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"Come join the cast!"

-Cody Poulton, IAPL President

Workshops and show

On the first day, the conference began with a drama workshop by *Anaza Jijodan*, a theatrical group from Japan. It opened with a kinetic self-introduction, where through the use of body-sign names, each of the 30 participants were able to remember everyone's names in ten minutes! Fascinatingly, these body-sign names acted as a catalyst for the rest of the activities. Utilizing their sign-names, participants set about creating, in a step-by-step fashion, a drama based on Anton Chekov's comedy, *The Three Sisters*. Participants were so engrossed in this task that the two-hour workshop ran somewhat over time.

The conference reception was extraordinary. After a party, there was an ice-breaking theatrical activity directed by Juliana Saxton, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Theatre, UVic, and Cameron Culham, a UVic ESL instructor and professional actor and director. After working for a short time in four groups (narration, movement, sound, and stage setting), all participants performed an ensemble drama of a native Canadian story called *How Raven Stole the Sun*. Despite the constraints of limited time and resources, an evocative performance ensued. The most magical moment came when the four groups were harmonized as an imaginative multimodal orchestra to perform the story. As a result, the first day of the conference ended happily and contentedly.

On the second day, there was an applied theatre demonstration given by two experts in the field: Dr. Warwick Dobson and Emily Story. The demonstration began with a short scene from Harold Pinter's play, *Mountain Language*, performed by professional actors. It began:

Keywords

IAPL, conference, ELT, drama, education

In response to the challenge and invitation, 60 participants from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America joined the 2nd International Association of Performing Language (IAPL) conference held at the University of Victoria (UVic), situated in the beautiful garden city of Victoria, Canada, from March 6th to 8th, 2009. This new conference was a meeting place for language teachers and drama practitioners to build relationships and understanding from their knowledge and experience on performing language – the application of performing arts into language education. This year there were 20 academic papers, a panel discussion, and six workshops. The conference was offered bilingually, in English and Japanese.

2009年3月6日～8日、カナダの美しい庭園都市ビクトリアにあるビクトリア大学で行われた第2回IAPLに、アフリカ、アジア、ヨーロッパ、北米から60名が参加した。この新しい会議は語学教師と演技指導者の出会いの場として、新しく関係を築き、performing language（言語教育への演技導入）に対する知識と経験を共有し、相互理解を深めるためのものであった。20の学術論文発表、6つのワークショップ、そして公開討論会が1回あり、会議は英語と日本語の2ヶ国語で行われた。

Man: (speaking to a woman): *Your language is dead. It is forbidden. You are not permitted to speak your mountain language in this place. You cannot speak your language. It is not permitted. Do you understand?*

What do you think this play is about? Who is the man? Who is he talking to? In addition to these deceptively simple questions, the audience, working in small groups, was also asked to imagine what was going on in the story. Most groups seemed to agree that the play was about people who were prohibited from using their own language. Although time was quite limited, through the process of group discussion and articulation of ideas within a theme of *language, oppression, and emancipation*, each group created original scenes and performed them for each other. The demonstration was wrapped up by Story's talk about how theatrical theory and practice has contributed to the understanding of languages and cultures. We learned that using drama in language education can be a powerful learning tool for reflecting on intercultural issues as well as issues of using L2-only policies within language teaching and learning.

The highlight of the second day was a bilingual performance of *The Three Sisters* by Anaza Jijodan at the banquet. After a *kamishibai* (picture-story) introduction, the professional actors powerfully demonstrated how audience participation can be utilized during a performance, thus reviewing skills taught in previous workshops. The play was full of energy and laughter, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

On the third day, three different types of performing arts presentations were offered. Yuka Kusanagi of Akita Prefectural University introduced reading aloud as performance (*gundoku*) activities. Working in two groups, workshop participants experienced amusing ice-breaking activities with tongue twisters and rhymes and made a *gundoku* script for a poem by Kenji Miyazawa. Through open discussion of Miyazawa's poem, creative energy was unlocked that resulted in extremely different interpretations of the same text. In this way, the participants learned the essence of *gundoku*.

Also on the third day, Sachiho Mori, a Japanese language teacher, introduced a game called *Mari Ball* for communicative language learning. *Mari Ball* was originally designed by Mariko Suzuki for students who could not find topics for writing short essays. Mori demonstrated other uses of the activity, such as building student rapport, conversation practice, speech making, and practicing pronunciation.

Finally, Hideko Oshima, a drama improvisation and Japanese language instructor, led an improvisation workshop for language learning. She emphasized the importance of providing a relaxing environment in the classroom for students. When students feel at ease in the safe zone, mistakes can be seen as exciting opportunities to observe and learn about language. Participants experienced various improvisational activities to practice language in amusing ways.



IAPL Committee: In one place, at one time at last

Concurrent sessions

On the mornings of the second and third day, there were a number of thirty-minute concurrent sessions. Although the common thread was *Performing Language*, the topics were wide ranging and diverse, with a huge range of interesting and dynamic fields from which to choose. The sessions commenced with a presentation by Dr. Claire Borody (University of Winnipeg) on the question of what happens before human beings express themselves. Her research incorporated Anne Bogart's viewpoints of time, space, composition, and vocals as a means for training actors within the L1 theatre experience.

There was a dynamic and interactive session on learning Yoruba, a West-African language, demonstrated by Olusola Adescope. This focused on the cultural and linguistic traditions of Yoruba to replicate Vygotsky's concept of play within African language acquisition, and made use of drama-focused computer software.

To demonstrate how the past can benefit the present, Dr. Sakae Fujita of the University of California presented video footage of how her students sought to make the Japanese language their own

through the theatrical experience of Japanese *kyogen*. *Kyogen* is a type of theatre that is performed between the acts of a *Noh* drama, however, in contrast to the solemnity and symbolism of *Noh*, the content of *Kyogen* drama relies heavily on comedy and satire and it was the precursor of the original *Kabuki*, which was later banned on various occasions on the grounds of lasciviousness before developing into the more staid art form of *kabuki* today.

In *Patchwork and its Influence*, Anne McCormack and Su Jeong Lee introduced the *Patchwork Project*, a project designed to show teachers how the telling of folktales from around the world had been used to catalyze creativity in children and students in New York and Korea. They spoke about how this project has toured the world and made a particular mark in English language teacher training in Korea.

The issue of bullying was the focus of the *Process Drama Project* that Eucharia Donnery (Kwansei Gakuin University) demonstrated. Using graphs and video footage, Donnery showed how the issue manifests itself in societies worldwide. The findings of this project were quite surprising and lead to subsequent exploration of the theme in various ways. For example, students studied radio announcements and letters, set up an online discussion group, performed role-play activities, and presented a final performance to dramatize the issue.



Reflections

An interactive presentation made by Aiko Saito (Setsunan University) demonstrated how movie scripts can enhance student creativity and develop memory in the target language through covert repetition.

Finally, the ten-minute Q&A discussions which followed each session were dynamic and allowed for a free-flow of ideas, encouragement, and explanation between the speakers and the audience, maximizing the experience for both through the open exchange. Names of prominent theorists from the fields of language acquisition, drama, and theatre pedagogy were utilized as the basis for these discussions, which often continued outside of the conference setting.

Panel session: Scientifically minding theatre

In this groundbreaking report, cognitive psychologist Miki Goan (PRESTO-JST/ATR, Kyoto) discussed the outcomes of her scientific approach to the work of one of Japan's leading playwrights, Oriza Hirata. Through extensive analysis of rehearsals in both real-time and in video footage, she revealed much of how and why Hirata's unique directorial approach was effective in improving the actors' performances.

Although the time and place for the next IAPL conference has not been set as yet, emerging details indicate it will be held next summer in Japan. For more information on IAPL, please go to the following site: < web.uvic.ca/~hnserc/IAPL/ >, or contact Yuka Kusanagi in Akita <kusanagi-y@akita-pu.ac.jp> or Eucharia Donnery in Kansai <eucharia@kwansei.ac.jp>.

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Yuka Kusanagi is an associate professor at Akita Prefectural University. Her research interests include drama-in-education, project-based learning, needs analysis, and extensive reading. She is also on the board of IAPL and a member of Asia TEFL, JACET, and JALT, among many others.