary spaces of personal liberation (Gilroy 2000).

Indeed, for many people, language learning may not need to involve physically travelling to another country. As De Botton (2002) recounts, for some people, staying at home to relish the anticipation of travel is more pleasurable than the act of travelling itself. Learners' encounters with languages and culture are in constant dialogue between, on the one hand, learners' desires and fantasies for worlds of escapism, and on the other, the valuing, cherishing, but also recasting of their very personal and mundane lives. The contact of these two very different and contrasting spheres allows the learner to reflect on her cultural identity and as Holland et al. (2001) suggest 'redraw the boundaries of the self'.

From the national paradigm to a cosmopolitan vision

An alternative to the 'monolingual' and national paradigm in language teaching would be one that deconstructs the idea of the 'target culture,' that uses the notion of the nation-state as its only cultural and linguistic referent (Risager 2006). The concept of cosmopolitanism (Beck 2006; Delanty 2005) from the fields of sociology and cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler and Starkey 2005; Starkey 2011) offers an alternative perspective. It emphasises the breaking down of territorial boundaries. In doing so, it promotes a view of the world where individuals extend their moral responsibility and solidarity to communities beyond the local or the national. One embodiment of this idea is Beck's (2006) theory of cosmopolitanism which sees individuals as having multiple loyalties within a proliferation of transnational ways of life. This *Cosmopolitan Vision* argues against the old national outlook based on national borders and their differences, and replaces the nation-state as the organising cultural and socio-political unit with a notion which embraces transnational approaches to cultures and societies and the interdependence between them.

For Delanty (2005), the lived culture of everyday life becomes central for cosmopolitans and this form of cosmopolitanism discards the administrative demands and official cultural policies that others promote. Delanty's cosmopolitan thinking is found in language learners' narratives, both in the way they construct meaning with ordinary events and 'banal cosmopolitanism' (Beck 2006) in their lives and in the way they investigate and internalise the cultures and languages they are studying. As well as having dreams about distant lands and exotic landscapes, these learners also live Arab, Croatian and Serbian cultures on their doorstep. They engage with language in a variety of locations in their ordinary and mundane activities: they go to a Serbian community centre to have a meal, they study Croatian vocabulary lists while travelling on the train to work, they read the Arabic signs on

London's well-known 'Middle Eastern' thoroughfare, Edgware Road, with its multitude of Middle Eastern restaurants and shops; or they buy biscuits with Arabic writing to practise the language.

The two forces of national attachments and transnational affiliations are, however, not in contradiction for the truly cosmopolitan individual. According to Delanty (2005: 416) 'cosmopolitanism does not entail the renunciation of local or national attachments'. Despite the international and mobile outlook, language learners may also feel they belong to a national community. So, while they embrace 'other cultures', they do not reject their affiliations to their national territories. In the quote below, Weronika, the Polish learner of Croatian/Serbian explains how she both belongs to the other culture and at the same time she is an outsider.

It's a tainted experience, because on the one hand I really enjoy myself and I really think that somehow I *belong* to a different world that everybody is Serbian and there is the TV on and the architecture and the design of the place it makes you feel like you were really like in Serbia. But at the same time I can't forget about the context. The context is that you are in London and you use most of the time either English or Serbian and that I am an *outsider* to that world because I'm not Serbian and I'm not Orthodox either. So, in a way, there is always this duality, I suppose, I think.

Cosmopolitan cartographies

Theory on language learning is already beginning to explore *cosmopolitanism* as a new avenue for approaching language teaching and its cultures (Starkey 2011; Stougaard-Nielsen 2011) where the learner is seen as opening to new geographies that do not tie them to national boundaries. Delanty (2005) provides us with another aspect of cosmopolitanism which recognises new cultural models and their power to incite the self to be in constant evolution and transformation. Ros i Solé and Fenoulhet (2011) borrow from such a framework to explore ways in which the language learners' horizon and moral imaginings can change. In such a view, language learning goals are seen not simply as an immutable and universal series of objectives and competences but rather as contingent on the socio-economic climate they are embedded in. These transnational citizens are then free to interact both at the national and at the local level in a process of self-development and becoming.

Language learners in the data position themselves in the world by creating their own road-maps and cartographies of the world that transcend national boundaries and cultural dichotomies. They imagine their cultural destinations and their historical alliances with their neighbouring countries and cultural legacies across time and space in a dynamic personal trajectory.

Weronika is an example of a true transnational citizen. She embraces post-national identities that neither refuse nor fully embrace nationalism or globalisation. She displays a highly complex set of alliances to different countries. On the one hand, she recognises her international upbringing and education (Holland, Poland, Britain), on the other, she is interested in researching a particular national 'identity,' that of Croatia. Her transnationalism is made manifest in how she perceives her identity: one that is multiple and dynamic, which fluctuates from one country to another. I illustrate this in the following extract from an interview with her.

Cristina: How do you identify yourself in all these countries?

Weronika: Oh, that's a difficult question, since I usually try to deconstruct such concepts such as Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Western Europe. I think it's best to see yourself as fluctuating. Certain aspects of me are very Westernised since I have been living here for such a long

time, in Western Europe, so I think that certain aspects such as individualism are completely western, whereas others, well the post-socialist experience and what it means to live in a socialist country, to be able to understand how people feel there and what do they expect from life. To understand the attachment to religion and family is very Central European and I think I can understand that because of my heritage. So I always feel myself as balancing on this line and maybe playing a little bit with those images and taking whatever I see as suitable for myself from either.

Like Weronika, Antonia, a student of Arabic, feels that her roots are not only in her home country of Romania but also in the many countries that have shaped Romania's history. She explained this to me when we went to a Turkish restaurant and she recognised some of the words, which she puts down to the (Arab) linguistic legacy of the Ottoman Empire in Romania and Turkey. So, for Antonia the reality of the 'Arab world' is one that is not limited to the present or the physical world. Rather, it is in her imaginary concept of the place. By studying Arabic, she is creating her own figured world and symbolic reality by challenging the 'national' mapping of languages and cultures and equating 'Arabic' with the influence of the Ottoman empire. Antonia gathers evidence from books on history and the etymology of language to create her own version of the 'Arab world'. Through imagination and curiosity she modifies prevalent ideas about Romanian culture and her own place in the world. She re-defines what it means to be a Romanian studying Arabic and the intercultural space she inhabits. In so doing, she is constructing her own cartography of the world with Romania in the middle, between the East and the West.

The cosmopolitan language learner does not differentiate between herself and the 'other'. The difference between cultures that exclusively nation-based representations of cultures would assume is erased. Here, there is no clear division between the self and the other, and rather than an 'encounter' of two cultures, there is a gradual building of curiosity and affinity with another culture through personal interests. Rather than trying to solve the 'problem' of difference, the language learner uses the language encounter as an opportunity for displaying the 'practices of the self' (Holland et al. 2001), or the day-to-day rituals and habits of the self, and revising them. The act of learning a language becomes an act of testing the boundaries of the self, by re-appraising routines and values and by entering processes of becoming. In the acting out of different activities, the boundaries between languages and cultures become flexible and negotiable and the CS constantly questions their multiple identities and affinities to cultures. This is accomplished through the constant interaction between the spaces of the cultural and the spheres of the intimate. The individual does not see herself as fixed to a particular language and culture, but fluctuates from one set of cultural meanings to another. The language learner inhabits and performs social and even personal acts within the target culture. She does not see a barrier between herself and what is possible in the other culture. Instead, she wants to discover and immerse herself in new exciting cultural worlds through aesthetic, intellectual and moral experiences.

Cosmopolitan empathy

By looking at language learning from a cosmopolitan perspective, language learners are also compelled to take an interest in and empathise with the fate of the culture(s) under study. Language learners can contribute to the construction of knowledge by becoming intellectually and emotionally involved in another culture by caring about the misfortunes of other peoples. In doing so, the (cultural) 'possibilities for the self' (Ivanič 1998) are not restricted to consuming cultural representations constructed by political agents and handed down to them unquestioningly. Rather, learners adopt a critical stance towards the target

culture and even contribute to the meaning-making process of another culture by interpreting its problems, its cultural memory and its history. They become personal cultural agents from their own subjective perspectives.

The following extract from Weronika's diary in which she visits a Serbian community centre in London testifies to this 'cosmopolitan empathy'. Here she gives a description of a restaurant in a community centre in which the broadcasting of a war trial on TV is put beside the more banal and sensual actions of the context.

Yesterday I went to the Serbian Community Centre for dinner. I was surprised to see the centre very much alive. Last time I was there – in June 2008 – the atmosphere was entirely different. An elderly waiter poured our wine lazily, often peeking at a massive TV in the corner that was transmitting the trial in the Hague of Vojislav Seselj one of the alleged war criminals from Yugoslavia. This time there were three groups having dinner, drinking rakija and speaking Serbian (or attempting to do so). The waiter caught the buzz, smiled, spoke Serbian with us and seemed to enjoy the sudden and probably slightly surprising interest in Serbia and her language. I enjoyed myself very much as well –speaking Serbian (albeit limited), eating terapi, drinking rakija and smoking Serbian cigarettes.

Here Weronika describes an instance in which, for her, learning a language and culture has become interlinked with her intellectual interest and moral responsibility about the war trials in the ex-Yugoslavia. Whereas in the first visit the atmosphere was bleak, reflecting the mood that the broadcasting of the war crimes on television in one corner of the room had created; in the second visit, the atmosphere was much more upbeat and people seemed much livelier and happy. Weronika's account is an illustration of how the learning of a language has a web of different layers and connections in which political and historical events are reflected in peoples' mundane actions: when the news on TV was bleak, the atmosphere was tense, years later, without such news on TV the atmosphere was much more relaxed, with people enjoying themselves eating, drinking and smoking.

Banal cosmopolitanism

Another dimension of the data exposes the tension in language learning between on the one hand a desire for 'alterity' and the unfamiliar, and on the other, a need to integrate exoticism into our everyday lives. Following Beck's (2006) concept of 'banal cosmopolitanism,' I will argue that language learners consume cosmopolitan mass-products such as ethnic food and world music in an attempt to bring the exotic and the desired world closer to home and to integrate it in their more familiar lives. As Beck (2006: 41) explains:

Banal cosmopolitanism is intimately connected with all forms of consumption. It is exhibited not only by the vast colourful array of meals, foodstuffs, restaurants and menus routinely found in almost any city anywhere in the world. It also pervades other spheres of everyday culture – for example music.

By integrating rituals, everyday objects and souvenirs into their lives, learners are able to read these cultures with their own experiences and personally constructed symbolic meanings.

An illustration of such banal cosmopolitan acts comes from an interest in Balkan culinary traditions. A beautiful description in her diary depicts how Weronika, the student of Croatian, notices how certain types of food are shared across the Central Europe region: a sign of the porosity of cultures in the sharing of culinary traditions. She makes a

connection between Eastern Europe and her present Western world through the vegetable box she gets delivered to her flat in London:

Having come back from London, I received the regular order of my fruit and veg box. And I found, amongst other things, the January King cabbage – at least I think that is how it is called. And I found myself planning to make Sarma – a Balkan speciality, which is making by wrapping meat and rice filling in cooked cabbage leaves. This dish is found in almost all central European countries existing as *gotjabki* in Poland and *Kohlrouladen* in Germany. But as I was looking up the recipes for Sarma on the Internet I remembered its texture and taste as I ate it in Bosnian restaurants in Sarajevo. It was perfect.

For Weronika, learning Serbian/Croatian is about reflecting and intellectualising cultural experience through the discovering and interpretation of its cultural and historic memory (as in the example about the war trials). But it is also about sensitising oneself to another culture by participating with one's senses in the customs and mundane activities of Croatian and Serbian culture in a sort of 'banal cosmopolitanism' (Beck 2006).

The cosmopolitan disposition

The view taken here is that language learning involves not only carrying out specific pragmatic tasks in the target language, but also a specific frame of mind and disposition. A cosmopolitan disposition can be understood through the metaphor of the figure of the *flâneur* from the turn of the twentieth century and made famous by Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin (Tester 1994). The wandering figure of the *flâneur* suggests the stance of the CS and their consumption of the urban surroundings. Imagining the language learner as a twenty-first century *flâneur* grants them a new freedom of movement from the confines of the language classroom to a more flexible space which would include the multicultural urban landscape and its diasporic life. The *flâneur* lifestyle offers the language specialist a reflective distance, 'a distant gaze' to the foreign culture.

Flâneurs are rather detached from society. They stay on the periphery and, like a voyeur, they adopt the gaze of the spectator and observes and studies the world around him like an amateur detective. This type of language learning can be described as 'sightseeing with the sound switched off' (Cronin 2000). Unlike the phrasebook globetrotter with the tourist gaze (Urry 1990), who establishes direct contact with the host culture and interacts with it, the *flâneur* is happy to be silent, to adopt a distant gaze, to 'read' and appreciate the culture aesthetically, to 'browse scrupulously' (Barthes 1975 in Kramsch 2009: 208). Similarly, noticing the way things are said and expressed in the culture, not only through words but also through other artistic expression (e.g. through architecture, music, painting), language learners are constantly silently and leisurely observing and scrutinising their environments being struck by new meanings and re-interpreting old ones. Weronika is fascinated by the monumental architecture of the Eastern Block hotels in the former Yugoslavia because they speak of past Soviet rule. Antonia craves to scrutinise more visual memories of the Roman legacy in the Middle East. These readings of linguistic and cultural meanings through careful observation of the surroundings fit the special disposition of the *flâneur*.

Today's language learners also meander into other cultures by roaming the internet. The intercultural virtual *flâneur* is not a recent phenomenon, but it is one that needs to be investigated. Learners are increasingly using the internet to collect and gather information about different cultures. They read travel accounts, they visit museums, they browse pictures posted by others on the web. The internet has become a cultural superhighway, a borderless online repository of cultural information where people do not stay in one place for long.

Here, multilingual and CSs are able to do ‘culture-surfing’ and construct their own interpretations of cultures.

From the *intercultural* to the *cosmopolitan* speaker

The power of the learners’ imagined world and mental life created through the reading of literature and travel accounts has enabled me to postulate a concept of a type of IS that appears in the analysis of the data: the CS. The CS disengages with the politics of nation-states and the national ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1991) underlying previous conceptualisations of the language learner. Instead, it reaches for a global and transnational belonging (Risager 2006), in particular in the context of increasing international mobility, global networks and flows of discourses and ideas. The examples that I have provided of the CS need to be further interpreted in the light of such social phenomena and challenge some aspects of the definition of the ‘IS’.

In the pioneering Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) model (Byram 1997), the IS was rooted in a single mother tongue and nation and its accompanying social spheres and spaces. The intercultural subject had to travel ‘across cultures,’ mediating between cultures. In today’s new transnational and global world order, positions that were constructed for these languages and their learners limit the ways in which multilingual subjects are able to position themselves in the language learning experience and the roles they are allowed to adopt: e.g. as tourists or as businessmen/women, i.e. as insiders or outsiders of a culture. Examples of multiple and complex identities sit uneasily within this model, such as heritage migrant language learners, members of the diaspora, or indeed cosmopolitan individuals with multiple cultural alliances and belongings.

Such new cultural possibilities for the self require new vocabularies and definitions for the intercultural subject that take cognizance of contemporary social phenomena such as multilingualism, super-diversity and mobility. This new model should aim at allowing language learners to take charge of their cultural destinies and to free themselves from the restricting national and static models that stop them creating complex relationships to cultures, social positions and ways of looking at the world.

Table 2 summarises the stance of the CS on the four axes discussed above.

Implications for language pedagogy

This article has shown that language learners are not passive receivers and spectators of another culture and its literary canons. On the other hand, moving away from the

Table 2. The stance of the CS.

Cosmopolitan Cartographies	CS position themselves vis à vis cultures by creating their own road-maps and cartographies of the world that transcend national boundaries and cultural dichotomies and are anchored on a personal history and imagined world.
Cosmopolitan Empathy	CS are compelled to take an interest in and empathise with the fate of the culture(s) under study
Banal Cosmopolitanism	CS consume cosmopolitan mass-products such as ethnic food and world music in an attempt to bring the exotic and the desired world closer to home and to integrate it in their day-to-day lives.
Cosmopolitan Dispositions	CS silently and leisurely observe and scrutinise their environments, read new meanings and re-interpret old ones

'action-packed' and goal-focused orientation to language learning of previous models, the CS is characterised by a gentler activity and reflective agency. CS are defined by their conscious wandering and creative and compromise-oriented disposition towards the 'other'. Moreover, within such a view of language learning, learners are not statically fixed in particular languages and cultures, consuming homogenised versions of the language. Rather, they 'live' and 'imagine' languages at their own pace, and on their own terms by engaging in their agency, through personal readings of cultures and tracing their own trajectories within a cosmopolitan vision. By 'investing' themselves (Norton 2000) in languages and culture, learners construct a version of the language and culture that draws on their own histories, their moral views and their dreams for the future.

If the national models of culture and their language learner 'avatars' are no longer a viable solution in today's changed global, mobile and super-diverse world, we need an alternative model that recognises the new possibilities for the self that a post-national geography provides. I have argued Beck's *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006) provides a useful point of departure for providing a new theoretical framework that encapsulates today's language learners' cultural maps. I have proposed the notion of the CS as an alternative to the IS. If the IS was concerned with finding a position as a 'mediator' in between nations, outside national territories, the CS seeks to create a new cultural identity for the individual who 'dwells' in a variety of languages and cultures.

The shortening of distances through the democratisation of travel (Urry 2009), the increased digital connectivity of the world and the super-diversity of today's cities is challenging previous conceptualisations of the 'foreign' and the personally constructed cultural horizons of the language learner. CSs do not distinguish between the 'self' and the 'other' as their alliances are shifting and multiple.

CS are not only 'born' into cultures and marked by birth by their nationalities, they acquire new identities in the places they work, the people they socialise with and the media they consume in their super-diverse and cosmopolitan cities. They are both creative consumers of cultures through 'banal cosmopolitanism' and ethical and empathic thinkers who participate in global debates such as global warming, terrorism across the world or the devastating effects of far-flung wars (Beck 2006). But how is this translated into policies and actions for the language classroom?

Cosmopolitan pedagogies

In order for CS to position themselves *vis à vis* new cultures, language teaching methodology needs to acknowledge the subjectivity of the individual and its positioning towards a variety of cultures. Language learning needs to be done in tandem with the personal experiences and cultural history of the learner and acknowledge their cultural baggage irrespective of national boundaries. Studying Arabic will carry a different meaning for a heritage language speaker than for a complete newcomer to the culture. The public discourses in which language learners are immersed will also carry their weight in the subjectivities afforded to language learners, e.g. learning Arabic after 9/11 in the USA will carry a different symbolic meaning than studying Arabic in another time and space. Textbooks and language teachers should recognise such shifts in public discourses and be ready to engage with it in their classrooms.

With greater global flows and transnational communication, language learners may leave their exclusive attachments to national cultures behind. Instead, they can experiment with world views full of complexity that embrace new cultural formations and relationships. Indeed, multilingual and cosmopolitan individuals are constantly questioning and

reassessing their views and position on new world-conflicts and global moral dilemmas. Viewing learners as CS urges the development of a *Cosmopolitan Empathy* that forces the learner to engage with the language emotionally. It goes beyond tolerating other stand-points and world views by prompting the learner to put himself in the shoes of the ‘other’ and use his empathy to feel solidarity with a range of cultures and imagined collectives.

Rather than silence and avoiding the cosmopolitan and transnational experiences and cultural memories of individual learners, language classrooms should be seen as *fora* where such topics can be discussed and reflected upon. What is called for here is not a general response to global socio-historical phenomena, but rather the exploration of the effects of such historical events on individuals and the acknowledgement of the complex effect of such phenomena on individual lives. Moreover, those global phenomena need to be localised as learning a language means different things according to the cultural context in which it is learnt and the individuals who learn it. Given the multilingual and super-diverse populations in some language classrooms, this is a point worth bearing in mind. It is only in this way that these diverse language learning populations will be able to develop their unique cosmopolitan trajectories.

But, cosmopolitan pedagogies are not only implemented in the abstract domain of the imagination. This study has also pointed out that language learners live the here and now through the consumption of banal and mundane mass-marketed products such as ‘ethnic food’ and ‘world music’. Perhaps, here, the adoption of a new definition of ‘culture’ for the language lesson is called for. If university Modern Language departments have long been adopting new definitions of culture that include ‘popular culture’, it is high time that language pedagogy uses ‘pop culture’ that illustrates the shift of models of cultures from a national-based models to new paradigms based on cultural ‘fusion’.

Finally, a shift of emphasis in language pedagogy is needed that takes cognizance of the world of the imagination and learners’ ability to critically reflect on their environment in a personal and creative way. Whether it is through the use of literature in language learning curricula, or the emphasising of aesthetic aspects in language learning, or the use of the increasingly available multilingual cultural landscapes and social relationships in today’s super-diverse cities, there is a need to extend the goals of the language curriculum from an exclusive concern on competencies to new linguistic and cultural sensibilities.

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