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Journal

L2 Journal, 10(2)

Author

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Publication Date

2018

DOI

10.5070/L210235662

Peer reviewed

Designing Meaning and Identity in Multiliteracies Pedagogy: From Multilingual Subjects to Authentic Speakers

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This essay examines textual engagement of two students during a Multiliteracies lesson on a French poem (*Liberté*, Paul Eluard) in terms of *the multilingual subject* (Kramsch, 2009) and *the authentic speaker* (Van Compernolle, 2016). The case studies are based on personal data: (1) the students' autobiographies written on the first day of the course; (2) the transcript of their annotated comments about the poem; (3) their essays comparing the French poem to an English translation; and (4) their retrospective analysis about the effects of the multiliteracies lesson and course. The essay begins with a review of the Multiliteracies Framework, and the concepts of the multilingual subject and the authentic speaker. Next, the essay turns to a description of the subjective experiences of the two learners. Finally, the essay illustrates how the two students filtered the poem through their own subjectivities to arrive at a new sense of multilingual authenticity.

INTRODUCTION

We interpret a text based on who we are and what we know about the world. This basic idea lies at the heart of the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's claim that all human discourse is inherently dialogical (Bakhtin, 1986, 1992). Bakhtin asserted that the interpretation of a text brought the interpreter's present into dialogue with his or her past as well as his or her future. In other words, Bakhtin viewed the act of textual interpretation as a chain of semiosis that includes the remembrance of prior texts as well as the projection of possible, future texts. Thus, while textual interpretation occurs in the here and now, it implicates both retrospection and prospection. In addition, Bakhtin (1986) conceptualized linguistic interpretation as an on-going dialogue between the Self and the Other during which the Self seeks to appropriate certain words and expressions of the Other:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's 'own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language, but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (p. 294)

Similar ideas were expressed by A. L. Becker (1984) who borrowed the phrase "the linguistics of particularity" from the anthropological linguist Kenneth Pike (1972) to describe

how our linguistic competence was anchored in the memory of particular texts:

> The actual <u>a priori</u> of any language event—the real deep structure—is an accumulation of remembered prior texts just like the one studied here: particular prior texts, acquired from particular sources... And our real language competence is access, via memory, to this accumulation of prior text. (p. 435, original underlining)

Bakhtin's musings on the dialogicality of language and Becker's notion of language competence as the accumulation of prior texts raise interesting questions for language learners who find themselves confronting the meaning of a foreign text. For example, how exactly is a learner supposed to appropriate foreign words that seemingly belong to someone else? How does "taking ownership" of a foreign language affect the learner's identity? And finally, what is the impact of classroom instruction on the development of new learner identities?

To answer these questions, this essay examines the subjective aspects of "Designs of Meaning" as originally formulated by the New London Group (1996):

> We propose to treat any semiotic activity, including using language to produce or consume texts, as a matter of Design involving three elements: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned. Together, these three elements emphasize the fact that meaning-making is an active and dynamic process, and not something governed by static rules. (p. 74)

In addition, this essay is framed in terms of two theoretical constructs: *the multilingual subject* (Kramsch, 2009) and *the authentic speaker* (Van Compernolle, 2016). The first concept is the focus of Kramsch's (2009) book, *The Multilingual Subject,* in which the author expands the purview of language learning to encompass the emergent subjectivity of the learner: "The word 'subject' here will refer roughly to a learners' experience of the subjective aspects of language and of the transformations he or she is undergoing in the process of acquiring it" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 17). The second concept—the authentic speaker—derives from sociolinguistic research on local norms of linguistic behavior. According to this line of research, the linguistic performance of one's identity can be framed either in terms of conforming to external sociolinguistic norms or as an internal process of self-authentication (Bucholtz, 2003; van Compernolle, 2016).

The general goal of this essay is to illustrate how a Multiliteracies Framework, a meaning-based approach to language learning and teaching that privileges textual interpretation (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016), influences the identity development of two second language learners. In particular, this essay examines the cognitive and affective processes of two advanced-level learners of French, Sarah and Ricki (both pseudonyms), as they engage with the French poem *Liberté* (Eluard, 1942) during three consecutive class sessions. The cases of Sarah and Ricki were chosen because both students clearly articulated in retrospective interviews how multiliteracies as a pedagogical approach to poetic texts helped them achieve a more authentic, multilingual identity. Thus, the two case studies serve as illustrations of the idiosyncratic nature of textual engagement, and, as such, should not be generalized. Rather, the value of the two case studies lies in the particularity of their stories.

The learners' experiences of the poem are mediated by different knowledge processes grounded in an approach to literacy instruction called "Learning by Design" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). The case studies are based on personal data I collected during the course:

(1) the students' autobiographies written on the first day of the course; (2) the transcript of their annotated comments about the poem from an activity during the first day of the three-day lesson; (3) their essays comparing the French poem to an English translation from the last day of the lesson; and (4) retrospective interviews conducted several months after the course had ended. I begin by reviewing the Multiliteracies Framework, as well as the concepts of meaning design, the multilingual subject, and the authentic speaker. Then, I discuss in detail the performance and subjective experiences of the two learners during the lesson. Finally, I conclude with a discussion about how the two focal participants filtered the poem through their own particular subjectivities to design for themselves a new sense of multilingual authenticity.

THE MULTILITERACIES FRAMEWORK

At the end of the 20th century, linguists and applied linguists turned away from formal approaches to language in order to develop more dynamic models of meaning making (Kramsch, 2014a; 2014b). The new meaning-based approaches emphasize the nature of language and culture in terms of general cognition (Langacker, 2008), complexity (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), ecological relations (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 2004), semiosis (Byrnes, 2006; Halliday, 1978; van Lier, 2004), and Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (Byrnes, 2006; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Despite important differences, these approaches all construe language and culture as a complex, dynamic system whose abstract patterns originate in the social and cognitive features of human interaction (Atkinson, 2011; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Summarizing this paradigm shift, semanticist and ethnolinguist Cliff Goddard (2011) aptly states that "[m]eaning is moving back to centre stage in the linguistic enterprise" (p. x).

In keeping with these theoretical developments, the field of foreign language teaching has increasingly focused on meaning. One of the most salient examples of this renewed interest in meaning is the Multiliteracies Framework, a cover term used to refer to a set of powerful ideas about the relation of texts to linguistic practices and identity formation (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2015; Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Paesani et al., 2016). Grounded in a functionalist view of language exemplified by systemic functional linguistics, the Multiliteracies Framework (also known as the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" or "Multiliteracies pedagogy" or simply "Multiliteracies") recognizes the diversity of visual, audio, spatial, behavioral, and gestural modes of meaning making (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2015). In other words, the Multiliteracies Framework goes beyond traditional logocentric media and ventures into previously proscribed areas such as multimodal genres that closely align with students' digital experiences (New London Group, 1996).

While many researchers recognize the Multiliteracies Framework as the dominant paradigm in the field of New Literacy Studies, its popularity in collegiate foreign language teaching is relatively new (Paesani et al., 2016). Recently, foreign language educators have begun to adopt the Multiliteracies Framework in their efforts to rethink classroom practices (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Dubreil, 2011; Michelson & Dupuy, 2014; Warner, 2014) as well as curriculum development (Paesani, 2017; Paesani et al., 2016). The shift from "literacy" to "multiliteracy" not only signifies the inclusion of a wider range of textual genres, but more importantly, a fundamental rethinking of the concept of literacy itself and how to teach it. Traditional approaches to literacy have been based on the consumption of canonical texts paired with an understanding of their received interpretations (Warner, 2014). In contrast,

the Multiliteracies Framework emphasizes a critical awareness of language use viewed as a set of social practices that constitute an important part of one's identity.

In 1996, a group of language and literacy specialists called the New London Group developed a metalanguage for describing how textual meaning is designed that includes three basic components: Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned (New London Group, 1996).[1] Paesani et al. (2016) define Available Designs as the "linguistic, cultural, and social resources that a learner draws on in understanding and creating texts" (p. 23). Akin to Becker's concept of the "accumulation of prior texts," Available Designs refers to the learner's knowledge of specific textual genres, such as a "eulogy," combined with the background knowledge of a specific sociocultural field or event, such as a "funeral" or a "memorial service." Designing refers to the act of textual interpretation or textual production, and can include, for example, processes of assembling and performing a text, such as the actual reading of a eulogy. And finally, the Redesigned refers to any product of Designing, such as the blending of a eulogy with a song to create a redesigned text meant to memorialize the deceased in a creative, personalized way. Such a hybrid text emphasizes that Meaning Design is not a mechanical process of replicating a textual template, but rather a creative act of meaning-making. As such, the Redesigned necessarily always transforms the original Available Designs. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2009), "Meaning makers do not simply use what they have been given: they are fully makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning" (p. 175).

In the Multiliteracies Framework, the general process of Meaning Design described above is facilitated by four kinds of pedagogical acts: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice. It is important to point out that the developers of the Multiliteracies Framework never prescribed a particular sequence of pedagogical acts. These four acts simply refer to different classroom activities that may be sequenced in different ways depending on the instructional goal. In an effort to make the four pedagogical acts more transparent to teachers, Cope and Kalantzis (2015) renamed them in terms of four knowledge processes: Experiencing, Conceptualizing, Analyzing, and Applying. According to the authors, their newer approach to multiliteracies pedagogy—referred to as "Learning by Design"—frames learning as a "process of coming to know" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 23).

Situated Practice refers to a kind of experiential activity during which learners encounter a text but are not asked to consciously reflect on the text's structure. For example, during a Situated Practice activity, a learner might be confronted with a familiar text in the L1 or an unfamiliar text in the L2. Cope and Kalantzis (2015) associate the knowledge process of Experiencing with Situated Practice. Furthermore, they contend that Experiencing should link the learner's own lifeworld (Experiencing the known) to unfamiliar domains (Experiencing the new). Overt Instruction refers to methods that are meant to draw the learner's attention to the linguistic resources of a text, such as grammar, vocabulary, and rhetorical organization. The authors associate Overt Instruction with the knowledge processes of Conceptualizing by Naming and Conceptualizing with Theory. Conceptualizing by Naming refers to categorizing and labeling while Conceptualizing with Theory refers to generalizing beyond a single text. Critical Framing obliges the learner to think beyond the text in an effort to understand the relevant social and cultural forces at play in the production and interpretation of the text. Cope and Kalantzis (2015) associate this pedagogical act with the knowledge process of Analyzing a given text to understand how it

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[1] The three terms are consistently capitalized in the scholarly literature.

functions. And finally, Transformed Practice refers to any activity that requires the learner to apply knowledge gained during pedagogical acts in a new and creative way. The knowledge process associated with this pedagogical act is Applying. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2015), "Application in pedagogy is a process in which knowledge is taken out of its immediate educational setting and made to work beyond that setting" (p. 21). A good example of Transformed Practice would be a creative writing activity that asks the learner to produce a personalized version of a text type previously studied in class.

Literacy specialists point out that teachers and researchers often implement the Multiliteracies Framework in ways not intended by the New London Group (1996). For example, Leander and Boldt (2012, p. 24) warn teachers not to "domesticate" the learning process by envisioning Multiliteracies pedagogy as an overly rational, "text-centric" practice that ignores the unpredictable, embodied, and emergent nature of textual engagement. Furthermore, the authors caution that the development of language and identity in the Multiliteracies Framework is never completely under the control of either the students or the teacher. Following the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) who liken the reader's subjective interpretation of a text to a rhizome—the root system of bulb plants—Leander and Boldt (2012) claim that textual understanding is "in a state of constant, unpredictable emergence" (p. 25). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) extend their rhizomatic metaphor with the concept of an "assemblage," a random collection of things that happen to be present in any given literacy context. Leander and Boldt (2012) warn teachers and researchers that the elements of any literacy lesson—texts, learners, activities, emotions—will produce "any number of possible effects on the elements in the assemblage" (p. 25). As such, they challenge researchers to document assemblages with great care in order to understand how learners engage with texts. In light of Deleuze and Guattari's metaphors of emergent understanding and Leander and Boldt's pedagogical warnings, it would seem that the real challenge for both teachers and researchers is to embrace the unpredictability of Multiliteracies pedagogy.

Along similar lines, Warner (2014) cautions teachers to view reading as a process that depends on affectivity as much as rationality. Or, more precisely, Warner describes reading as comprised of two interrelated processes—an experiential process that is largely emotional and an interpretive process that is largely rational. According to Warner (2014), foreign language instruction has tended to privilege the reader's rational interpretation of a text to the detriment of the reader's affective response. She appeals to language educators to "incorporate learners' feelings of discomfort, pleasure, rightful discombobulation, resonance, etc. into our professional understandings of what language does, so that we can better address it in curriculum-building and teacher development" (p. 172).

THE MULTILINGUAL SUBJECT AND THE AUTHENTIC SPEAKER

Warner's (2014) contention that our subjective experience of a text is central to "our sense of the world and our place in it" (p. 158) recalls two theoretical constructs from the foreign language acquisition literature—the multilingual subject and the authentic speaker. According to Kramsch (2009) the multilingual subject "is a symbolic entity that is constituted and maintained through symbolic systems such as language" (p. 17). Citing Bakhtin's (1992) work on "the dialogic imagination," Kramsch claims that the learner's subjectivity is created in interaction with speakers of different languages and, in turn, gives rise to a multilingual sense of self. Relating the learner's development of a multilingual

subjectivity to Halliday's (2002) notion of *semiodiversity* or the plurality of meanings, Kramsch argues that language learning is not simply a matter of learning a new word for a familiar meaning but rather learning entirely new meanings that expand the learner's semiotic potential. Kramsch (2009) emphasizes that the process of becoming a multilingual subject invariably leads to fundamental changes in the learner's sense of self:

> One could say that becoming a subject means becoming aware of the gap between the words that people utter and the many meanings that these words could have, between the signifiers and the possible signifieds, between who one is and who one could be. (p. 18)

As language learners become increasingly aware of this gap, they begin to see themselves as multilingual subjects striving to integrate new meanings into a hybrid semiotic system. And yet, in order for the multilingual subject to become an authentic L2 speaker, he or she is forced to decide which meanings in the foreign semiosphere are authentic to one's new multilingual sense of self. However, this conception of the "authentic speaker" is at odds with how the term has been typically defined in sociolinguistics. For instance, in sociolinguistic theory, an individual who follows community norms when speaking a sociolect or dialect is referred to as an authentic speaker of that variety. Van Compernolle (2016) points out that the traditional sociolinguistic conceptualization of authenticity excludes most L2 speakers who do not conform to local norms as embodied in the native speaker ideal. Following sociocultural linguists such as Bucholtz (2003) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and philosopher of education Cooper (1983), van Compernolle (2016) contends that L2 speakers should be viewed as "authentic" if they are able to appropriate "culturally relevant and recognizable patterns of meaning and language" as part of an on-going process of self-authentication (p. 62). In particular, van Compernolle (2016) argues that the process of L2 self-authentication should not to be conceptualized in terms of the native speaker norm, an externally imposed benchmark, but rather in terms of an internally guided appropriation of meanings that are consonant with one's self-perception. In such a view, authenticity should be equated with the personal transformation that occurs when a learner employs a foreign language in ways that feel true to his or her emerging sense of self.

A COURSE ON FRENCH LANGUACULTURE

In order to grasp Sarah and Ricki's subjective experience of poetic engagement and its impact on their identities, it is essential to understand the specific literacy "assemblage" of text, learners, activities and the course on which this essay is based. For many years, I had been teaching an upper division linguistics course entitled simply "Introduction à la linguistique française" (Introduction to French Linguistics). Taught in French, the course targets the major sub-disciplines of structural linguistics: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. In fall 2015, I decided to reframe the course in terms of the anthropological concept "languaculture" in order to focus more closely on meaning rather than on form. Defined simply as the "cultural aspects of language" or "verbal culture" (Risager, 2007), *languaculture* is a neologism that highlights the complex relationship between language, culture, and the human mind (Agar, 1994; Friedrich, 1989). My argument for reframing the course in terms of languaculture was based on "the Sapir-Whorf effect" (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013) that refers to the benefits of labeling a phenomenon that has previously gone unnamed but not necessarily unnoticed. Cognitive scientists Douglas Hofstadter and

Emmanuel Sander claim to "see a genuine power that comes along with providing a concept with a name: it allows speakers to spread knowledge of it around easily and quickly" (p. 124).

By reframing the course in terms of languaculture, I also hoped to break with the nationalist paradigm in foreign language education that equates native speaker identity with proficiency in a single, standardized national language (e.g., the English speak English, the French speak French, the Germans speak German, etc.) (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Kearney, 2015; Levine, 2011; Risager, 2007). It was my belief that such a nationalist, monolingually-biased, and structuralist paradigm essentializes languages and cultures and perpetuates the very stereotypes and myths that a liberal education seeks to dispel (Warner, 2011). Despite my concerns, shared widely by many applied linguists, the nationalist paradigm remains prevalent in many foreign language departments (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Diaz, 2013; Kearney, 2015).

Following Risager (2007), I divided the course into three macro domains of meaning: the semantic-pragmatic domain, the social domain, and the poetic domain. These three domains are each represented by well-established academic fields. Semantics and pragmatics belongs to linguistics, while social meaning is the focus of sociolinguistics. Finally, the poetic domain that includes the study of aesthetics, expressivity, and poetics has long been a focus within literary studies. The data for this essay are derived from a single lesson focused on how meaning is made within the poetic domain of French languaculture, the final unit of the course.

In addition, I chose various authentic, multimodal texts written in French—blogs, online fora, films, poems, and songs—to facilitate an inquiry-based study of the three domains of languacultural meaning. Finally, I found parallel texts in English to contrast with the French texts. The analysis of parallel texts was meant to exemplify how different languacultures reflect different realms of meaning. Importantly, the use of parallel texts allowed me to incorporate "back translation" into the Multiliteracies Framework. According to Becker (1984), "back translation" is an effective method for uncovering one's semiotic biases: "…starting from a translation and then seeking out the exuberances—those things present in the translation but not in the original—and the deficiencies—those things in the original but not in the translation" (p. 246). It was my belief that back translation could help my students uncover their own "exuberances" and "deficiencies" as they tried to "operate between languages" (MLA Report, 2007), or in this case, between languacultures.

THE CASES OF SARAH AND RICKI

Describing Their Languacultural Identities

At the time of the course, Sarah was hoping to double major in pre-medicine and French. During one of our early discussions, she confessed that her dream job would be to work for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). A rising junior, she was heavily involved in many different social and extra-curricular activities. For example, as a passionate music lover, she was a dedicated member of an undergraduate choral group. In her languaculture autobiography (see Appendix A), Sarah emphasized her multicultural heritage: "Between my parents and my parents' parents I experienced Latin, American, Argentinian, German, Polish, Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Hebrew ethnicities, religions, and languages." Born to an American father and a Chilean mother, Sarah grew up in a wealthy suburb of Dallas, Texas. Her parents had lived in Dubai for 10

years, and they maintained close ties with her mother's Chilean family. As a result, Sarah had grown up exposed to many languages, in particular, Arabic, English, Hebrew, and Spanish. Despite her multilingual background and knowledge of Spanish, she considered herself neither bilingual nor multilingual.

Sarah had studied French since middle school and had traveled to France. She had also recently begun the study of Portuguese following a trip to Brazil during which she experienced a deep connection with the Brazilian people and culture. At the beginning of the course, Sarah sheepishly confided that she had come to enjoy the study of Portuguese more than the study of French, despite, or rather because of, her many years devoted to learning French. Unfortunately, French had become associated in Sarah's mind with a rigid, prescriptivist approach to language. In contrast, she felt a sense of liberation when learning and speaking Portuguese. She often commented on the pedagogical differences between her French professors who she claimed found fault with her "imperfect" French grammar and her Portuguese instructors who seemed more concerned with her efforts to communicate. As a result, despite her impressive skills in French and her nascent skills in Portuguese, she tended to describe her French in terms of deficiency and disappointment and her Portuguese in terms of potential and pleasure.

Ricki, the other focal participant, described her heritage as multi-ethnic and multi-racial, a blend of "midwestern Scandinavian-American" and "hippie Tex-Mex." Much like Sarah, Ricki felt uncomfortable calling herself bilingual or multilingual. An avowed Francophile, Ricki spoke enthusiastically about her love of francophone literature and French food. She found the sounds of the French language aesthetically pleasing, such as "the nasal vowels, the French [ʁ] and [ʒ], and the musicality of that language." Unlike her classmates, Ricki had already completed a BA in French and was returning to university to acquire her teaching certification. A highly focused student, Ricki was driven to improve her linguistic and cultural proficiency before undertaking her teaching career.

After the first month, she wrote me an email that demonstrated her seriousness of purpose (Appendix B). In the email, she asked if the theoretical ideas around the focal concept of languaculture were of any practical use for a language teacher. In particular, she wanted to know if what she was learning in class could benefit her future middle school students. Recognizing the importance of her questions, I asked her for permission to share the email with her classmates in order to prompt reflection on the personal relevance of the course material. The subsequent discussion afforded me an opportunity to explain that the course was intended as an exploration not only of French languaculture(s) but of the students' own languaculture. Finally, Ricki's email also contained evidence that the concept of languaculture was helping her construct a positive multilingual identity: "…I have never thought of my own American accented version of French, with its attendant baggage of 'AmericanEnglish-speaker-Hispanic-college-student-from-Texas' as having a place in the francophone world. I think maybe that's not exactly what you were getting at when you were explaining some things yesterday, but I like the thought nonetheless!"

Experiencing the Poem

Occurring near the end of the semester, the lesson began on Thursday, November 12, 2015 and lasted for three consecutive class sessions during which participants engaged with the poem *Liberté* (Liberty) by the French surrealist poet Paul Éluard through pedagogical acts

informed by Multiliteracies pedagogy.[2] The word "surreal" is often attributed to the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire who coined the term in 1917 in reference to a kind of reality that could only be accessed through a dreamlike state of emotional associations (Hargrove, 1998). In 1924, André Breton, a French poet and leader of the surrealist movement, defined surrealism: "Pure psychic automatism by means of which one intends to express, either verbally, or in writing, or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, free of any aesthetic or moral concern" (Kline, 2017, online preface). In general, surrealist texts are characterized by non-sequiturs and disorienting juxtapositions of random images and ideas. As such, surrealist texts often defy common strategies of interpretation aimed at uncovering a text's coherence and cohesion. In essence, to recall Warner's (2014) distinction between experiencing a text versus interpreting a text, surrealism calls for the reader to experience the text in an associative and affective manner before attempting logical explanation of its meaning. As such, I chose the poem *Liberté* to explore the poetic domain of languaculture whose meanings cannot be apprehended in the same manner as those belonging to the semantic/pragmatic domain or the social domain.

The first pedagogical act was a brief Situated Practice activity that required the students to experience the French poem *Liberté* as declaimed by the poet Paul Eluard. Recall that the pedagogical act of Situated Practice does not require the students to interpret the text per se, but rather to become familiar with the text through experiential processes. After listening to a recording of the poem, I asked the students what Eluard's diction and delivery brought to mind. Not surprisingly, Sarah and Ricki both associated the poet's tone with formality, seriousness, and a kind of melodrama reserved for theatrical performance.

The next pedagogical act was a Critical Framing activity during which I situated the poem in French history and discussed background information about the poet, the surrealist movement, and the canonical interpretation of the poem. As a concrete illustration, I showed the students pedagogical treatments of the poem that were sanctioned by France's National Ministry of Education. My goal was to teach the students about the poem's place in the French literary canon, and to discuss the structural and rhetorical properties of surrealist texts that had received attention from French educators and literary specialists. Written by the French surrealist poet Paul Eluard in 1942, the poem *Liberté* is typically presented in French textbooks in terms of the resistance to the German occupation, a canonical reading based largely on the text's culturally sanctioned "horizon of expectations" (Makaryk, 1993). For example, the Ministry of Education's website "Poètes en résistance" (Poets in resistance), refers to the poem as "un texte emblématique de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, de l'engagement des hommes et de la lutte pour un idéale" (a text emblematic of the Second World War, of human political engagement and of the struggle for an ideal).[3] It is widely claimed that Eluard intended the poem to be spoken given its repetitive structure that facilitates memorization and declamation. In fact, the poem was recited by members of the French Resistance as evidence of their membership in the underground movement. The poem's structural properties also make it highly accessible for language learners: 20 short stanzas that end with the refrain "J'écris ton nom" (I write your name) followed by a final, frame-breaking stanza that names the poem's subject: Liberté.

In the next pedagogical act, an Overt Instruction activity, I sought to challenge the canonical reading of the poem by re-contextualizing the text in terms of different designs—

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[2] See https://www.poetica.fr/poeme-279/liberte-paul-eluard/ for access to the poem online.
[3] https://www.reseau-canope.fr/poetes-en-resistance/poetes/paul-eluard/liberte/pistes-pedagogiques/

different sounds and images from different languacultures. Recall that an Overt Instruction activity requires that attention be paid to how design elements of a text contribute to the overall textual meaning. For this activity, I asked the students to watch a series of YouTube mash ups of the poem created by people from all over the world: Tunisian middle school students reciting the poem in French; young children in Madagascar dancing to the poem set to lively music; a Spanish version of the poem accompanied by hand drawn illustrations, etc. My goal for this activity was to draw their attention to iconicity, a central concept in the creation of poetic meaning based on a relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. In addition, this activity was meant to raise the students' awareness about the nature of their own multilingual subjectivities by explicitly demonstrating how the original meanings of the French text changed when accompanied by different design elements found in the videos.

Watching the YouTube videos familiarized the students with the poem's overall structure, but there remained words that the students did not understand. Therefore, in the next Conceptualizing by Naming activity performed on computers, I asked the students to look up unfamiliar words in an online dictionary and to gloss the words for the benefit of their classmates. To facilitate this Overt Instruction activity, I used a web-based social reading program called *eComma* that allows a group of readers to collaboratively annotate and comment on any shared text (Blyth, 2014). In addition to glossing new vocabulary, I asked the students to share thoughts and feelings triggered by the text, but to avoid logical interpretation as much as possible.

During this social reading activity, Sarah mixed English, French, and Portuguese in her online comments. She paid close attention to the formal properties of the poem such as its rhyme scheme as well as the poem's stylistic devices such as metaphor and juxtaposition. In particular, she commented on the verse "Sur l'espoir sans souvenir" (On hope without memory) saying that it reminded her of Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" because it represented "honest thoughts that may or may not have meaning in themselves." Importantly, the verse "Sur mon chien gourmand et tendre" (On my sweet gluttonous dog) triggered in her a melancholy feeling that she referred to using the Portuguese word "saudade": "Cela me fait penser au mot 'saudade' (portuguais)" (That makes me think of the word saudade (Portuguese)). When I replied to her posted comment with a query, "Le sens de saudade?" (The meaning of saudade?), she switched to English and posted a long explanation:

> *Saudade* is not translatable into English (maybe it is possible to do so into French, but I wouldn't know), but it's essentially an amalgamation of nostalgia, longing, and a very specific characteristic sadness that is hard to explain in any language. The reason the highlighted portion reminds me of saudade is that the commentary of the dog made me think of what happens when people go off to war (or have to leave for another reason) and have to leave their pets, and how there's this longing that exists. Towards the end of the poem, with the lines "Sur l'espoir sans souvenir / J'écris ton nom", I think it evokes that feeling again.

Much like Sarah, Ricki was a very engaged participant during the social reading activity, responding to her classmates more frequently than any other student. In fact, she responded to Sarah's explanation of the Portuguese word *saudade*: "J'adore cette explication mais c'est triste ☺" (I love this explanation but it's sad ☺). Her comments were either one-word English

glosses of unfamiliar French words (e.g., phare=lighthouse) or long musings written entirely in French. For the verse "Sur le sable, sur la neige" (On the sand, on the snow), she wrote the following comment: "Partout dans le poème, l'auteur crée des contrastes. Ici on a le sable et la neige. Les deux sont compris des granules/crystales, mais ils sont des substances/matières très différentes; on trouve le sable au désert, et la neige sur les montagnes. Le passage indique qu'on trouve la liberté partout dans le monde (Throughout the poem, the author creates contrasts. Here, one has sand and snow. The two are comprised of granules/crystals but they are very different substances; you find sand in the desert and snow on the mountains. The passage indicates that you find freedom everywhere in the world). After the students had thoroughly annotated the poem with their comments, I handed out copies of the French text accompanied by an English translation (see C) and asked the students to conduct a "back translation" to identify the deficiencies and exuberances in the English translation. I told the students that we would discuss their analyses during the next class session.

Recontextualizing the Poem in the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks

The following day, Friday, November 13, 2015, terrorists killed 130 Parisians, the deadliest attack on French soil since WWII. Having just read Eluard's *Liberté*, the students were quick to notice how the French public turned to poetry to memorialize the victims on social media. In fact, one student sent an email to the class with examples of poetry circulating on French social media. On Sunday, I sent the students a link to an online article from Slate.fr about the use of poetry to express emotions in the aftermath of the attacks: "Sur les réseaux sociaux, les émotions passent par la poésie" (On social networks, poetry is a vehicle for emotions).[4] A student noticed a poignant detail in the article that had escaped my attention—a photo of a makeshift altar with a handmade poster inscribed with the last stanza of *Liberté*.
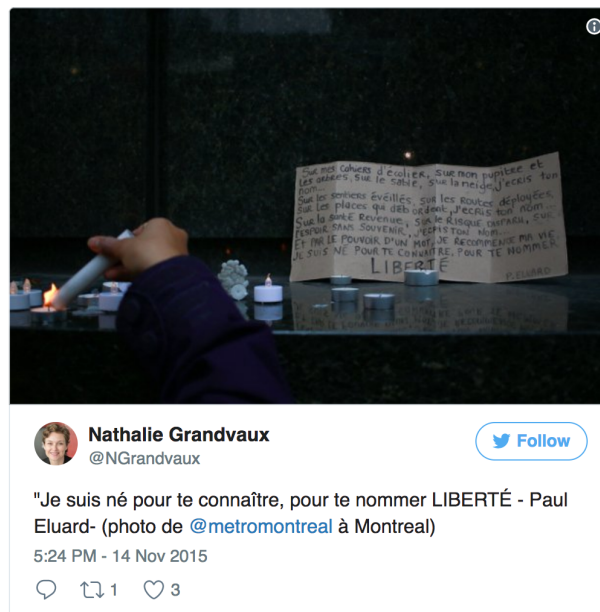
Nathalie Grandvaux
@NGrandvaux   Follow

"Je suis né pour te connaître, pour te nommer LIBERTÉ - Paul Eluard- (photo de @metromontreal à Montreal)
5:24 PM - 14 Nov 2015

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[4] http://www.slate.fr/story/109993/reseaux-sociaux-emotion-poesie

Given the gravity of the attacks and the circulation of Eluard's poem on French social media, I felt it necessary to begin Tuesday's class with a discussion of the horrific events and the public's poetic response. As part of the activity that mixed elements of Critical Framing (a focus on the larger social context) with elements of Overt Instruction (a focus on design elements), I had the students watch President Hollande's official televised address to the French nation in which he proclaimed that the attacks were an act of war "contre les valeurs que nous défendons partout dans le monde, contre ce que nous sommes, un pays libre, qui parle à l'ensemble de la planète" (against the values that we defend throughout the world, against what we are, a free country, that speaks to the entirety of the planet).[5] Next, I had the students watch President Obama's televised address in which he emphasized the importance of liberty as a shared Franco-American value: "We draw strength from the French people's commitment to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' We are reminded in this time of tragedy that the bonds of 'liberté, egalité, fraternité' are not only values that the French people care so deeply about, but they are values that we share."[6] I used the juxtaposition of the two speeches to prompt a critical analysis of how the French and American concepts of liberty were embedded within different sets of accumulated prior texts that formed complex webs of lexical associations, collocations, and fixed expressions (e.g., "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness").

Analyzing Translations of the Poem

During the rest of the class session, my students and I discussed their "back translations" of the poem, a Transformed Practice activity during which the students conducted a verse-by-verse comparison of the original poem and the English translation. The goal of this activity was to have the students creatively apply the knowledge that they had gleaned about the text during the previous pedagogical acts. At the end of the class, I gave them their final assignment of the lesson—the writing of a short essay about the challenges of translating Eluard's *Liberté*, another example of a Transformed Practice activity.

Sarah began her essay by citing Roman Jakobson's well-known concept of the poetic function. She argued that what one typically considers that the "poetic" is based largely on an aesthetically pleasing repetition of sounds and phrases such as rhymes, alliterations or parallel structures. Given the grammatical and phonetic differences between the two linguistic codes, she claimed that it was impossible to capture this level of poetic artistry: "For example, the 'rich' rhyme of the French suffix -age in '[s]ur la mousse des nuages / [s]ur les sueurs de l'orage' is lost when translated into the English '[o]n the foam of the clouds / [o]n the sweat of the storm.'" Moreover, she noted that French and English, like all languages, have incommensurable grammatical properties. For example, she pointed out that the semantic connotations of gender for French nouns were completely lost in the English translation.

After discussing the formal differences between the two texts, Sarah analyzed the semantic and pragmatic differences. She noted that while French and English are historically related languages and therefore share many words, differences in lexical meaning still pose challenges. For example, she argued the English word *desk* is a generic term that lacks the specificity of the French word *pupitre* that evokes the image of a desk used by young children at school. Despite acknowledging the loss of many aesthetic nuances, Sarah contended that

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translation was still a worthwhile endeavor, and concluded her essay on a positive note stating, "intercultural literacy is incredibly important in order to have a more complete understanding of life."

Ricki's essay was one of the most insightful and nuanced of the class. She went beyond what is lost and gained in translation by adding a third category—what stays the same. She claimed that languacultures occasionally align, thus allowing the original text to be translated with virtually no discernible change in meaning. Like Sarah, Ricki was adept at cataloguing the many formal properties of French that were lost in the English translation such as rhymes ("cahier/écolier") and alliterative phrases ("le lac lune vivante"). She also discussed the cases of lost meaning attributed to grammatical differences. For example, she pointed out that the poem's refrain ("J'écris ton nom") lost the intimacy and informality carried by the French possessive determiner when translated into English ("I write your name").

Despite the many losses attributed to the formal mismatches between French and English, Ricki maintained that occasionally the translator created rhymes and alliteration in English as a way of restoring the original text's poetic function: "We also see alliteration of "w" in several places throughout the English translation—"wonder/white" in the fifth stanza, "wings/windmill/shadows/write" in the seventh stanza, "wakened/ways/write" in the eleventh stanza, and "awkward/paws/write" in the fourteenth stanza." Finally, in one of the most original parts of her essay, Ricki noted that the poetic effect of repetition was largely preserved in the translation. For example, she noted that the poetic repetition of the preposition remains in the English translation and thus does not disturb the poetic effect: "The idea that the poet writes "on" the surfaces of objects (on crowns and weapons, for example), on living beings (on wings and extending hands), and on Mother Nature herself (on the sea and on the foam of the clouds), gives power to the poem, whether in the original French or not."

Accessing Subjective Experiences Through Retrospection

In keeping with Leander and Boldt's (2012) admonition to avoid domesticating Multiliteracies pedagogy by focusing exclusively on the students' textual production, a practice they call 'text-centric', I conducted an in-depth retrospective interview with Sarah and Ricki to uncover the subjective experiences of their Meaning Design process. During my interview with Sarah, I showed her the transcript from her online social reading of the poem and asked her to recall as best she could the moment when her reading had triggered her "Portuguese" emotion:

> Uhm...I was reading the poem in French. And I saw the word *souvenir* and translated that in my mind, uhm, I thought *memory*. And from there, that's when I thought of nostalgia. And that doesn't really, that doesn't really explain it right. *L'espoir sans souvenir*, you know, *hope without memory*, that's not...that's not...it's not nostalgia. It's this thought of something less concrete. And I think saudade is the only word to describe that phrase. Hope without memory. Even in English...I can't even...I can't even...that still doesn't…nostalgia is the closest I can get in English. But that still doesn't encompass the meaning of what *l'espoir sans souvenir* means.

Later in the interview, Sarah explained that the verse "l'espoir sans souvenir" had initially triggered her feelings of melancholy and longing but that it hadn't been until she read the

verse about a dog and imagined the dog being left behind by its owner during wartime that the Portuguese word suddenly came to her mind. Her obvious difficulties putting the concept of *saudade* into English or French exemplify the incommensurable nature of languacultures. Fortunately, rather than construing this particular instance of semiotic dissonance as yet another example of her deficiency in French, she chose to view it as evidence of her multilingual capacity, that is, her ability to shuttle between the meanings of multiple languages in a somewhat conscious manner—a phenomenon that the literary critic Mary Louise Pratt (2002) has dubbed "the traffic in meaning."

Sarah confirmed that the lesson on *Liberté* and its focus on the poetic domain of languaculture had allowed her to successfully blend seemingly disparate elements of her multilingual self into a more coherent whole, namely the study of Portuguese and French and her love of different musical styles and genres. When I asked her if she had made a connection between language and music during the poetry lesson, she confirmed that analyzing the "music of the poem" had made her think about her love for different kinds of world music.

> Yes, I LOVE music. And I listen to not just American music, I listen to French music, I listen to Brazilian music, I listen to Greek music and all this different music. And part of that, I've said before, my Mom is from Chile but also my parents used to live in Dubai for a really long time. That's where my siblings grew up…I wasn't born in Dubai. I was born in Dallas. But music from there was brought over. My brother and sister, we still have records from there that are in a different language. I never experienced that culture itself, but I listened to the music.

Furthermore, Sarah claimed the lesson had given her the impetus to tackle a final project on one of her favorite francophone singers, the Belgian pop star Stromae. She confessed that she greatly admired Stromae for his unique ability to blend French lyrics with musical styles from all over the globe. In essence, Stromae was someone with whom Sarah wanted to identify, a new and improved French-speaking role model who displayed a playful, multilingual/multicultural sensibility. Inspired by the discoveries she had made during her social reading and back translation of the poem, Sarah decided to analyze the Portuguese concept of *saudade* in Stromae's oeuvre as her final project. She chose to focus on two of Stromae's most popular songs—"Papaoutai" and "Cesaria." In the interview, I asked her how she had made the leap from the lesson on *Liberté* to the music and lyrics of Stromae:

> At the time of the lesson, I had been listening to Stromae a lot and getting into his music videos. And I found his songs so interesting because he makes so many really clever plays on words. Papaoutai that is obviously this made up word from "Papa où t'es" (Dad, where are you?). So, I was kinda obsessed with him at the time and when you brought up the idea of iconic meaning in poetry and we had a lot of freedom, which I really loved cuz this was the first time where I was actually bringing it into my own life and my perspective of things.

According to his biography, Stromae was born in 1985 in Belgium to a Belgian mother and a Rwandan father. Tragically, his father was killed in 1994 during the Rwandan Genocide, leaving his mother to support him and his four siblings on her own. During her final presentation on Stromae, Sarah claimed the meaning of *saudade* captured the autobiographical essence of Stromae's song Papaoutai, a song about a son's longing for an

absent father. In addition, Sarah also demonstrated how Stromae had appropriated the melodies and rhythms associated with *saudade* in another song entitled "Cesaria," an ode to the Cape Verdean singer Cesaria Evora. Known around the world as a specialist of the morna, a musical genre indigenous to Cape Verde that evokes feelings of sadness and regret much like the African-American blues, Evora sang frequently about unrequited love, nostalgia for one's homeland, and the passing of a loved one. Thanks to her background in music, Sarah was able to give an explanation of how Stromae masterfully employed the formal melodic structure of the morna as a poetic icon of mourning for the deceased Evora.

THE IMPACT ON SARAH'S AND RICKI'S IDENTITIES

Recall that Sarah originally saw herself as multicultural but not as bilingual or multilingual. She thought these terms should be reserved for individuals who possessed native-like proficiency in their languages, that is, for speakers who had "mastered the language" (her words). In the interview, when I asked her if her Chilean mother had mastered English, she smiled and admitted that she considered her mother bilingual, although she readily acknowledged that her mother would never pass as a native speaker of American English. Apparently, due to the pernicious effect of the native speaker pedagogical norm, Sarah had come to see herself as a "deficient communicator" (Belz, 2002) who had yet to master the French language as evidenced by her grammatical mistakes. When I asked her why she felt such discomfort about her proficiency in French but not in Portuguese, she surmised that the difference was likely due to her experiences learning the two languages. She had begun learning French in middle school and had idealized French culture and people. She had even dreamed of being French one day ("I used to want to be French, I think. I loved the idea of it. It wasn't until I started taking some upper division classes and learning a little more about the actual culture that I began to change."). She recounted her first trip to France during her senior year of high school as an experience that had a profoundly negative effect on her self-perception as a French speaker.

> I remember going into a coffee shop in France and using the word *tu* to speak to someone instead of *vous*. And the reaction I got from that made me really scared…and suddenly there was a fear of making errors and a fear of making mistakes because there is an 'air' there. It doesn't really exist in Brazil. They are just happy that you are speaking anything in Portuguese and they don't care if you mess up. They might correct you but they are nice about it and they are happy that you are speaking the language at all.

When I asked Sarah if her subjective experiences as a French learner had changed because of the lesson and the course, she spoke about her self-perceptions in decidedly mixed terms. On the one hand, she praised the focus on languaculture for liberating her from her naïve assumption that she had to conform to a rigid native speaker norm—"as Monsieur Dupont." But on the other hand, she felt daunted by the newly discovered complexity of French languaculture and a bit disappointed by the realization that she would never "100 percent fit in." Despite her residual nostalgia for the native speaker ideal, she had begun to reframe her understanding of what it means to be francophone.

> There is a part of me that is happy to know that there is a broader definition of French and what encompasses French languaculture. Because I used to think about French as

Monsieur Dupont, a white guy in Paris who gets his baguette around the corner, y'know. So, in a way it is liberating because it isn't simple. French languaculture is very complex. But at the same time, it's hard because there are all these different types. I know now that I will never 100 percent fit in. I will never be French as much as I try to be. But I am going to change the way I go into it. I'm not going to force myself to fit into their frames. And I'm not going to force myself to try to be looked at as a French person. I've kind of accepted that I'm going to be a foreigner, and that I can be accepted in that way. So, it kinda gives me freedom. You get both things. It's kinda disappointing but then you also have a freedom that you don't have to worry so much about making these errors or not being accepted, cause you're not gonna be accepted fully (laughs).

Related to Sarah's newfound sense of linguistic freedom was the realization that native speakers violate sociolinguistic norms too. The Belgian pop star Stromae is a prime example of a francophone who takes artistic license with the French language in order to create neologisms and bend grammatical rules. Throughout her interview, Sarah critiqued her French language classes for focusing exclusively on imitating "formulaic" and normative French instead of providing opportunities to create with the language. As a consequence, she had been unable to appropriate the French language and make it fully her own.

It definitely opened up possibilities in me for not worrying so much about being right. Cause a lot of classes that I have taken are focused on speaking formulaic French and I've always kinda ignored those things a little bit. And so, it was nice that I just, uhm...that I'm ignoring it isn't being wrong necessarily because that's how a lot of French speakers actually speak.

Like Sarah, Ricki too had struggled with the native speaker norm. On her official evaluation for the course, she summarized how the course had affected her identity as a francophone speaker.

One of my favorite parts of this class was when you told us we get to pick and choose our identity not only as human beings, but as French speakers. No one had ever verbalized that idea in quite that way to me before. Yes, language is creative, but furthermore, *we* get to *craft* an identity within langua-cultural communities. My background, though I am not a native-French speaker, has value. I have langua-cultural luggage (not all "baggage"!) that I bring to my identity as a speaker of French, and that is not a bad thing. That is wonderful and refreshing to think about—to know I can seek out and carve out a place for myself within the francophone world. That is a concept I will take with me and share with my future students.

In my interview with Ricki five months later, it was apparent that the interpretive and reflective activities carried out in the classroom through the new frames of languaculture and Multiliteracies had given her a new way to think about her identity not only as a non-native speaker, but more importantly as a non-native teacher.

It's been obvious to me for a very long time that, just after talking to people who have lived in francophone countries or just studied other languages and are immersed in that culture that I was never going to pass as a French person. Ever! Yeah, well, maybe one day, if I go there and live there for forty years. Whatever! (laughs, rolls eyes) It was sorta a

psychic burden. Here I am trying to be a French teacher in Texas and thinking how am I gonna do this and not being a native speaker. I have the love of this language and languages in general…Taking this class made me feel more free. I wasn't born in France. But maybe that is OK.

Ricki's remarks about her sociolinguistic liberation prompted me to ask her the question that she had previously asked me in her email: Are the concepts of languaculture and Multiliteracies relevant to her second language students? Her enthusiastic response was tellingly framed in terms of her emerging identity as a foreign language learner trying to become a foreign language teacher.

Yes, it does! No matter where you are in your language education, you bring something of value to the study of your foreign language…you may have limited experience speaking French, you may not have been to France, you come from all different ethnic and racial backgrounds, but bring that with you to our class, use whatever cultural knowledge or background or whoever you are, you bring something to the table when studying language.

Later in the interview, Ricki stated that the exploration of the poetic domain of French languaculture had been her favorite part of the course. She explained that she had always loved French literature and had even considered going to graduate school to study "le fantastique." She claimed to have thoroughly enjoyed the poem *Liberté*, especially the Critical Framing activity that exposed her to multiple mash ups of the poem. In fact, she admitted that she had been so taken with the activity that she bookmarked all of the YouTube videos on her computer for future reference.

I went back and bookmarked all the YouTube videos that you made us watch so I can use them when I teach this poem. I really liked the social reading activity and the poem because 'Liberty' seems like such an American concept. So yea, this poem in particular was great. Another thing that I liked was how you showed us different interpretations of the poem. And there was one of the poet reading and he was like an old man on the stage. And then, you know, children in some African country singing in like, some jaunty, jolly way as they smiled. The juxtaposition of those two things really stayed with me. Just the different ways that the poem could be interpreted. That was really cool. There is one where Tunisian children are reading it in the classroom. But then there is another one where there are little kids and it's like a song.

I was particularly impressed that Ricki was able to recall so many pedagogical details of the lesson, including the exact sequence of activities. Many of her remarks about the lesson indicated that she had been keenly observing the lesson from the perspective of a future teacher, a crucial element to Ricki's "literacy assemblage." Moreover, she offered her critical insights on how to improve the pedagogy. For instance, she felt that reading the comments posted by her classmates had been "the most valuable part of the social reading activity." Finally, she laughingly disclosed that she had already incorporated elements of the lesson into her own teaching.

Near the end of my interview with Ricki, she proudly confessed that the lesson on poetic engagement had given her new interpretive skills that she had transferred to other media and modalities. As an example, she recounted a recent visit to a modern art exhibit with a friend.

During their visit, the friend confided that she didn't understand modern art. Ricki promptly advised her friend to stop trying to interpret the art works. Next, Ricki had her friend look at a painting and simply react to it ("Don't tell me what you think. Tell me what you feel."). Ricki had not only learned the value of Experiencing as a knowledge process, a key part of the Learning by Design approach (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), but she had also learned to teach that lesson to her friend. To me, the story not only represented Ricki's impressive ability to design meaning, but her ability to teach others how to design meaning as well. Clearly, Ricki had gained confidence in her multilingual capacities, not only as a speaker but, more importantly for her, as a teacher.

CONCLUSION

Grounded in the dialogicality of language (Bakhtin, 1986, 1992) and the linguistics of particularity (Becker, 1984), the Meaning Design process resulted in multilingual epiphanies that allowed Sarah and Ricki to bridge the gap between "who one is and who one could be" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 18). Of course, Sarah and Ricki's personal transformations were the result of very particular "assemblages" of elements. In Sarah's case, the key was finding a way to liberate herself from her own internalized prescriptivism and monolingual bias. Her "saudade moment" came while reading the poem *Liberté*. Soon thereafter, she was able to link her passion for Portuguese with her skills in French and her love of world music. In the pop star Stromae, Sarah found an authentic francophone role model who was unafraid of breaking norms—cultural, gender, linguistic, racial—and who allowed her to identify herself as belonging to a multilingual and multicultural group of "makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 175). For Ricki, the key was to find legitimacy and authority as a non-native teacher. During the course, she came to see the affordances of multilingualism not only from the perspective of someone who *speaks* French, but also from the perspective of a Mexican-American woman who *teaches* French.

It seems clear that the pedagogical acts and knowledge processes inherent to the Multiliteracies Framework in general and the Meaning Design process in particular helped Sarah and Ricki to see themselves as multilingual subjects and to value their unique capacities to "traffic in meaning" (Pratt, 2002). That said, the Multiliteracies Framework is no panacea. It is important to recognize that Sarah and Ricki represent two specific case studies that are not generalizable. In fact, there were many students in the same class who did not experience epiphanies similar to Sarah and Ricki's. As Leander and Boldt (2012) emphasize, the process of Meaning Design gives rise to unpredictable outcomes.

As noted, developing an awareness of one's multilingual subjectivity is only the beginning for language learners. Once confronted with the reality of semiodiversity, learners must then be allowed to decide for themselves which meanings to make their own (van Compernolle, 2016). In essence, learners are first multilingual subjects before becoming authentic speakers. The concept of meaning within the languacultural framework adopted here is an expansive one. It refers not only to semantic meanings as exemplified by Sarah's choice of the Portuguese word *saudade* rather than the English word *nostalgia*, but it also refers to social meanings as exemplified by the choice of an informal or formal pronoun, and even to poetic meanings associated with the choice of different melodies, intonations, and literary devices. Unfortunately, language teachers tend to focus on the semantic/pragmatic domain and overlook the social and poetic domains of meaning. In conclusion, the main contention of this essay is that the Multiliteracies Framework when combined with the concept of

languaculture can help learners expand their meaning-making potential and construct identities as authentic multilingual speakers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Languaculture Autobiographies

Sarah's Autobiography

I grew up in a multilingual and multicultural home and was therefore surrounded by many different ethnicities, religions, and languages. My parents had weddings in both Chile and the US, which I believe is a testament to the importance they held in both cultures. They also lived in Dubai for around ten years, where they experienced a culture very different from either of their native cultures. Between my parents and my parents' parents I experienced Latin, American, Argentinian, German, Polish, Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Hebrew ethnicities, religions, and languages.

I found myself fascinated with learning another languages at a young age. In middle school, when my classmates took Spanish because they heard it was easier or because they already knew the language, I decided to study French. Although I likely could not have properly articulated it at the time, I felt as if I was already well versed in Latin culture and felt it would be a waste of my time to take Spanish. Having grown up in a home with a Chilean mother and American father (who also speaks Spanish), I found myself craving for something different from what I already knew.

The thing that I am finding most interesting regarding linguistics is where language, especially colloquialisms, comes from. Another aspect I find really interesting, especially now that I am taking Portuguese along with French (and physics, which I also consider a foreign language), is denoting the similarities and differences between the morphology of the same word in different languages. I am eagerly anticipating learning about French linguistics as a baseline with which to compare other languages.

Ricki's Autobiography

Everyone calls me Ricki. I'm a post-bac UTeach Liberal Arts student. My BA was triple major in French, History, and Government. In Fall 2015, I was a student intern in both middle and elementary schools (French and ESL). In Spring 2016, I was an intern teacher (French & Spanish classes) at McNeil High School. I am also currently a tutor at Dobie Middle School, and am a research assistant at The UT Sound Lab. In Summer 2016, I will attend the Institut des Formation des Maîtres in Grenoble France and Azurlingua language institute in Nice, France.

My multi-ethnic mixed-race heritage has been the biggest influence on my linguacultural identity. I grew up in a single-parent household, and for several years my mom and I lived with her mother, who was Hispanic (Mexican-American), and her father, who is of mixed Swedish, Norwegian, and Polish descent. I grew up in Austin, and the Texas/hippie culture here definitely influenced who I am, but many summers spent in my grandfather's native Two Harbors, Minnesota gave my hippie Tex-Mex upbringing a midwestern Scandinavian-American bent.

When I developed an interest in French language and culture around age 12, my linguacultural identity broadened. My adolescent brain was forever changed by francophone literature, movies, and French food, as well as by the first trip I took to France when I was 18. I also just love the way French sounds: the nasal vowels, the french [ʁ] and [ʒ], and the

musicality of that language.

When I first arrived at university, I felt a desire to deepen my connection with my Hispanic heritage, and began trying to learn Spanish—the language that my grandmother rarely spoke in our home, since she was embarrassed that it would mark her as the child of immigrants. Four semesters into my study of Spanish, I am happy to report I am making progress, and managed to negotiate the purchase of some flowers at Fiesta Mart—entirely in español—a few weeks ago!

I spent 6 years working at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and there I supervised several Mexican-American students who hailed from border towns. That experience was particularly enriching for my linguacultural identity because I learned some slang terms from my work studies, and picked up a bit more on the vocalic harmony/cadence of different dialects of Spanish, since our professors and grads hailed from Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Spain, Brasil, Africa, the Basque region, and beyond. I have also taken two semesters of Italian—a language I adore and wish I had more time to focus on. This semester (Fall 2015) I will be volunteering at a UT informal class, the topic of which is "Ciao, Italy!" This will be a welcome opportunity to delve deeper into Italian language and culture.

Appendix B: Ricki's Email

Dear Prof. Blyth,

I suppose what I was essentially asking is, "Where are you taking us with all this material you've given us (where are we headed?)," and "What is the big-picture we should keep in mind as we go through these daily assignments?" Also "How will this class be of benefit to my future self" (how can I expect my outlook to be changed by this class, by the end of this semester?)

I asked because, while I can grasp individual concepts like "complex categorization," and icon vs. symbol vs index, etc., I am having trouble connecting the dots to answer the question: "why is this important outside of theoretical discussion?" I was thinking about how I could apply what we've learned to real-world situations and make the material have meaning outside of academia. I am getting certified to teach middle school French. Thus, I also ask myself: Can what I learn in this class benefit my own future students, and if so, how?

One of the things I most enjoy about linguistics is that it fosters inclusion; as you said, no one version of French language is inherently better than another. At University, we are indeed taught a very specific kind of French. I always think of other dialects of French as being wonderful (Haitian or Quebecois or Louisianais, etc.) but I have never thought of my own American accented version of French, with all its attendant baggage of "AmericanEnglish-speaker-Hispanic-college-student-from-Texas" as having its own place in the francophone world. I think maybe that's not exactly what you were getting at when you were explaining some things yesterday, but I like the thought, nonetheless! I look forward to hearing more from you on the aforementioned topics. Hasta mañana.

All best,

Appendix C: English Translation (Source Unknown)[7]

On my school notebooks
On my desk and the trees
On the sand on the snow
I write your name

On all the pages read
On all the blank pages
Stone blood paper or ash
I write your name

On the gilded images
On the weapons of warriors
On the crown of kings
I write your name

On the jungle and the desert
On the nests on the shrubs
On the echo of my childhood
I write your name

On the wonders of nights
On the white bread days
On the seasons promised
I write your name

On all my rags of blue
On the musty pond sun
On the lake living moon
I write your name

On the fields on the horizon
On the wings of birds
And on the mill of shadows
I write your name

On each breath of air
On the sea on the boats
On the moonstruck mountain
I write your name

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[7] This particular translation was originally published on an individual's web page and is no longer available. Recall that it was my intention to subvert canonical readings of the poem by exposing my students to interpretations from a variety of different readers. At the time, I believed that the translation was the work of neither a professional translator nor a well-known literary scholar. As such, I purposefully chose the translation for its apparent "ordinariness."

On the foam of the clouds
On the sweat of the storm
On the thick insipid rain
I write your name

On the sparkling forms
On the bells of colors
On physical truth
I write your name

On the awakened paths
On the deployed roads
On the overflowing places
I write your name

On the light that turns on
On the light that turns off
On my houses reunited
I write your name

On the fruit cut in half
Of the mirror and my room
On my bed empty shell
I write your name

On my gluttonous and tender dog
On his trained ears
On his clumsy paw
I write your name

On the sill of my door
On familiar objects
On the flood of blessed fire
I write your name

On all flesh betrothed
On the foreheads of my friends
On each hand that extends
I write your name

On the window of surprises
On careful lips
High above the silence
I write your name

On my destroyed shelters
On my collapsed lighthouses
On the walls of my boredom

I write your name

On absence without desire
On naked solitude
On the steps of death
I write your name

On health regained
On risk that is no more
On hope without memory
I write your name

And by the power of a word
I recommence my life
I am born to know you
To call you
Liberty.