**Bringing the Body into Play: The Corporeal Dimension in Intercultural Foreign Language Learning**

**Abstract**

This article foregrounds the often-overlooked enactive role of the learner’s lived body in the process of intercultural Foreign Language Learning (FLL). It draws on recent neo-phenomenological and neuroscientific research on the embodied mind which suggests that it is our body that forms our primal mode of engagement with the world. Perception and learning are not restricted to brain activities, but/rather they fundamentally extend to the experiences and resonances of the lived body and its real-time, unmediated inter-action with the affordances of the social, cultural, and material environment. Thus, learners’ *bodies* must be fundamentally engaged in multimodal processes of FLL so that the resonances with the foreign language and cultural Other can be directly sensed in, through, and with the body. Corporeally based performative FLL facilitates a holistic experience of the cultural Other, engaging all the senses of the body and thereby modifying elements of sedimented body memory, and not just episodic memory. It allows for modified cultural behaviour to flow naturally in intercultural situations. Regular training of attentiveness to the resonances and adaptive responses of the lived body in the FLL process saturates the rich multisensory nature of the learning process via the mindful body.

Keywords: embodied cognition, multimodal learning, lived body, mutual incorporation, body memory, performative learning, somatic attentiveness

**Introduction**

Cognitive approaches to Foreign Language Learning (FLL) have been dominant in FLL research and practice for decades, and even more recent notions of embodied cognition still only afford the body the role of? a subservient backdrop to cognitive processing. However, current phenomenological research on embodiment has shown that cognition is dependent on (and shaped by) the body in terms of what sentient bodily functions are capable of perceiving and how they respond to its (the boyd’s?) unmediated coupling with the world. This paper foregrounds these nonconscious perceptive and communicative qualities of the body in the context of FLL and argues for the integration of the corporeal dimension into performative FLL so that a truly embodied cognitive learning process is facilitated, with cognition not being in a position to raise all the multisensory perceptions, resonances and responses of the lived body to conscious awareness.

This paper will begin with a short introduction and critique of cognitive approaches to/methods for intercultural FLL, before introducing phenomenological approaches to strongly embodied cognition (or mindful bodies) which emphasize the enactive role of the multisensory body for shaping perception, cognition, and action. The phenomenological concept of the lived body allows for the notion of pre-reflective body memory to be formulated, which differs from cognitive episodic memory. In the second part of the paper, the benefits of integrating the bodily dimension into intercultural FLL will be outlined, focussing on performative approaches. In so doing, reference will be made to neuroscientific research on language embodiment, body-involving translanguaging activities, and the impact of performative learning on the lived body and somatic awareness of its movements.

**Cognitivist Approaches to Intercultural Foreign Language Learning (FLL)**

Cognitivist approaches to intercultural FLL assume that the accumulation, structuring, and representation of knowledge in a subjective cognitive space results in enhanced cognitive competences (e.g., Long 2015). For this purpose, they tend to treat the foreign language (FL) as a system of reified linguistic structures, extracting isolated cultural facts from a much broader and dynamic social, cultural, material, and behavioural background. These facts and structures are taken as a representation of the foreign culture for the FL classroom. They are supposed to be learned and processed by the learner’s brain, turned into mentally represented knowledge, and then internalised by transforming represented knowledge through one’s internal mental functions into competence, understood as a cognitive structure that generates skilful behavior to cope with complex and unpredictable situations. These cognitivist approaches to learning have solidified into disembodied educational practices, conceptualizing cognition as a computer-like and logic-based processing system which is inputted with new information in order to build ever-more elaborate internal representations of meaning and competence (Baron-Cohen 1995; Goldman 2006). This line of theory and practice of FLL assumes that brain activities dominate all other influences on the FLL process to an extent that “research on SLA is increasingly viewed as a branch of cognitive science” (Doughty & Long 2003: 4).

However, cognitivist approaches to FLL are problematic in several dimensions. First, they reduce the complexities and dynamics of the living target language and culture to a detached, determinate, and highly learnable system of disembodied, simplified, and reified cultural ‘facts’, and linguistic relations, implying that human coordination is a purely symbolic activity. Second, the cognising subject is conceptualized as an autonomous agent, who individually ‘learns’, ‘acquires’, or ‘develops’ a non-native language. Third, this reductive procedure ignores the richness of linguistic, cultural, and social affordances related to the lived practice of intercultural FLL which might be perceived by learners as embodied subjects with their own experiences, aspirations, and desires. And finally, the treatment of cognition as a disembodied function does not take into consideration tacit learning activities (Polanyi 1966), the possibility of non-linear corporeal and sensuous learning processes and, more generally, the role of non-cognitive multimodal influences of (and on) the “mindful bodies” (Sheets-Johnstone 2016: 63) in their multisensory learning activities.

Constructivist and sociocultural models of FLL address some of these concerns, and they are more inclusive in integrating the social, cultural, and pragmatic context into their considerations. For example, sociocultural theory (SCT; Lantolf 2000; Lantolf & Thorne 2006) considers contextual factors as well as individual developmental influences on the FLL process. SCT is a very useful approach for analyzing the impact of participatory semiotic mediation on cognitive and linguistic development which is embedded in a particular sociocultural environment. However, it does not extend to tacit meaning making activities beyond explicit linguistic tools, and the notion of embodiment does not extend to unmediated experiences of the body. SCT thus stands in the long tradition of cognitive approaches to FLL (albeit integrating contextual factors and shifting the focus of analysis from the psychological to the sociocultural plane) which reduce intercultural FLL to the socio-culturally mediated *mental* development of conceptual meaning (Lantolf & Thorne 2006: 4).

FLL theories often view the idea of the learner’s body, if considered at all, as something separate, a backdrop against which one makes decisions, but which is in itself seldomly reflected upon. This view ignores the fact that the immaterial lived body is an implicit dimension in all human activities, including reflection, thought, perception, language use, and even constructionism. Thus, a sufficiently reliable definition of the corporeal dimension[[1]](#footnote-2) in the FLL process is needed to bring this backdrop to the foreground, not only in FLL theory, but also in the complex translanguaging practices in the FL classroom. This definition must overcome (replace?) weak definitions of embodiment, where the body is seen as merely having a supporting role for cognition, and instead embrace a strong version of embodiment, which extends to the pre-reflective feelings, visceral drives, resonances, and responses of the lived body to affordances of the social, cultural, and material environment. This dimension is important from a phenomenological perspective because our world is not so much conjectured or analytically deduced, rather it is primarily encountered and experienced by us in a multisensory manner via our resonant affective-corporeal involvement with Other and others. In this regard, the living (material, physical) *and* the lived (immaterial, sentient) body is the organ for unmediated experiencing, sensing, and non-consciously inter-acting with other bodies and with affordances of the sociocultural and material environment, before intentional consciousness can kick in and process *some* of the rich sentient information provided by the sensory, sensual, and visceral experience of the felt body vis-à-vis the FL and its cultural context.

Learning a non-native language in a way that explicitly integrates the sentient and performative dimension of the body makes the learning process a lived, situated, and participatory social activity within the classroom (and beyond). It has the capacity to act as a catalyst for new sensory and (inter)corporeal experiences, framed by other social practices which in turn are shaped by different cultural and environmental affordances. The newly made corporeal experiences can challenge and modify incorporated, taken-for-granted forms of behaviour and attitudes, some of which may be raised to conscious awareness and critically reflected upon through the lens of the new experiences. Emphasizing the unmediated experiences and senses of the lived body in the FLL process and training attentiveness to its pre-reflective resonances with and adaptive responses to the cultural Other blurs the boundary between language learning as the object of study and learners’ processes of becoming aware of their existence as multisensory embodied subjects, who are shaped by and engaged with their sociocultural and material environment in continual processes of dynamic attunement and becoming.

**Phenomenological approaches to embodied cognition**

Social cognitivist research has favored a third-person paradigm of perception and cognition as a detached and passive observation of others’ behavior, attributing it to a representational, simulative, or projective process by the observer (Goldman 2006). By contrast, phenomenological approaches to embodied cognition take a first-person perspective (e.g., Gallagher 2020; Schmitz 2005; Böhme 2003) which is not exclusively focussed on the brain but emphasizes the multisensory body in its engagement in the sociocultural and material environment as an important dimension for shaping cognition, perception, and action. After all, “meaning is first and foremost *experienced* meaning” (Gallese 2017: 317; original italics); there is no human act of perception and experience without a lived significance (Griffero 2016: 4).

Direct, unmediated corporeal perception can capture a wide range of largely nonconscious information about Other and others, for instance, through the emotional tone of voice, direction and intensity of gaze, posturing and gait, facial expression, proxemics, etc., which may or may not be consciously noticed. This sort of nonconscious perception is “*not* reducible to a simply passive picking up of sensory properties; rather, it involves an enactive process that responds to intentions and emotions” (Gallagher 2020: 141; original emphasis). The enactive view of perception explicitly integrates bodily factors into perceptual action as a constitutive ingredient, so that perception can be conceptualized as a dynamic corporeal inter-action or exchange between an active organism and its ecological environment. This includes having a specific disposition or expectation to act in terms of implicit knowledge of sensorimotor contingencies (e.g., unconsciously moving hand and fingers in a specific way to grasp a specific object, e.g., a bottle or an apple). Embodied cognition, as Gallagher (2017: 160; original emphasis) puts it, is “a kind of dynamic adjustment process in which the brain, *as part of and along with the larger organism*, settles into the right kind of attunement with the environment – an environment that is material but also social and cultural.” Brain processes are thus fundamentally *E*mbodied, *E*mbedded, *E*nactive, and *E*xtended, as the ‘4E’ concept of cognition implies (e.g., Newen et al. 2018).[[2]](#footnote-3) This view suggests that cognition is is neither a disembodied nor a private affair but is emergent in dynamic interaction with ecological affordances.

Through perceptually guided action, the environment is selectively disclosed to the perceiver by corporeally engaging with it through a skilled “‘hands-on’ practice of sense-making” (Jackman 2016: 113). Skilled ‘hands-on’ perceptual experience refers to a practice of sense-making that largely depends on sedimented tacit knowledge of the lived body, which is activated by certain sensory experiences, e.g., the tactile-kinaesthetic exploration of surfaces and feeling their bluntness, sharpness, jaggedness, smoothness, or softness. The feeling of a sponge held in the hand, for instance, is “not communicated by any particular softness detectors in the fingertips, nor is it characterized by some intrinsic quality provided by the neuronal processes involved, but rather it derives from implicit, practical knowledge about how sensory input from the sponge currently might change as a function of manipulation of the fingers” (O’Regan et al. 2005: 56; cited in Jackman 2016: 113). The skills one exercises here are derived from incorporated skilled ‘hands-on’ knowledge which ontogenetically develops into an awareness of one’s contingently stable environment. Hence the 4E approach to cognition contributes to the permeation and overcoming of artificial hierarchies and barriers established by cognitivist theories of mind, separating functions of the brain from those of the body and separating the organism from its environment. Transferred to FLL this understanding implies that, rather than learners acquiring, learning, or developing a language, they adapt their mindful bodies to the sounds and conceptualizations of the non-native language and its cultural context by non-consciously engaging in dialectical and vibrant body-brain-ecosocial attunement processes in the performative FL classroom – and beyond.

**Dimensions of the Body**

Conceptualizations of embodiment often refer to ‘the’ body in a rather undifferentiated manner (Gallagher 2019: 355) which can oscillate between very weak (i.e., echoing Cartesian hierarchies of mind and body) and strong (i.e., non-representationalist) versions. In FLL research, a weak notion of embodiment appears to be prevalent in most, if not all, mainstream approaches, even though the wider interactional and environmental context, as well as the possibility of non-linear learning processes, has increasingly been integrated (e.g., Lantolf & Thorne 2006; Kramsch 2009; Levine 2020). The focus on mental mediation in constructionist and sociocultural approaches, and sometimes also in ecologically conceptualized approaches to FLL (e.g., Kramsch 2002; van Lier 2004; Levine 2020), including “re-wilding” language education (Thorne, Hellerman, & Jakonen 2021), still tend to support an understanding of the subservient function of the body in FLL as a provider of sensory information *for brain processes*, rather than allowing for non-representationalist experiences of the lived body to be integrated as an important non-conscious regulatory influence on processes of thought, action, perception, and learning.

The lack of evidence of strong notions of embodiment in FL research may be grounded in the fact that all learning processes are conceptualized as intentional and therefore ultimately cognitive; it may also be explained by the immateriality of the lived body which favours a one-dimensional understanding of just the material dimension of the body. From a phenomenological perspective, the human body is seen as a subject inhabiting the world which is referred to as the *lived body*, with mind and body (and the environment) being inextricably intertwined (Merleau-Ponty 2012), however the primary role in accessing the world is not necessarily attributed to cognition. This view implies that we experience and access the world primarily via our lived *and* material bodies, making embodied experience an important subject of study. It also implies that most of our experiences in the world are sensory and sensual in nature which are often not processed by the neuronal devices within the human skull/brain.

The phenomenological distinction between these two closely related dimensions of the human body has been influenced by two terminological conceptualizations of the body in the German language.[[3]](#footnote-4) On the one hand, there is the concept of the body in a material sense, the *Körper* (derived from the Latin term *corpus*, no matter whether dead or alive), which is accessible to conscious awareness as an intentional referent. On the other hand, the body has an immaterial dimension which is called *Leib* (derived from the Old-High German term *lîb*, meaning life, and the subsequent Middle-High German term *lîp*, meaning both life and body),[[4]](#footnote-5) referring to the full range of “bodily factors prenoetically governing conscious life below the level of conscious monitoring and manipulation” (Bower & Gallagher 2013: 110). The neo-phenomenological philosopher Schmitz suggests that the lived body (*Leib*) is only partially, if at all, accessible to conscious awareness “in the surroundings of [one’s] material body, without basing [this] on the attestation of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, olfaction, taste) […]. The lived body is populated by bodily drives such as anguish, pain, hunger, thirst, breathing, pleasure, and affective involvement on the part of feelings” (Schmitz 2007: 15–16; my translation, A.W.).[[5]](#footnote-6)

Based on Merleau-Ponty’s (2012 [1945]) work, Gallagher (2005) elaborates on similar dimensions of the body from a phenomenological perspective, i.e., the ‘body image’ (comparable to the notion of *Körper*) and the ‘body schema’ (echoing the concept of *Leib*). According to Gallagher, the concept of body image refers to the body in a biological sense as a physiological, spatial, and material object that, as a *living* body, is subject to the laws of physics, causation, gravity, etc.; it is “a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body” (Gallagher 2005: 24), so it can be understood as an artefact of perceptual awareness of one’s body and its parts.

By contrast, the body schema, as the central mechanism of the *lived* body, is immaterial and not normally present in foregrounded consciousness, e.g., when walking down the road, or writing a conference paper. The body schema refers to the non-conscious pre-structuring of habitual movements of the body that require no specific attention to enact them, for instance, the activities of breathing, walking, posturing, swallowing, etc. These embodied movements “are accomplished by the *close to automatic* performances of a body schema” (Gallagher 2005: 26; original emphasis) in which the body-in-action effaces itself.

The body schema provides access to a very limited, proprioceptive awareness of *some* bodily drives, sensations, and movements as a “structural feature of the phenomenal field of consciousness, part of a framework that is likely to determine or influence all other aspects of experience” (Gallagher 2005: 2). Preconscious processes of the body schema can, for instance, come about by somaesthetic states of tension or relaxation, such as fear, hunger, fatigue, pleasure, satiation, or satisfaction which can severely bias perception, action, and higher-level processes of thought, without the subject noticing these influences. For example, a study by Danziger et al. (2011: 1; cited in Bower & Gallagher 2013: 118) shows the impact of extraneous factors on higher-level cognitive processing by/in the case of? a judge arriving at judicial court rulings, such as the judge being hungry or satiated. Although potentially life-altering judicial decisions ought to be governed purely by legal reasoning, the percentage of court rulings in favour of the accused party regularly dropped by two-thirds within each decision session (e.g., between breakfast and lunch) and increased abruptly by two-thirds after a (food) break. Thus, the lived body with its affective, visceral, and schematic dimensions provides a non-conscious regulatory background to conscious awareness and purposive action (Shusterman 2012: 47–67).

The unmediated resonances, affects, and processes of the lived body are not restricted to the subjective domain, rather they are designed by nature and culture to allow embodied agents to connect in a dynamic manner with other bodies by non-consciously communicating and exchanging affects, movements, and moods. This intercorporeal dimension of lived bodies implies that the visceral drives and feelings do not emanate from within the subjective body, rather they are generated by atmospheres in the environment (e.g., the feverish atmosphere that corporeally grips engaged spectators watching a live soccer match, or the joyous feeling at a wedding), or *between* bodies in processes of mutual incorporation. Mutual incorporation is a “pre-reflective intertwining of lived and living bodies, in which my own is affected by the other’s body as much as his by mine, leading to an embodied communication” (Fuchs 2016b: 200). Persons involved in processes of mutual incorporation engage in unmediated responsive corporeal interchanges and progressive assimilations of affective corporeal communication, e.g., intuitively aligning glances, gestures, smiles, mimics, postures, etc. (Brennan & Hanna 2009), thus generating corporeal feedback cycles (Krueger 2011). The view of mutual incorporation emphasizes pre-reflective participatory sense-making via embodied intercorporeal communication (De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007). However, the individuals engaged in dialectical activities of mutual incorporation do not lose their individuality or agency in the process; rather, the individually lived bodies are actively shaping the intercorporeal experiences while at the same time being shaped by them. If achieved, the positive intercorproreal experience establishes a joint affective atmosphere of relaxation, trust, and collaboration which is important for the intuitive constitution of a shared pre-reflective experience of participation between interactants, e.g., in collaborative FLL processes.

In a similar vein, the notion of non-linguistic perception does not imply sacrificing rational thought to bodily felt sensation, but it suggests a different way of thought, a sort of tacit knowing which is regulated by the richness of the drives, sensations, and resonances of the lived body with the affordances of the environment. Much of our perception takes place without involving deliberate attention or reflection; the lived body simply registers perceptive items sensuously, without explicitly attaching a semiotic label to them. This concerns most of the complex sounds, colours, odours, and textures which are encountered by us as familiar and therefore do not need explication, for example, the peculiar smell of a rose, the taste of chocolate, or the sound of waves breaking on a beach. It also concerns social cognition which is often an act of registering a perception, e.g., recognizing another’s emotions or intentions by their facial expression or bodily conduct, without the need for theorizing or simulating (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012). The meaning-carriers of sensuous, non-symbolic perception acquire their meaning potential through past experiences (Johnstone 2016: 39) which have sedimented in the memory of the lived body.

The conceptual distinction between the lived and living body, between *Leib* and *Körper*, is particularly relevant for FLL. The encounter with the sounds, structures, and conceptualisations of the FL and its use triggers affective resonances and responses of the lived body which regulate the level of learner engagement in the FL classroom. Because of the ‘foreignness’ of the subject-matter, the corporeal resonances may be somatically felt by the learner as challenging, gratifying, threatening, (un)pleasant, etc., as documented in (auto)biographical accounts of FL learners (e.g., as analyzed by Kramsch 2009). These unmediated feelings can evolve into a dynamic range of attitudes towards learning the FL, from enthusiasm and being prepared to invest more time and effort into adopting to the FL, to withdrawing further investment into learning. Whatever the response of the subject is to these somatic feelings towards learning the FL in the/an institutional context (with its formalistic requirements such as curricular objectives, learning outcomes, regular assessments and evaluations of the learning process, expectations of parents, etc.), trying to apprehend one’s affective, sensory, and sensual responses of the lived body implies a greater level of awareness of one’s feelings and attitudes towards the FLL process, so that mindful reactions are possible.

**Body Memory as Habitus**

Over one’s lifetime, but particularly during primary socialisation, the continual corporeal processes of corporeal (re)alignment with the environment tend to sediment into “patterns and regularities of behaviour, motor skills, reflex actions and responses which are engrained within a kind of bodily memory” (Blackman 2012: 97). This sort of memory does not represent past experiences in the brain, but is distributed in the body schema where it tacitly re-enacts the sedimented corporeal skills, habits, experiences, and dispositions whenever activated in the present conduct of corporeal life (Gallagher 2017: 195). Whereas episodic memory is directed to the past, body memory can be regarded as a sedimentation of our “lived past” (Fuchs 2016b: 202). In the quotidian conduct of life, the retention of the body’s past performance is transformed by primal enaction into a protention of its skilled performance in the present and in the future. This pattern of emergence of the potentiality of actions echoes Husserl’s anticipatory “I can” which is oriented towards possibilities of action, drawing on prior embodied experience and the current state of corporeal engagement with environmental affordances (Moran 2017). This view can also be related to (ist anschlussfähig) the ecological approach to FLL which proposes that learning *emerges* when ecologically embedded agents participate in eco-social processes based on incorporated memory and perceived affordances, and adapt their bodies to a non-native language (Cowley 2012).

Most of our knowledge of the world results from our multisensory and practical engagement with it, i.e., from preconscious corporeal experience, without us ever having learned this non-propositional knowledge explicitly (Fuchs 2020: 44). As Merleau-Ponty (2012: 146) puts it, “habit resides neither in thought nor in the objective body, but rather in the body as the mediator of a world”, i.e., the lived body. From a sociological perspective, Bourdieu (1977: 72) called this sort of implicit bodily knowledge “habitus”, a concept which straddles the individual and sociocultural domains. The notion of habitus is central for capturing the dialectic between culturally informed social structure and individual agency because it is fundamentally embodied and embedded in practices that are not only normative for physical actions, but also socially and culturally normative and hermeneutical in terms of shaping the way individuals interpret themselves and others.

By way of corporeally acting in the structured social world, culture[[6]](#footnote-7) as a symbolic order has entered the body through diverse social and experiential channels; culturally constituted social habits “reside in the matter of the body, in the muscles, nerves, and skin where they operate autonomously” (Massumi 2002: 236), e.g., in terms of skilled hands-on knowledge. These cultural principles are embodied but “placed beyond the grasp of consciousness” (ibid.), so we continually and non-consciously adapt our mindful bodies to become and remain active members of our cultural community. In contrast to episodic memory, which explicitly recollects and (re)constructs the past as such, culturally structured and socially embedded body memory corresponds “to an embodied and implicit knowing *how*, not a knowing or remembering *that*” (Fuchs 2017: 333). Body memory is emergent in and modified by bodily practices of applying the *knowing how* to do things; it is intercorporeally distributed in the social and cultural community by way of non-representational “collective body memories” (Fuchs 2017). The collective body memories reinforce the habitus and predetermine the coordinated behaviours of group members.

Precisely because habitus is not explicitly reflected upon, we nonconsciously adapt our bodies and minds to certain socioculturally induced mindsets, practices, and norms that for us make them intuitively seem normal, while making others appear out of place. These preconsciously structured behaviours pertain, for instance, to patterns of tensing or loosening of body postures, exuberant or restrained use of gestures, loudness of voice in interaction, proxemics, etc., which may vary across communities and cultures. They also function as the source to guide *spontaneous* behaviour in interactive situations without the opportunity for deliberate reflection, particularly if these situations are informed by a non-native language and its sociocultural context. In these instances, spontaneous behaviour is shaped by the subject’s preconscious visceral gut feelings, hunches, and instincts, as emergent in the situation. However, the sedimented habitus can also give rise to deeply embodied prejudices and stereotypes which “resist correction by mere discursive arguments for tolerance” (Shusterman 2012: 30) because they operate only on the rational level “without changing the visceral grip of the prejudice” (ibid.). They can only be addressed and modified through an interplay of rational insight and focused (re)training of situationally appropriate modes of behavior at a corporeal level.

For intercultural FLL, the view of tacit, socioculturally structured and practically constituted body memory implies that the living and lived bodies (i.e., *Körper* and *Leib*) of learners have to be actively involved in the processes of engaging with the ecological affordances, similar to those of the primary processes of immersionist ‘learning by doing’, i.e., corporeally attuning to and incorporating the patterns and norms of the FL and its sociocultural contextby means of hands-on sense-making. However, the motivations and circumstances in institutional FLL are different from first-language socialization, as the students’ dynamic co-constitution of body, emotion, cognition, and their environment in primary socialization has largely been completed, and the related experiential traces in the body, including the habitus, have already been consolidated to a large extent (although they remain amenable to modification). Therefore, it is even more relevant to engage the body in the FL-related attunement processes because meaning emerges through the practical mastery and skilful exploitation of contingencies provided by the pre-symbolic foundations of sensory experience (Jackman 2016: 114). Hence, the sociological and phenomenological concepts of the mindful body (or embodied cognition), body memory, (inter)corporeal communication and sensing, and sensorimotor knowledge strongly suggest that the practice of intercultural FLL needs to be adjusted to explicitly integrate structured patterns of bodily activities.

**Embodied (Trans)Languaging Activities**

The human body is involved in broad languaging activities right from birth onwards. Cognitive processes and brain structures emerge in infancy through the sphere of reciprocal embodied interaction and affective-behavioural attunement with the sociocultural and material environment. They are initiated by affective intercorporeal resonances in early infancy, then proceeding to iconic gestures in engaged shared practices of inter-action between infant and relevant others (mutually shared gaze-following, pointing, mimicry, vocalization, touch, coordination of movements, etc.) which gradually solidify into symbolic modes of communication (first and foremost language), without ever losing the primal dimension of the preverbal intercorporeal resonance system (Fuchs 2016a). For example, gesture continues “lending form to the sweep of an idea, helping to draw it out” (Gibbs 2010: 199) in ways that may be difficult to convey in words (Novack & Goldin-Meadow2015: 405). In this light, speech can be seen as “transformed gesture, enacted by the body” (Fuchs 2016a: 123); languaging can thus be understood as a fundamentally embodied interactive praxis in a meaningful environment.

Since language emerges in intercorporeal dynamics and ecological modes of communication, these resources ought to be studied in an integrated manner with/alongside? the FL. Such an emergent, dynamic, and integrated understanding of language is offered by Distributed Language Theory (Cowley 2011; Love 2004) which distinguishes between ‘first-order languaging’ and ‘second-order language’ whereby ‘language’ is specified as a second-order cultural construct of first-order languaging activities. First-order languaging is defined as a form of embodied and intersubjective activity (Love 1990; Thibault 2011) which includes “making and interpreting linguistic *signs*” (Love 2004: 530; original emphasis) and, according to Thibauld (2011), also extends to semiotic paralinguistic bodily resources (such as gesture) together with “external (extrabodily) aspects of situations, environmental affordances, artifacts, technologies, and so on” (p. 215).

Spontaneous first-order languaging processes are seen as a socioculturally and pragmatically embedded “experiential flow that is enacted, maintained, and changed by the real-time activity of participants” (Thibault 2017: 74). It involves the living, sensing, and moving body (lungs, vocal musculature, mouth, eyes, ears, hands, faces, etc.) and embodied semiotic resources, which are not always consciously deployed (e.g., intonation, intensity of breathing, emotions, etc.). The notion of first-order languaging thus transcends the realm of language in the conventional sense of speaking and writing, and includes a variety of material, historical, lingual, cultural, semiotic, and modal resources and capacities “which languaging agents *orchestrate* in real-time and across a diversity of timescales” (Thibault 2017: 82; original emphasis). According to this view, language is not a disembodied symbolic system, rather it extends and emerges in concert with pre-conscious body memories and expressions in spontaneous languaging activities which are socioculturally, intercorporeally, and situationally embedded. The embeddedness invokes a diversity of timescales, not only the micro-social timescale of the actual interaction, but also macro-sociological timescales of the institution, ideological timescales of society, and the biographical timescales of the learners (incl. their memories of previous learning experiences, projections of future scenarios related to FLL, and subjective appraisals, desires, and fantasies) (Lemke 2002). Languaging activities are thus fluid, multiscalar, and complex practices which partially rely on incorporated meaning-making potentials, sedimented in the pre-reflective habitus; they dynamically provide the know-how for intuitive languaging behaviour that emerges in interactive situations.

For intercultural FLL, the level of embodiment of second-order languaging and first-order languaging activities is initially different in the FL compared to the L1 (Pavlenko 2005), but it dynamically evolves over time in terms of increasing cognitive, sensual, and emotional FL incorporation. This imbalance can favour the retention and use of L1-related discourse categories and mental patterns of meaning-making processes in FL-related (trans)languaging activities, particularly in early FLL. Together with the richness of multilingual, multisemiotic, and multimodal resources for processes of thinking and communicating, this imbalance should be particularly considered for intercultural FLL, resulting in a practice of “translanguaging” (Li Wei 2018).[[7]](#footnote-8) This view emphasizes the necessity of moving away from disembodied cognitive FLL in the direction of a fundamentally embodied intercultural FLL approach which explicitly includes the integration of the learners’ bodies in translanguaging activities (Thibauld 2017: 76).

The view of language embodiment is supported by research in neuroscience, which claims that higher cognitive processing, such as perceiving animate actions, automatically activates the same sensorimotor structures (or so-called mirror neurons, although/even though neurons cannot mirror anything) in the brain as if the person is directly carrying out or experiencing these actions (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia 2008; Gallese 2008). Even if only *understanding* words denoting reported action, neuronal sensorimotor activation occurs similarly/in the same way to neuronal activation when actually *performing* the described action (Dudschig et al. 2014: 14), provided that the action has been carried out before and sedimented in body memory prior to auditory or visual activation of the mirror neurons. This finding suggests that language comprehension is crucially based on action-perception circuits in the brain (Gallese 2008; Pulvermüller 2005 & 2013; Jirak et al. 2010), involving, not abstract and amodal representations, but rather “the activation of traces of perceptual and motor experience” (Zwaan & Taylor 2006: 9). For example, when listening to verbs referring to hand movements (e.g., write, take, point, wave, etc.) right-handed people show an activation of the left pre-motor cortex, left-handed people an activation of the right cortex (Willems et al. 2010).[[8]](#footnote-9) Whereas neuroscientific research often takes a cerebrocentristic perspective, these results clearly show that regions of the brain are involved in action-oriented formation of intention and activity, suggesting that the explanatory unit for languaging is the brain-body-environment triad rather than just the brain. It also suggests that, if languaging and cognition “is not a (local) state in the brain, but rather a process that crisscrosses physical structures, then it is in a state of *becoming* (cf. Major, 2010), rather than a state of *being*” (Steffensen 2015: 111; original emphasis).

Regarding FLL, these research results imply that sensorimotor activation in the L1 should be different from the FL, with less rich or direct connections to the sensorimotor cortex for the FL (Perani & Abutalebi 2005; Pavlenko 2005; Eilola & Havelka, 2011; Dudschig et al. 2014). This appears to be the case particularly for adolescent and adult FL learners (i.e., over the age of 12 years; Pavlenko 2012) whose dynamic co-constitution of the lived body, perception, and cognition in the L1-related environment has largely been completed, so that FL lexical representations have less senses associated with them in comparison to those in the L1 (Finkbeiner et al. 2004). Supporting evidence provided by Harris et al. (2003) demonstrates that, for late FL learners, taboo and negatively loaded words elicit higher levels of skin conductance (e.g., blushing) in the L1 relative to the FL, suggesting that embodiment effects most likely differ between languages of/depending on the? varying degrees of incorporation. Studies examining L1 and FL embodiment in terms of affective and sensorimotor effects appear to corroborate these findings (Pavlenko 2012 & 2017; Ahlberg et al. 2017; Monaco et al. 2019).

Neuroscientific studies of differences between L1 and FL embodiment focus mainly on the effects language has on the sensorimotor system. There are only a limited number of studies on the *reverse* effect of sensory or motor influences on cognitive FL processing, e.g., examining how reading comprehension can be enhanced when learners physically perform a story they are reading (Skulmowski & Rey 2018). Several studies have shown that the use of accompanying gestures can improve the retention of newly learned FL words and phrases (Macedonia & Knösche 2011; Macedonia 2014; Porter 2016). More generally, Mavilidi et al. (2015) have demonstrated that an integrated physical learning task normally leads to improved learning performance. However, most of these studies focus only on the use of gesture as a tool for enhancing the learning process and retaining FL knowledge (Block 2014: 70), without considering other or more complex forms of corporeal activity for integrated learning activities.

Whereas FL-related neuroscientific studies examine the levels and regions of neuronal language stimulation in the brain, cognitivist studies of embodiment mainly focus on the use of para-linguistic means such a gesture in supporting cognitive objectives of improved representation and retention of FL knowledge. Both approaches fall short of providing a comprehensive account of embodiment regarding intercultural FLL, although there appears to be strong evidence for improved learning through the integration of performative learning activities, reaching into (and thus modifying) elements of the learner’s body memory. However, none of the mainstream models and conceptualizations of intercultural competence (see Spitzberg & Changnon 2009) consider the dimension of the (lived) body.

**The bodily dimension in performative and intercultural FLL**

Learning to incorporate the FL in its sociocultural and pragmatic interrelatedness necessitates the integration of learners’ bodies in exploring the foreign way of life, thus linking cognitive processes with their visceral, motor, affective, kinetic, and kinaesthetic modalities. The practical and behavioral dimensions of interactive FL use can only be apprehended by the medium that expresses this behaviour, i.e., the body in its coordinated lived and living dimensions (Bennett & Castiglioni 2004: 257). A performative approach to FLL appears to be particularly suited for this purpose, as it brings more variety and enjoyment to the learning process and thus increases learners’ motivation, investment, and focus by simultaneously engaging their bodies, emotions, and minds (Fleming 2018). Research has shown that there is not necessarily a direct correspondence between the *degree* of bodily engagement and levels of embodiment or improved learning outcomes. Rather, levels of FL embodiment depend on whether the learner’s body engagement is only *incidental* (resulting in low levels of embodiment) or robustly *integrated* in the learning tasks. If bodily activities are regularly integrated into the learning tasks, the levels of holistic learning are enhanced, even if they comprise only performed seated activities (e.g., using gestures). However, learning outcomes tend to be much improved if bodily performances and body locomotion are strongly integrated in the learning process (Skulmowski & Rey 2018), because richer opportunities for non-linear learning and activation of body schema and body memory are provided.

Performative intercultural FLL pedagogies integrate bodily dimensions into the learning processes to different degrees, ranging from the simple reinforcement of reading practices by reading aloud and using congruent gestures (Pavlenko 2005), the use of FL role plays, in-class games, and simulations (Jones 1983), intercultural performative project work (Kompiadou et al. 2017), improvised process drama (Bowell & Heap 2013), and drama pedagogics (Crutchfield & Sambanis 2017), to more complex theatre performances (Aden 2017). The emphasis of performative approaches to FLL is not so much on the structure, function, or product, such as the staging of a play, but on the *process* of actively engaging the body in creative translanguaging and performance-related activities. More complex performative learning activities require learners to take more responsibility for their learning process, for joint and coordinated learning activities, and for developing the plot of the play (if applicable), as well as collaboratively engaging in warm-up activities, such as getting in the mood of the FL-related roles and contexts. This is a complex undertaking, involving an imaginative transposition of learners’ bodies into the performed FL environment, while simultaneously engaging in tanslanguaging activities, multimodal intercorporeal interaction, and mutual incorporation. This multi-perspectival approach to developing and performing roles in the FL play can also be seen as facilitating the gradual incorporation of a dynamic intercultural third space.[[9]](#footnote-10)

The complexity of performative FLL encourages spontaneous translanguaging activities, e.g., when collaboratively discussing characters’ thoughts, expressions, emotions, and actions in a mix of the languages in the? play, whilst also making use of multimodal para- and extralinguistic resources. In this way, learners “move dynamically between the so-called languages […] to fulfil a variety of strategic and communicative functions” (Li 2018: 26) in relation to the performance at hand, thus exploring rich resources for translanguaging and imaginative transpositioning activities. An illustrative example of such an exploration is provided by a university student in a performative FL class situated in Ireland: “Throughout the module, German was the language mostly used, although English wasn’t prohibited and was also used at times. The emphasis was on fluency over accuracy and soon we were all using German freely. The dramatic situations of our improvisations called on us to reach for the language needed to keep the drama going: the last thing anyone wanted to do was let the drama die out. If we didn’t have the exact words the situation called for, we looked for an alternative way of expressing what we had to act out” (Schewe & Woodhouse 2018: 61–62). Here, translanguaging activities are used for communicative and strategic functions, driven by the common desire of the students to creatively advance the improvisational drama plot which they obviously enjoy doing, clearly having taken ownership of their performative activities. Learners also use multimodal resources to ‘keep the drama going’, ranging from the level of discourse and rhetoric to paralinguistic means and the full array of extralinguistic resources. For embodying a particular role in a FL play, the normally preconsciously activated corporeal resources now ought to be intentionally deployed so as to ‘fit’ the role, i.e., “to live through the eyes of others and feel inhabited by their gestures, sounds and postures” (Aden 2017: 59). By learners moving, breathing, and inhabiting the characters in a play, FL use and social patterns of behavior in the FL-context are no longer viewed as “abstract concepts unrelated to real-life situations” (Bora 2020: 152). Rather, they are imaginatively and corporeally inhabited by the learners in a living context, and the motivation for acting in a particular way is reflected upon in the group of learners, thus facilitating a more holistic understanding of the foreign way of life and making it relatable to their own life-worlds.

However, the roles of characters are populated by cultural others in its/their? authentic FL context whose habitus, attitudes, and perceptive focus may be different to the learners’ experiences. When the frame of a performative situation is transposed between the L1 to the FL contexts, the learners’ bodies are exposed to experiencing and resonating culturally different affordances, initially triggering incorporated patterns of behaviour and activity sedimented in their body memory. These previously embodied L1-related patterns may not be appropriate for performing the new FL-related cultural characters so that a certain degree of unease, alienation, or decentering might be somatically felt. This somatically sensed affectedness by the cultural decentering of the corporeal comfort zone is precisely the catalyst for intentionally attending to one’s own lived body in an attempt to understand the reasons for the discomfort felt. Relevant aspects of the body memory may be retrieved (or re-enacted) for critical attention and then modified in the context of the emerging performative situation by (efforts of) intentionally performing relevant experiences and, with? time, modified preconscious, dispositional re-enactments of habits in the body schema. If this self-reflective practice is regularly used in the performative FL class, it is likely to enable a more focused attentiveness to the sentiments and adaptive responses of one’s lived body to the experience of the cultural Other; it also has the potential of modifying bodily habits vis-à-vis a changed cultural background.

The performative FL play constitutes a complex “imaginative transposition” (Fuchs 2014: 158) as a cognitive operation where one puts oneself into the shoes of another person and imagines how one would feel and act in place of the other in another socioculturally framed environment. This process seems reminiscent of cognitive Theory of Mind (Goldman 2006) but by contrast, during the processes of imaginative transposition one remains acutely aware of the difference between self and the other in a state of “split awareness” (Fuchs 2014: 161) at a performative level, as the learner moves back and forth, and in-between the linguistic and cultural spaces. Imaginative transpositioning in the FL classroom also extends to the learners’ bodies in their intentional performative efforts. Gallagher (2017) sees imagining as a complex activity, similar to playacting. He argues that it “involves a variety of different practices – some of them actively embodied, some of them involving the manipulation of bits of the environment, some of them sitting still and picturing something by manipulating concepts or thoughts or images (re-enacted perceptions) – which in any case may still involve affective and kinaesthetic aspects of embodiment” (Gallagher 2017: 195). Thus, imagining is not confined to the level of cognitive projecting/projection?, but it is closer to corporeal “pretending and simulating” (Gallagher 2017: 192) in terms of “dealing with affordances” (Gallagher 2017: 195). These affordances in the performative FL classroom can be provided by authentic FL-related resources such as images, sounds, video or audio clips, plays, websites, narrations, etc., but also by the FL teaching and learning activities themselves. They relate to the corporeal and cognitive processes of collaboratively and imaginatively exploring the culturally situated Other in relation to one’s own skills, abilities, and lived-body responses, whereby the bodies of peers in performative play can oscillate between embodying the role of a cultural Other and directly resonating with the bodies of collaborators in class as peers. Although conceptualizations of intercultural FL teaching and learning extend to psychological domains such as attitudes and empathy (e.g., Byram 1997; Barrett et al. 2014; Deardorff 2011) or emotions (e.g., Gkonou, Dewaele, & King 2020), the relevance of the body and of body memory is normally not considered for intercultural FL methodologies.

**Mindful bodies**

The discourse on performative approaches to intercultural FLL has centred mainly on cognitive dimensions of the play, such as learning outcomes, intercultural awareness, acting and drama techniques, etc. It has not extended to the role of the nonconscious elements of the body and to training attentiveness to its drives and resonances with the cultural Other. However, when experiencing the cultural Other, it is precisely the non-conscious and affective mechanisms of the lived body that regulate the momentary perception of the response to such otherness. The cultural Otherness of the FL-related context cannot be reduced to the embodied categories of the L1-related habitus, nor can it be integrated into the L1-related system of beliefs and knowledge without eliminating the authenticity of such Otherness. Rather, cultural Otherness belongs to a transitional zone of intercultural in-betweenness in which the lived body of the learner assumes a central role in preconsciously connecting elements of the foreign with elements of embodied experience, thus preparing the ground for explicit learning.[[10]](#footnote-11) Meaning-making arises from this pre-conscious interspace, but meaning only becomes manifest in the modified corporeal behavior of FL learners, such as intuitively using gestures or facial expressions (Waldenfels 2000). Corporeally attentive learning is initially not directed at the rational interpretation of foreign cultural constructs and constellations but at the apprehension of one’s unmediated resonances with, and responses to, the holistic experience of the cultural Other. The moment of sensing certain instinctive resonances of the lived body with encounters of Otherness unlocks a space for apprehending some of these resonances and responses, particularly those which are somatically felt to be weird and strange, i.e., out of kilter with sedimented body memory.[[11]](#footnote-12)

A vague form of situationally-derived meaning can normally be sensed in a temporal window of between 0.5 and 3 seconds *before* sensory integration (Gallagher 2020: 29–30), meaning that *some* of the proprioceptive perceptions can be intentionally apprehended, and the shift in corporeal resonances can then be reflected upon (Aden 2017: 66–67). Enquiry and mindful reflection are important processes for *ex post* drawing attention to those drives and responses of the lived body which actually *can*, with deliberate effort and skilful training, somatically be noticed and potentially be verbalised, even if the richness of sensate experience cannot be fully captured by propositional categories.[[12]](#footnote-13) Since many of these corporeal drives, affects, and responses are rooted in the distributed habitus of the L1 cultural community, and, initially to a much lesser extent (if at all), in the newly experienced practices of the FL cultural community, the corporeally-based engagement with aspects of these practices forms the basis for developing a dynamic subjective place on a continuum between the cultural spaces, i.e., a dynamic intercultural zone of experiential multiple blending and embodied “potentialisation” (Aden 2017: 70).

Attentiveness is a domain-crossing cognitive style whereby reflective consciousness “operates *upon* rather than *within* thought, feeling, and other contents of consciousness” (Levesque & Brown 2007: 285; cited in Jackman 2016: 119; original italics). Training attentiveness to the movements, resonances, and drives of the lived body therefore implies processes of raising to conscious awareness some of the intricacies of the habitus and the body schema which are involved in the subject’s actions and the dimensions they disclose. The training of attentiveness to the resonances, responses, and drives of the lived body starts with sensitizing the learners for/to regularly attempting to apprehend their pre-reflective corporeal affects, for example, trying “to apprehend their perception in as concrete a way as possible – we feel a vibration, the expansion or reduction of the breath, pain to the legs” (Bennett & Castiglioni (2004: 262). These perceptual apprehensions can then be transformed into a somatic, sometimes even conscious awareness of the sensed affective experience of one’s lived body and its affectedness by the corporeal experience of engaging with the FL and its context. Training attentiveness to nonconscious feelings and responses of the lived body has the potential to transform these vaguely sensed perceptual experiences into a saturated embodied experience of learning, closing the gap between higher levels of consciousness (which tend to efface the body and losing itself in objects and configurations; Böhme 2003: 120) and corporeal perception (which tends to elude consciousness altogether). Guiding questions for raising nonconscious corporeal experiences to awareness could, for instance, address the feeling of anxiousness of speaking the FL in front of others, the sensing of foreign words in the process of hearing their sounds and articulating them, the specific corporeal resonances with the sounds and structures of the FL, the feeling of being imaginatively transposed to situations informed by another language and socioculture, the feeling of bodily performing through the FL in front of others, the sensing of mutual incorporation in collaborative forms of learning, and the feeling of corporeally encountering otherness in the process of acting out aspects of the play. Through regular and structured training of directing attentiveness to the resonances and responses of the sentient body, supported by the integrated use of reflective learner journaling, one can learn to value it as an important instrument for accessing preconscious information about other cultures and one’s own self which cannot be captured directly by rational processes of the brain, thus completing epistemological understanding by a corporeal comprehension of languages in their sociocultural embeddedness.

In this manner, learners become aware of their own embodied experience in their culture, and, on that basis, are enabled to shift their body boundaries “into the forms that elicit a feeling for the other culture” (Bennett & Castiglioni 2004: 260) so that gradually “behavior appropriate in the other cultural context can flow naturally from our embodied experience, just as it does in our own culture” (ibid). The FL classroom thus becomes a space of experimentation, of affective, sensory, and kinaesthetic learning with direct relevance for the FLL process, restoring the place of the lived body to intercultural FL teaching and learning approaches. More generally, it can also restore the status of the lived body to the conduct of one’s quotidian life where somatic self-consciousness “should play a central role in tracking, guiding, and responding” (Shusterman 2008: 14) to the transformations and reorganizations in bodily perceptions, actions, and experiences.

**Conclusion**

FLL is not confined to students’ heads and dependent only on verbal interaction. In addition to being deeply situated in a particular time and specific environment and constrained by a social and institutional structure that defines how learning will develop, it is also deeply dependent on the learners’ bodies. The differentiation between the material *Körper* and the immaterial *Leib* introduces an important terminological innovation for the field of intercultural FLL. It allows for the relationship of the modes of lived body experience and material bodily practice to be formulated. The strong notion of embodiment relativizes the traditionally assumed primary role of representational cognition and emphasizes the enactive roles of the sentient *Leib* and physical *Körper* for emerging perception, action, and meaning-making in a given environment. This perspective does not imply replacing the role of higher cognition with corporeally-based perception and action (although lower cognitive processing such as perception can be replaced in this way), but it offers an alternative approach for explaining the emergence of human knowledge, acknowledging/taking into account that cognition fundamentally depends on the multisensory and enactive body, and the rich experiences and complex actions it affords in the world.

This is an important, yet largely unexplored approach to FLL, as our material and sociocultural world is not so? much analytically deduced but primarily encountered by the multisensory body (incl. mind) and “disclosed in terms of our own abilities to act upon it through a ‘hands-on’ practice of sense-making” (Jackman 2016: 113). Only through unmediated bodily resonances and adaptive responses can situational atmospheres, affects, moods, and meanings be sensed and experienced, and an intuitive feeling for new FL-related situations be generated. In this regard, embodied learning can be understood as “the active process through which changes and shifts are experienced in, through, with, and because of the body” (Munro 2018: 6).

The deliberate integration of the lived and living body in collaborative and performative intercultural FLL activities can be associated with many benefits, including attentiveness to multisensory embodied learning and contextually situated intercorporeal (inter)action; heightened emotional engagement; enhancement of social competences arising from (trans)languaging activities and corporeal engagement with peers; mutual incorporation; creative role taking and role making in performative FL-related foreign spaces; increased pleasure, confidence, and motivation in and for intercultural FLL; improved retention and consolidation of the learned items, not only in episodic memory, but also in body memory; fostering of multimodally-based intercultural-situational competence; ability to use the FL in a more confident and flexible manner which also has the effect of reducing affective barriers such as anxiety of speaking the FL in front of and with others. Elaborate forms of performative FLL may not always be in alignment with institutional demands for public accountability and efficiency, but even small-scale activities of integrating the body (such as using gestures in seated activities) are clearly relevant for the holistic FLL process. The essence of embodied approaches to FLL is that the body, particularly corporeal systems that have evolved for perception, action, and emotion, play an important role not only for embedding higher cognitive processes but also regulating the individual’s affective, sensory, and attitudinal stances towards the FL and its sociocultural context. Training somatic vigilance and attentiveness to the unmediated resonances and responses of the lived body, not only in intercultural FLL activities, but also more generally in the everyday conduct of one’s life, can contribute to a modification of one’s corporeal presence, so that consciousness returns from the focus on objects (in the widest sense) and is likely to saturate the rich experience of one’s subjective existence in the world (Böhme 2003: 120).

1. In this article, the term ‘corporeal’ (*leiblich*) refers to the dimension of the immaterial lived body (*Leib*). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The concept of “4E” cognition which could be extended to other ‘E’s’, such as *Empathic* or *Evolutionary*, suggests that ongoing relational processes of the brain-body-environment triad continuously shape and reshape (or ‘enact’) the boundaries between organism and its eco-socio-cultural environment (Atkinson 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This conceptual differentiation has proven useful for German phenomenological philosophers (particularly Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, but also more recently Hermann Schmitz and Gernot Böhme). Philosophers working through/in other languages have experienced difficulties with translating the concept of *Leib*. Merleau-Ponty (2012 [1945]) terms the *Leib* ‘chair’ (flesh) in French, whereas in English it has been translated as the ‘lived body’ (Gallagher 2020) or the ‘felt body’ (Schmitz, Müllan, & Slaby 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The related Anglo-Saxon term *lîf* has evolved into English *life.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The notion of the extended *Leib* refers to the fact that, according to Schmitz (2011), it is not confined to the boundary of the skin. For example, when skilfully driving a car, one feels intuitively at one with the car in terms of its measurements or physical characteristics, i.e., incorporating dimensions of car into one’s lived body, so that one can drive confidently through a narrow gate, tacitly knowing that the car will fit through it. Building on an example provided by Merleau-Ponty (2012), Berndtsson (2018) illustrates how the long cane of a person newly gone blind rapidly becomes an extension of her own body, unifying bodily, cognitive, and environmental dimensions in one object and its use. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Paradoxically, the human body is normally written out of conceptualizations of culture. Bennett & Castiglioni (2004: 250) argue that since Plato, “the excision of the body from Western thought has led to the reification of the products of the mind”, which is particularly evident in the concept of objective culture. The disembodied mind thus paradoxically produces a cultural reality that effaces the producer’s role in this reality, and the dimension of lived reality is sacrificed for the notion of a constructed factual or objective culture. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The current theory of translanguaging appears to emphasize the cognitive domain and is still lacking a proper definition regarding the integration of para- and extralinguistic dimensions, particularly concerning the body. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. New neuroscientific research has shown that human brains can read thoughts (motor signals) via brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), thus seemingly bypassing the body and its parts (i.e., the hands). For example, a paralyzed person learned to write again only by *thinking* of writing a text; the computer decoded attempted handwriting movements from neural activity in the motor cortex (transferred via an implanted chip) and in real time converted his thoughts into text with 95-99% accuracy (Willett, F.R.; Avansino, D.T.; Hochberg, L.R.; Henderson, J.M.; & Shenoy, K.V. 2021). However, impressive as this technology may be especially for impaired individuals, it only works from brain to body, and not conversely, as the sensory, visceral, and affective information captured by the body is far too complex and dynamic to be encoded by a machine. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. This also appears to be one of the premises for improv theatre groups such as the German-speaking *artig* group ([www.artiges.org](http://www.artiges.org); Haftner & Riedmüller 2017) which promotes intercultural-performative translanguaging activities by visiting schools around the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. This does not imply that the now orphaned place of the Cartesian *ego* is occupied by the lived body, because the lived body does not stand for an inwardness of the subject but is itself composed in a fractured manner, i.e., an experience of “diastasis” (Waldenfels 2002: 11), caused by the subject being decentered by encounters with the irreducible foreign. The direct experience of foreignness and strangeness undermines the artificial opposition of inner and outer worlds and points to an interworld in which we exist as intercorporeally and ecologically connected subjects. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. This gap between sedimented body memory and the unfamiliar requirements of quotidian life is acutely sensed when immersed in a non-native languaculture, e.g., spending a year abroad in the context of third-level FL study programs. The lived body and the habitus only adjust gradually to the resonances of lived atmospheres, structures, rhythms, rituals, and practices of the foreign sociocultural environment, and they re-adjust equally slowly after returning home after the year abroad. This can be an unsettling experience which is often described as a “re-entry shock” (La Brack 1993: 244) or “reverse culture shock” (Gaw 2000: 297). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The process of attending introspectively to visceral feelings and sensory experience is always reductive by the need of tying/on account of the need to tie vaguely sensed, complex and unnamed experiences to propositional categories. For instance, words cannot capture the simultaneity of various sensory experiences that renders them indivisible, “as when, sitting by the window in a café watching the busy streetscape with the warmth of the morning sun on my back, I smell the delicious aroma of coffee and simultaneously feel its warmth in my mouth, taste it, and can tell the choice of beans as I listen idly to the chatter in the café around me and all these things blend into my experience of ‘being in the café’” (Gibbs 2010: 201). Translating the simultaneity of multisensory experience into strings of words implies splitting up the sensory components and listing them in succession, thereby “imposing a hierarchy of importance” (Gibbs 2010: 201) on them. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)