

# Multilingual challenges: Building bridges between classrooms and communities

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On Campus: Room 558, 12 Second Way – Online: [Zoom](#)

Proficiency in another language is indispensable in a multilingual world. In many language classrooms linguistic competence takes primary focus; however, this alone is not sufficient to navigate the complexities of human interactions in a society. It is equally important to acquire sociocultural and intercultural competencies, i.e., the ability to identify how language functions when communicating in our globalising world. In the Discipline of Languages and Cultures at Macquarie University, an approach is adopted to reach beyond the language classrooms and to enable both students and wider communities to enjoy the benefits of versatile language learning that contributes to the intercultural competence of all the participants. The aim of the symposium is to showcase examples of this approach ranging from formal classroom to work-related language learning as well as to home-language maintenance in migrant communities.

The first presentation, “Hearing others – discovering oneself: Enhancing sociocultural and intercultural competencies in the classroom”, provides pedagogical insights into the design of a multilingual language course that broadens learners’ horizons to create socio-cultural awareness and cross-cultural comparisons in relation to the LOTEs represented.

The second presentation, “Keeping language alive: Practicing with a community-focused language podcast”, demonstrates a practice that tackles challenges in retaining the community language through a series of weekly podcasts in easy Croatian. Australian and other news are written in simpler and shorter sentences and read at a slower pace, to create an engaging learning environment for Croatian learners in Australia and around the world.

The third presentation, “Teaching Modern Greek for better communication in Aged Care during the COVID-19 pandemic”, showcases a Greek language teaching program that equips non-Greek carers and professionals at a bilingual aged-care facility with oral skills and cultural awareness to effectively use Greek in everyday communication resulting in a healthier and safer environment during the pandemic COVID-19.



