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The Responsibilities of Language Teachers when Teaching Intercultural Competence and Citizenship: An Essay¹

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Abstract: All teachers have responsibilities towards their learners, especially if their learners are children. They make decisions about what to teach, how to teach and what kind of person they expect their learners to become as a result. Language teachers are no exception as they decide such matters as whether learners should attempt to imitate native speakers. The decisions have become more complex as language teaching has embraced intercultural competence and citizenship education as a major focus, together with linguistic competences such as syntactic and semantic competence. Teaching intercultural competence includes encouraging learners to critique social norms and beliefs in one's own and other societies, and this raises major moral issues for language teachers. When language teaching also contributes to education for citizenship, as is increasingly expected in curricular documents, then the moral issues become even more acute. One response is to hide behind a relativist stance but it is argued here that 'values pluralism' (Isaiah Berlin) offers a better position, and one which is especially appropriate to language teaching. Language teachers do not need to become moral philosophers but dealing with moral issues should be included in teacher education.

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Introduction

The concept of 'the teacher' appears to be simple but a glance at a dictionary shows how complex 'teacher' and 'teaching' are. The Oxford English Dictionary says a teacher is 'one who gives instruction' but is this the same as an 'educator' who, the same dictionary says, 'educates, trains or instructs' and in doing so raises further questions about differences between 'educate', 'train' and 'instruct'? An analysis of 'teaching' would be even more complex, and would take us into the work of philosophers of education. Furthermore, the meanings and connotations attached to 'teacher' and its equivalents in other languages, 'enseignant' in French or Laoshi (老师) in Chinese for example, differ tremendously and reveal differing traditions and practices in different countries. Any discussion of what teachers do and the responsibilities they have, has to be understood in the light of these differences. An author has to be aware that they are influenced by their own traditions and practices. A reader has to be aware that their own traditions and practices influence how they understand what they are reading. The author, furthermore, has to be careful not to suggest or imply that what they are saying is valid for every context and tradition, and the reader has to understand that they cannot simply transfer ideas from one tradition to another and expect them to flourish and be useful.

One of the founders of Comparative Education, Michael Sadler, put all this in a famous analogy with gardening:

In studying foreign systems of Education we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside. We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of Education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties, and "of battles long ago." It has in it some of the secret workings of national life. (Sadler, 1900/1964, p. 310)

It is particularly important to note his emphasis on the relationship between 'things outside school' and things which are inside, and the ways in which 'the secret workings' of life in a country are present in school even if not noticed because they are the 'natural' way to do things.

Nonetheless, gardeners do look at other people's gardens to see what other gardeners do, and they do transfer plants from one climate to another, often modifying them to suit the new climate as they do so. Educators everywhere should be open to considering

¹ I wish to acknowledge the help I have received in thinking about the topic of this article from Michael Fleming (University of Durham, UK), Melina Porto (University of La Plata, Argentina), and Manuela Wagner (University of Connecticut, USA).

other ways of doing things and challenging what has hitherto seemed ‘normal’ and even ‘natural’.

In this text, I will explain the responsibilities of the language teacher as I understand them from the traditions I know – from countries in Europe and the Americas – and hope that my readers can transfer, modify and re-plant some of the ideas in their own ‘garden’, just as I hope that I too can learn from how other people tend their ‘garden’.

I have called this article ‘an essay’ because it is in some ways speculative. The questions I raise are not subject to simple answers from empirical research. They are matters subject to discussion and argument, to stating principles and purposes, and to attempting to take those principles and arguments to their logical conclusion, including the implications they have for practice.

My focus will be on ‘language teachers’ but, as will become evident, these are people who share some characteristics with all teachers and the teaching of all subjects. I shall begin therefore with a brief discussion of ‘teaching’ before analysing how ‘language teaching’ has changed over time with an increasing emphasis on intercultural competence, and how, with these changes, new responsibilities have emerged. The analysis will have implications for how teachers are trained or educated² and that will be the final point I shall make, although not my main focus.

Teachers and Teaching

Language teachers, because they are ‘language people’ who are constantly aware of language in all its forms, quickly notice that ‘to teach’ can have three uses and sometimes one and sometimes two objects: ‘to teach a person’, ‘to teach a subject’, and ‘to teach a person a subject’. Furthermore, the ‘subject’ is in fact ‘knowledge of a subject’ (of history or physics for example) and that knowledge is of two kinds: ‘knowledge about’ (declarative knowledge) and ‘knowledge how’ (procedural knowledge). This means, for example, that in the subject ‘history’, learners learn knowledge *about* history (often focused on the history of their country) and knowledge *how* to carry out historical research and writing, how to be and act as an historian.

The responsibilities of the teacher therefore include decisions about what should be learnt (e.g. the history of

‘our country’ and/or of ‘international history’) and which research skills are to be taught to ensure that learners become ‘good historians’. The teacher also has to decide the order in which knowledge and skills are taught – an order determined by the learning process – although such decisions are often made for the teacher by people who design curricula or write textbooks.

Language teachers have similar decisions. They must decide what knowledge *about* a language – and through this about language as a human phenomenon – they should teach, and secondly which skills and knowledge *how* to use a language, how to become a ‘good user’ of a language. This applies to teachers of learners’ first language and to teachers of foreign languages³ but from this point on I shall focus on foreign language teachers, because foreign language teachers have a problem which first language teachers do not have. It is the question of what a ‘good user’ is.

In the last hundred years of foreign language teaching in Europe and North America, the answer has seemed obvious, and learners have been compared with ‘the native speaker’ without questioning exactly what this means. Does it mean having a native speaker’s ‘knowledge about’ the language in question? Does it mean ‘knowing how’ to use the language as a native speaker does? These questions, and answers to them, raise a further question about ‘which native speaker?’, and the assumption has been that it is ‘an educated native speaker’. However, these answers are deceptively simple. For example, I know numerous non-native users of English who have more ‘knowledge about’ English than I do, and a few whose ‘knowledge how’ to use English is better than mine, despite the fact that until the age of note, when I began secondary school and French, I spoke only English and had never heard another language; I was a native speaker and still am, and one with education to university level, an ‘educated native speaker’.

The responsibility language teachers have to teach ‘native speaker language’, the first grammatical object of their ‘to teach’, is one which has been much debated in recent times, particularly but not only for English, and I do not intend to go further in addressing this question

² I shall not engage with the distinction often made in English between ‘train’ and ‘educate’ in part because the definition is not easy to make in other languages I know, as may also be the case in Chinese.

³ The term ‘foreign’ is somewhat problematic. It suggests that an entity comes from outside, is alien and different, and thus often has some negative connotations. Terms have varied over time, geography and discipline, from

‘modern languages’ and ‘langues vivantes’ (in French) through ‘second languages’ and ‘additional languages’ to ‘world languages’ and ‘Fremdsprachen’ (in German), and many more in other languages. Whichever term is used, there are unavoidable connotations, some of them undesired. I have chosen to continue to use ‘foreign’ and hope that any negative connotations will disappear in the process of the discussion that follows.

directly. It will be present indirectly in my discussion of the other responsibilities⁴ which are my main focus.

Responsibilities and Morality

Although the debate about using a/the native speaker as a model is complex, and dependent on factors which vary from context to context, a teacher may nonetheless say: “Yes. I know all the facts, but what should I do?” This is a notorious dilemma, the chasm between ‘is’ and ‘should’, the absence of a simple bridge between knowing ‘what is’ and knowing ‘what should be’. There is no logical connection between the two and deciding what ‘should be’ is a matter of morality, not a matter of description of ‘what is’ the case. Language teachers cannot, in other words, use descriptions of what the language competences of a native speaker *are* – analyses of grammatical competence or active and passive vocabulary, for example – as a basis for deciding what the competences of a learner *should* be i.e. to say that they *should* aspire to acquiring identical competences and vocabulary. Teachers have to present an argument for or against, and take responsibility for it; this is a moral process. Responsibilities are moral, and involve making decisions. In the context of teaching, decisions are not taken only for the teacher as decider about their own actions but above all they decide for other people, for learners and their actions.

Making decisions for other people happens in many situations – in medicine, in government, in the law – but in teaching, the ‘others’ are mostly children, people who are not yet entitled by law or custom to make their own decisions. Custom and law can be changed and the legal age of becoming adult has changed in many countries during and after the 20th century. Custom in education can and does change too. Children are increasingly consulted about what they want or need to learn, and in what order. Nonetheless, as we shall see, teachers still make decisions for others, both children in schools and adults in universities, and in some countries and contexts this may be expected of them because custom and law remain unchanged. Ideally, they do so with a full understanding of their actions and their consequences but in practice they may lack understanding and guidance on how to act.

Furthermore, the specific issues are changing as language teaching evolves and, in the evolutions I shall describe here, the moral questions become more urgent as language teachers lead learners to take action in the world, outside the classroom.

Evolutions in Language Teaching

⁴ The debate is well known to teachers of English and conducted in the context of the emergence, for the moment, of English as the dominant international lingua

Changes in the methods of teaching languages and, correspondingly, in the materials and textbooks used, have been the focus of writing and empirical research for many years. It would be otiose to even attempt to summarise the literature here because the evolutions I want to consider are of other kinds.

One evolution – perhaps better seen as a to-and-fro between contrasting standpoints – is in the rationale and justification for language teaching and learning in general education, in schools and universities. One justification can be called ‘instrumental’: language learning is for communication. This justification is easy enough to support when there is an obvious and immediate need for language skills, in commerce for example. Commerce and trade is facilitated if at least one trader speaks the language of the other. Commerce using a lingua franca, developed from more than one language, is also possible, but less effective. Language teaching for commercial purposes is successfully offered in private language schools with specific purposes, on the basis of this instrumental rationale. The same justification has also been successfully extended to learning languages in order to be able to study abroad, as internationalisation of education has become widespread.

It is much less easy to use the instrumental justification in general education in schools and universities, where the purposes include developing the full potential of learners as human beings, not just preparing them for some unknown and unknowable future career or place of study. In this context, an instrumental justification alone is not satisfactory. It might help teachers and curriculum designers to persuade politicians and the public about the importance of language teaching and learning when it is difficult to explain the notion of developing human potential. Nonetheless, there is a still problem: there is no obvious or immediate need, and the instrumental justification is groundless. Even future needs, were they known, may be limited to a minority of learners, and they might in fact need other languages than the ones they have learnt in schools.

Debates about the justification of language teaching and learning in general education are therefore not infrequent though often inconclusive since the ‘instrumental’, commerce-grounded rationale although easier to understand for all concerned, including children and their parents, is hollow and illogical.

A second justification is more difficult to understand. It is also more demanding in terms of curriculum design and teaching methodology. It is the argument that language teaching and learning is an

franca. Similar debates are also relevant to teaching Chinese as a foreign language, or French, Spanish, or other widely learnt languages.

integral part of ‘liberal education’ and that liberal education – sometimes referred to as ‘humanistic education’ – is an integral part of general education. One argument (Williams, 2019) hinges on the notion that ‘languages study (sic)’⁵ introduces learners to new linguistic worlds of thought’ (p. 149) and this is an extension of earlier work on the educational value of ‘awareness of language’ associated above all with Eric Hawkins (1987). There are also formulations of this viewpoint in recent curriculum documents, notably in Norway:

1. Foreign languages are both an *educational subject and a humanistic subject*. This area of study shall give opportunity for experiences, joy and personal development, at the same time as it opens *greater possibilities in the world of work and for study* in many language regions.
2. Competences in language and culture shall give the individual the possibility to understand, to ‘live into’ and value other cultures’ social life and life at work, their modes and conditions of living, their way of thinking, their history, art and literature.
3. The area of study (languages) can also contribute to developing interest and tolerance, *develop insight in one’s own conditions of life and own identity*, and contribute to a joy in reading, creativity, experience and personal development.

(My [literal translation – emphasis and numbering added]
www.udir.no/k106/PSP1-01/Hele/Formaal – accessed March 2018

This statement demonstrates that the humanistic justification does not exclude the instrumental justification (with the references to the world of work and study) and it also introduces the importance of a humanistic education being focused not only on understanding others but also understanding oneself. An important statement of a similar kind has been made in China:

College English course is part of the humanity (liberal arts) education and it represents both instrumental and humanistic features.

4.2.3 Intercultural communication course

The intercultural communication course aims at intercultural education, helps students to *understand the different outlooks, values, thinking modes*

between China and other countries, cultivates students’ intercultural awareness, and improves their sociolinguistic and intercultural communication competence.

(College English Teaching Guideline by College Foreign Language Teaching Guidance Committee of Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 12 - emphasis added).

Here again we see the importance of self-analysis and comparison when trying to understand others, and at the same time a recognition that this humanistic purpose does not exclude the instrumental concept of ‘communication ability’.

Nonetheless, although it is clear from such statements that liberal/humanistic and instrumental rationales are not mutually exclusive, there is still a strong tendency among teachers and others to emphasise the instrumental because, as said above, it is easier to understand and accept.⁶ Yet, when governments and other public authorities publish such statements, they implicitly take responsibility for compelling learners to learn or study a foreign language for liberal and humanistic education reasons as well as instrumental ones. This means that the immediate responsibility for the decision is removed from teachers personally, for they are expected to follow the curriculum and strive to teach for humanistic as well as instrumental purposes. At the same time, this evolution in a humanistic/liberal rationale requires an evolution in teaching methods, to ensure the rationale is achieved, and in many countries methods are decided by teachers. The responsibilities are still present.

Changes in Direction

Evolutionary changes described so far are not yet widely accepted or implemented. They are nevertheless still within the traditions of language teaching. By contrast, more recent changes have taken a different direction and raise new and different questions of responsibility, beyond the traditional ones. One such change is the addition of intercultural competence to linguistic and communicative competences as a teaching and learning aim, encapsulated in the notion of the ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 2009). This is grounded in both liberal/humanistic and instrumental purposes. People who engage in commerce and study need intercultural competence, and an introduction to new worlds, to be effective and efficient in trade and study -

⁵ The use of ‘study’ rather than ‘learn’ here suggests an emphasis on ‘knowledge about’ rather than ‘knowledge how’.

⁶ Paradoxically, teachers of English may find it difficult to follow the liberal/humanistic rationale because the instrumental power of English as the world language is

self-evident even for learners who will never speak to an English native speaker or never leave their own country. It is important therefore that the statement about College English gives English teachers the responsibility and justification for implementing the liberal/humanistic rationale.

the instrumental purpose. An introduction to new worlds is simultaneously a challenge to assumptions about oneself and one's world, which can lead - and perhaps should lead - to new conceptions of self and one's own world, i.e. the liberal/humanistic purpose.

The term 'intercultural speaker' was invented to emphasise that a/the native speaker is not an adequate model when the significance of 'intercultural competence' is recognised and added to the learning objectives and outcomes expected of language teaching and learning. When it is recognised that linguistic and communicative knowledge and skills are necessary but not sufficient for successful communication, new skills, knowledge and attitudes need to be developed which are not guaranteed just because someone is a native speaker. Intercultural competence involves the ability to decentre, to look at and understand the world from another viewpoint - in common with the purposes of liberal education described above - and to take this other view into consideration when establishing successful communication and mutual understanding. It goes further. Intercultural competence also includes the ability to critique the other, new viewpoint on the world and, secondly, critique the learner's own viewpoint that they had hitherto not challenged and perhaps not even been aware of, simply assuming it was 'natural'.

It is the emphasis on critique, or critical understanding, which implies there are moral responsibilities on the part of the teacher. The teacher actively encourages critique which potentially reveals weaknesses as well as strengths in the learner's hitherto unquestioned and 'natural' own viewpoint. Since the critique is not simply of the individual's viewpoint but of what they have learned from and share with others in their society, the teacher encourages challenge to social norms and (aspects of) a society's assumed security in its beliefs and values. The foreign language teacher, in short, encourages and expects learners to challenge their own society, and this is a major responsibility.

A further change is more radical still, because it has roots in another discipline and an interdisciplinary approach. This is the change formulated in the phrase 'intercultural citizenship' (Byram, 2008), which also has both instrumental and liberal/humanistic purposes, being an extension of 'intercultural competence'. Taking its starting point in theory and practice of education for citizenship, language teaching which leads to intercultural citizenship encourages learners not only to critique and challenge, but also to take action in changing

society. This leads to 'political engagement', a phrase which causes unease among teachers and needs to be clarified.

In British English, as captured in the Oxford English Dictionary, 'Political' means 'Relating to or concerned with public life and affairs as involving questions of authority and government; relating to or concerned with the theory or practice of politics'. The definition of Politics is 'The political ideas, beliefs, or commitments of a particular individual, organization, etc.' On the basis of these two definitions, to say that 'Learners are or become political' means that they 'develop their own ideas, beliefs and commitments, become involved in public life and practice politics, and may therefore challenge authority [at any level – family, school, sports club, national and international government]'. This is the definition on which intercultural citizenship is based. In the European and North American traditions most if not all teachers would agree that 'developing ideas', becoming 'involved' in practical politics/activities, are necessary and widely accepted aims in education. Most, too, would agree that learners should 'challenge', and be independent thinkers. Being 'political' in this sense is therefore not problematic as an aim for teaching.

A teacher who accepts this understanding of political action and encourages and expects their learners to be involved in action has, again, to accept responsibilities for saying what learners *should* do, that they should become involved in action in their community. As with the focus on liberal/humanistic education, there are signs that governments too see this as part of language teaching, and are willing to share the responsibility. This is evident in the statement from Norway cited earlier, which concludes with a further purpose:

4. Good competence in languages will also lay the ground for participation in activities which build *democracy beyond country borders* and differences in culture.

(My (literal) translation – emphasis and numbering added)

www.udir.no/k106/PSP1-01/Hele/Formaal – accessed March 2018

The emphasis here is on 'democratic'⁷ processes and citizenship which, though not explicitly stated, includes critique and challenge of the kind found in intercultural citizenship. For it is evident from documents produced at the Council of Europe, which underpin the Norwegian statement⁸, that democratic competences include critique and challenge, as we shall see below. What language

⁷ The concept here is democracy as understood and practised in most European countries. It is clearly different from 'socialist democracy' as practised in China (Shi, 2015).

⁸ The most recent curriculum statement in Norway (November 2019), emphasises that 'democracy and citizenship' should be a cross-curricular theme. It is less explicit about the notion of 'democracy beyond country

teaching adds to building democratic competences is captured in the word 'intercultural' and the phrase 'democracy beyond country borders' because, through language learning, democratic activity is enriched by knowledge and experience of other viewpoints and other worldviews. The responsibilities of teachers are, in this situation, shared by governments and other authorities but are nonetheless real and significant for the individual teacher.

Once the teacher has accepted these responsibilities, they find help in making intercultural citizenship an integral part of their planning and teaching both from other teachers' accounts of their teaching (Byram et al., 2018) and also in a recent European document, the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018). The original title of this included 'intercultural competence' and it is still a major part of the document; the title was considered too long and therefore shortened.⁹ This document presents a model of intercultural and democratic competences and suggestions about how the model can be used in curriculum design, in teaching methods, in assessment and in teacher training.

Taking a Moral Standpoint and Teaching Values

The RFCDC is a European document and the model it presents is unusual among models of intercultural competence (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009) because it includes competences in values. The values are those of the Council of Europe and its 47 member states. Learners are expected to demonstrate behaviour which reveals that they value 'human dignity and human rights', 'cultural diversity' and 'democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law'. The Council of Europe does not impose its ideas on member states but the Ministers of Education of member states welcomed and endorsed the RFCDC in 2016 and asked the Council of Europe to help them in implementing it in their curricula and teaching. It is hoped that teachers who use the RFCDC in Europe will accept the responsibility of encouraging learners to adopt these values and the corresponding behaviours. At the same time, those who produced the model know that some teachers are reluctant to take this responsibility, especially in those countries which, before 1989, had education systems which indoctrinated learners and teachers with Marxist-Leninist values.

borders', but includes making learners ready for participation in democratic processes:

(/www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/prinsipper-for-laring-utvikling-og-danning/tverrfaglige-temaer/demokrati-og-medborgerskap?kode=eng01-04&lang=nob)

It might be inferred that there is a need for such processes to be practised whilst learners are still in education, since such experiential learning would be more effective.

The issue of teaching values is therefore difficult and the same problems doubtless arise if an education system promotes another set of values, for example 'Asian values' (Baier and Bell, 1999). However, this is not new for language teachers. They are well accustomed to the challenges of moral judgements made by their learners. Whether they are teachers of English asked about the use of the 'inhuman', 'barbaric' death penalty in the USA, or about the 'unfair' and 'discriminatory' class system and the bleak social inequalities of the United Kingdom, or they are teachers of Chinese challenged on the 'inhuman', 'barbaric' treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang, they know that their students ask awkward questions. They are expected to answer them because they are seen as representatives of the country (or countries) whose language they teach, and in some cases are denizens of the country in question. What shall they answer?

Some might reply that they are language teachers and questions of morality are not their responsibility. This is however not satisfactory if, at the same time, they think that language and culture are related and if they consider themselves educators involved in liberal/humanistic education and not just instructors who teach skills and 'know-how'.

Another response is moral relativist. It is the response which asserts that 'we' cannot and should not judge what 'they' do or think. Each 'culture' has its own traditions and ways of behaving, and each has the right to make its own decisions without being judged, and certainly without interference. Relativist positions are founded on the belief that there are no universal values or rights against which particular behaviours can be judged. This is a position easy to take, but it is a lazy position, which absolves people of responsibility. It is based on what a prominent moral philosopher said is 'possibly the most absurd view to have been advanced even in moral philosophy' (Williams, 1971, p. 34).

The third option is more complex and demanding. It is a position which seeks a common ground, a basis for making judgements, but it must not be confused with a simple universalism, i.e. the assumption that there are universal values which all should hold and observe in their actions. Universalism would be easy. It would provide binding rules, which must be followed in all situations on all occasions.

⁹ I presented the RFCDC for the first time in China in a plenary lecture China Association for Intercultural Communication, Jinan, 'Intercultural Education and a Shared Future - from a European Perspective', 9 June 2018.

This third approach is encapsulated in Isaiah Berlin's notion of 'values pluralism' (Gray, 2013; Crowder, 2018; Hardy, 2018), which, it must be said immediately, can easily be confused with relativism, but is in fact quite different. Values pluralism has several characteristics which are important for language teachers. First, there is the idea that there is a vast variety of values and behaviours observable in human individuals and groups of individuals. This is a matter of variety, not variation. 'Variation' would imply that there is a singular foundation on which variations are constructed. 'Varieties' are plural, not singular; there is no single, simple foundation, and therefore no point in searching for it. Furthermore, among the varieties and, just as importantly, within each variety of values and behaviours, there is incommensurability, i.e. contrasting and clashing values which cannot be resolved into one set of values by reasoning or argument. Thirdly, there can be no rationally developed judgement about one variety being superior to another. This is what makes values pluralism sound like relativism, but there is a difference.

The difference is between a defined set of universal values and a 'core' of values. In pluralism, there is a 'core' of values and behaviours which distinguish human values and behaviours from the non-human, the 'inhuman' and 'barbaric', the very words which teachers may hear from their learners. The core is not static. It changes over time, because human beings and societies evolve, through self-analysis and self-realisation. The core is not a single set of values and behaviours found in all varieties; that would be a universal set of values. If there were such a set of values, then there would be variation, rather than varieties. There are some core values in every variety but not necessarily the same ones. The core is, rather, a matter of 'family resemblance' not identity; there are some characteristics shared by some members of a family but not all, and yet there is overlap which makes it possible to see that all are of the same family. It is a matter of recognising that all moral varieties belong to a family but there are no identical twins.

This means for example that there are family resemblances between European democracy and 'socialist democracy' as practised in China (Shi, 2015). Neither phenomenon can be plucked from one garden and stuck in the soil in another garden with the expectation that it will flourish. However, it is the 'family resemblances' between the two concepts and the values inherent in them which make communication about both concepts possible, so that Chinese readers can 'live into'¹⁰ European democracy and vice versa. In other words, it is the family resemblances that make it possible

for individuals and groups with different varieties to communicate with each other. There is enough resemblance to allow this. This is a matter of empirical fact and, for language teachers, it is a crucial fact. For we know that it is possible to 'live into' another variety, to use one's skills of empathy and one's linguistic competence in order to understand the structure and coherence of another variety of values and behaviours (cf. Winch, 1964). In other words, it is possible to imaginatively engage with another variety of values and behaviours, and language teachers need to find ways of doing this which are appropriate to their learners; fiction, poetry, drama and other literature has a special role to play here. If, and only if, that other variety includes values and behaviours which offend against the common human core, which are inhuman, then we are justified in judging and condemning.

Unlike universalism which would offer easy-to-follow, binding rules, with values pluralism we must seek to understand, to examine the context, the history and other relevant factors - a much more demanding process - but we must do so without abandoning the right to make a moral judgement; values pluralism is not relativism. This has implications for language teaching, since values pluralism means that, if the language teacher is to help learners to understand the values behind capital punishment in some US federal states or the class system in Britain or the imprisonment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang, then they must ensure that their learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) - their language competences and their intercultural competences combined - is good enough for communication about values. For it is ICC which enables the use of skills of empathy and facilitates the grasp of the internal coherence of the position taken by interlocutors.

The language teacher also needs to help learners to judge whether the values which underpin the behaviour they observe are 'human', are within the core of human values, or not. They may decide that they are not. Yet, this is only one decision. Even if they decide not to reject behaviour as 'inhuman', Berlin explains that such behaviour may be comprehensible with its own rationality, and may be a variety of values which are within the core, but that nonetheless 'their' way of behaving and 'their' rationale for that behaviour is still incommensurable with 'ours'. In that case teachers need to help learners to accept that it is within the limits of human behaviour - not 'inhuman' or 'barbaric' - and that when a choice has to be made between two incommensurables, it will be tragic; there will be suffering for some human beings. Again, at this point, the

¹⁰ In the statement on language education in Norway quoted earlier in this chapter, the phrase used, in

apposition to 'understanding' and 'valuing', is 'live into', which I use here.

power of literature, of drama, to embody this must not be forgotten.¹¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me first say something briefly about teacher education. As I said in the introduction to this essay, language teachers share some characteristics with all teachers, and this applies particularly to the question of teaching values. It is important to remember that language teachers need not be the only ones dealing with these complex matters. In terms of teacher education, therefore, it is not only language teachers who need to be prepared for the moral responsibilities they meet. Teacher education needs to include moral philosophy, but this does not mean that teachers need to become moral philosophers. In practical terms, teachers can be prepared for the decisions they must make by discussing case studies, descriptions of dilemmas and ways of dealing with them, and this would introduce the concepts of a common core of values, of varieties of values, of incommensurability between different varieties and so on. Such case studies can be presented to those in teacher education by serving teachers already working and meeting such issues. There will be no ready-made answers to dilemmas. All involved need the freedom of a place of open discussion, where their discussions do not have immediate impact on learners, so that they can imagine all the possible responses to a dilemma.

My more general concluding remarks are simply to remind myself and my readers of Sadler's warning about gardening. On the one hand, all gardens have common features, being places where gardeners/teachers tend their plants/learners and want them to grow and realise their full potential. On the other hand, gardens lie in different climates and gardeners have different conceptions of what a garden is - a Japanese garden is different from a French garden which is different from an English garden, and so on - and we can learn to appreciate all of them in their own way. This is the central point of my essay which is itself an attempt to describe and explain a language teaching garden in one part of the world with the hope that others will do the same for language teaching gardens in other parts of the world.

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¹¹ At the time of writing the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjian Province by the Chinese authorities is, to a European, barbaric. There is surveillance and compulsory residence in re-education centres which are contrary to human rights and have been strongly criticised because of the infringement of those rights. The

Chinese authorities explain that these measures have led to a decrease if not a total absence of violence perpetrated by Uighur people, and therefore, they would say, the 'tragic' choice of surveillance and re-education is logical and justified.

