

Examples and materials from the project

In Other Words

An Alphabet to Problematize Otherness

Structure:

<i>Pars Destruens</i> (definition)	<i>Pars Construens</i> (subversion)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words: from their etymological root and definition, critical analysis in alphabetical order of some keywords which have been shaping prevailing discourses and/or are connected with Otherness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words: which are the words that can help us cast a new perspective on Otherness? e.g., using stereotypes for a counter-narrative; Texts and Visual Arts: which are the texts and figurative works of art which can help us problematize the narrative of Otherness?

An example. Entry: 'power'

Power	Kehinde Wiley* <i>Napoleon Crossing the Alps</i> (2005)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> etymology: from the Latin '<i>poteo</i>', '<i>podere</i>' = to be able to do something. It is about a relation of difference (who can/who cannot do something) in the sense of both 'domination' and 'protection' (same root of '<i>pater</i>', father); definition: the capacity and the possibility of doing something also as to impose 	<p>(*Kehinde Wiley is a North-American painter who reproduces great masterpieces of the past substituting the protagonists with black people whom he street-casts. By turning the 'familiar' into 'unfamiliar' he reverses the perspective of the visual representation of power obliging the viewer to ask her/himself: who had/has the power to be in a portrait? What were/are the portraits for, for whom, to communicate what?)</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofX8JOI8sbo</p>

one's own will or influence on others.	
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Example of materials for teachers/students:

Each keyword will be completed and discussed with materials **for pre- and in-training teachers** (which, in turn, can be used **with/by students**) able to favour, elicit and guide further discussion, as well as to offer suggestions for more reading and insights. As all activities will be carried out in a foreign language, pre- and in- training teachers can also prepare a list of expressions and phrases connected to a specific keyword in order to facilitate the discussion in class.

The structure of the materials for teachers/students will include several steps, such as reflexivity, recontextualization, connections, interdisciplinary collaborations, and final discussion. Here are just some hints to illustrate how the keyword presented before can be analysed from different perspectives.

- **reflexivity:**
 - a) what/how is a **determined word used for?** to (re)produce, challenge, resist, emancipate?
 - b) from its etymological definition, 'power' means both '**power over**', but also '**power to**' (e.g., the capacity to do something): think about examples of both;
 - **c) watch to the video again:** what does the painter says about 'occupying public spaces'? what does it mean? who is/isn't allowed to occupy/to be seen in public spaces?

- **recontextualization:**
 - a)** how is **that specific word used in daily contexts?** Prepare/bring in class/ask students to bring in class examples from the social media, flyers, advertising, graffiti, street art, YouTube videos, articles, etc.
 - **b)** analysis of **different texts:** songs (e.g., «People Have the Power» by Patti Smith); poems (e.g., «Power» by Audre Lorde); literary texts (e.g., «The Three Guineas» by Virginia Woolf);

- **connections:**
 - a) think about/discuss **other forms of inequalities**, how they are reproduced and disseminated by both traditional and social media, etc.;
 - b) **connection with other key words** (e.g., 'diversity');

- **collaborations:**
 - a) **interdisciplinary collaboration** with other teachers (History, Arts, etc.): discuss Colonialism, issues of power, inequalities; discuss portraits: who has been/is portrayed? for which purpose? 'heroes', 'villains', 'ordinary people'?

- **final discussion:**
 - a) **comparison** between initial associations with the word and the final outcomes: what has changed? how?

Example of Conduction and Timing (work in class)

It can be envisioned 3-4 hours for each keyword, with the activity divided in a **'before-during-after' pattern**. Teachers can start by presenting a specific word and doing some brainstorming with students asking them what idea/concept they associate it with. Teachers or students can write these ideas and associations on a paper, and then forget it until the end of the activity. Then, teachers can conduct the activity as before illustrated. At the end of the activity, teachers can go back to what it has been previously written on the paper and discuss with students on whether some ideas/associations have changed and how. Such a comparison would add insight to the activity and allow to revise and pull together all previous argumentation.

Critical Pedagogical Goals

- use the foreignness that foreign languages foreground for **critical** and **critical intercultural purposes**;
- Foreign Language Education (FLE) as a **site for engaging with critique** *versus* a reified reproduction of foreign languages and cultures;
- FLE as a way to **work with, on** and **through** language;
- FLE as a way to develop a **meta-linguistic awareness** of how far linguistic and cultural features are situated and constructed;
- realizing how using a **foreign language common to all students** allows to shuffle roles and dynamics (e.g., **disadvantage** in access to language and linguistic repertoire does not depend on ethnic or national background);
- realizing how a foreign language favours the **exploration** of new individual/collective identities (the foreign language allows an 'othering' of the self), and it redefines roles and social relationships.

Linguistic Goals

All activities and discussions are carried out in the foreign language, thus allowing students to practice it as a tool for exchanging and communicating ideas. Students will be then **directly engaged** in the **linguistic interactions**, in the **research** and the **presentation** of materials, etc. From my teaching experience, I have seen that this is a very **effective way** to allow students **appropriate** and **practice** the **foreign language**, also able to involve those students who usually tend to be more in the background.

Languages

The Project can be initiated in English, it being the most spread foreign language – and, consequently, the **language which is more likely to be 'other' for most students**. Yet, it can be later developed and/or translated in other languages – e.g., a possible implementation could be to use keywords in different languages, thus turning the project into a **multilingual critical tool**. To have an idea of how such project can be implemented in that direction, please visit 'Key Concepts' (menu

'Publications') at <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/> which is a good example of how a multilingual website is a multilingual statement and commitment put into practice.