Review Article

Culture and language learning: teaching, research and scholarship

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This review of work on the cultural dimension of language teaching updates one from 1986 and shows that there has been a considerable growth in interest since then. The focus has been largely on the elaboration of conceptual models and theories and the development of teaching and training approaches; much less effort has been devoted to empirical research investigating the impact of such developments and building up a body of knowledge.

In order to promote an agenda for research as well as reporting on what has been done, we make a distinction between research and scholarship, between investigating what is and developing what ought to be happening in teaching and learning. We also distinguish between work on foreign language and second language teaching, a sociological distinction important in the cultural dimension.

In the final part of the article we analyse teaching and curriculum development reported in the literature, and find an emphasis on approaches which draw on ethnographic techniques and theory, on approaches from critical theory and the politics of language teaching, and on teaching of cultural knowledge.

There is more need, we argue, for interaction between those who teach in general education and those who work in cross-cultural training in the business world. Finally we point out that the cultural dimension of language teaching is value-laden, that researchers need to be aware of this and of the inevitability of engagement with values in teaching and researching the cultural dimension.

1. Introduction

We could claim in 1986 (Byram, 1986) that the term 'cultural studies' was not widely used in foreign language teaching. In the meantime, attention to the cultural dimension has much increased here as in other disciplines, and in the last two decades, an increasing number of people working in foreign or second language education have developed their teaching theories and applications under the umbrella of teaching culture for intercultural competence. In parallel with this, developments in the field of training programmes for personnel to work in a multicultural setting or in another culture, have also gathered speed. However, the two have not had as much mutual influence and contact as they might.

The situation with research is different. The flourish in work on teaching and theories of teaching has not been accompanied by empirical research on the causal relationships at work in intercultural competence. There is little to parallel research on causal relationships between motivation and acquisition of linguistic competence, for example. It is only if conceptual work on what and how to teach is included under the umbrella term of 'research' that the picture becomes more encouraging. There is a need for more empirical research but also for a research agenda such that we can build up a systematic knowledge of language-and-culture teaching, the acquisition of intercultural competence by learners inside and beyond the traditional classroom, the relationship between linguistic and intercultural competence, the effect of both or either of these on social identities, and so on.

In the first part of this review article we shall present a distinction between research and scholarship which we hope provides a framework for setting a clear agenda, illustrated by discussion of existing

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work. One significant point here is that research on teaching and learning for intercultural competence cannot avoid questions of ideology and values. In the second part, we shall focus on teaching and curriculum development as reported in current literature. Finally, we return to the question of research and implicit values, and an expectation that researchers deal with these in a way which has not been seen in most work on learning and teaching language.

2. Research and scholarship

2.1 Definitions

Research in the 'sciences of education' – to use a designation borrowed from some European traditions – can be broadly categorised under three headings: work which seeks to establish explanations in terms of cause and effect, work which seeks to understand the experience of people involved in education, and work which attempts to create change. The distinction between 'explanation' (Erklären) and 'understanding' (Verstehen') was made by von Wright (1971) for the social sciences in general, but in addition the sciences of education also often attempt to intervene and to change the phenomena which educationists study; researchers have opinions and try to influence for example modes of teaching and learning or the development and implementation of education policy. Furthermore, educationists who wish to intervene and change things, do so from a particular standpoint. Such educationists will have a view on what ought to be, and not just on what is. They may attempt to intervene in 'what is', and find ways of developing from 'what is' towards what they think 'ought to be'.

These various distinctions apply to work on the cultural dimensions of second and foreign language learning too. There is, for example, work in the first category, which attempts to investigate the causal relationships assumed to exist between language learning and attitudes towards other people and cultural groups (Morgan, 1993); this is work which is looking for explanations (Erklären). There is other work which attempts to understand, from the perspective of the learners, their experience of other cultures and groups (Verstehen). And of course there is work in the third category on the development of curricula and methods of teaching or on policies of teaching or assessment, which is undertaken in order to move contemporary practices towards new objectives.

The first-order distinctions which we shall use to discuss work on the cultural dimension of second and foreign language learning will be designated as 'research' and 'scholarship', the former seeking for explanation or understanding, two different perspectives on 'what is', the latter attempting to establish 'what ought to be', and sometimes attempting to implement and evaluate 'what ought to be'. We shall thus use a threefold categorisation in our analysis of the literature in following sections, reflecting two kinds of 'research' and one kind of 'scholarship'. However the more fundamental distinction is between *investigating* 'what is' and *advocating* 'what ought to be'. The focus of both kinds of research is on analysis and description of the existing situation, whereas the focus of scholarship is on what developments should be pursued in the future and why.

The distinctions we are making are not matters of research method or design. We are not following the distinction frequently made between quantitative and qualitative research, because this is in our view a second-order distinction. Research which is explanatory in purpose can draw on quantitative and qualitative methods and data, as can research which is searching for understanding, or scholarship attempting to advocate and introduce new practices. It is also self-evident, that the same individuals may work as both researchers and scholars, sometimes investigating what is and sometimes advocating what ought to be.

The topics which researchers and scholars pursue arise from personal interest, from social demand as reflected in funding arrangements, or some combination of these, and there are numerous aspects of language teaching and learning which have culture-specific implications which are of interest to particular societies or individuals. One is the question of whether different traditions and conceptions of learning in general are relevant to how languages are learnt. For example, there is a debate on whether learners of the 'Confucian heritage cultures' learn languages more successfully through methods of rote-learning or 'memorising with understanding' (Feng, 2003; Hu, 1996; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Similarly there are questions about the impact of societal conditions on motivation for language learning, for example whether learners in anglophone societies are willing to learn foreign languages (Reynolds, 2001). It is also possible to study policies for language education, where both the specific conditions of a particular region or state and the general theorising about policy studies are a central focus of concern (Ager, 2001).

However, all of these and similar perspectives are outside our main focus, which is concerned with teaching and learning processes and outcomes, and in the following sections we shall consider these by using the two fundamental categories of research and scholarship.

2.2 Researching foreign language teaching-and-learning

The research questions which can be asked about culture learning in a foreign language learning context depend partly on whether the researcher is seeking explanation or understanding. From an explanation perspective, hypotheses about the relationships among culture learning and other aspects of

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learning and teaching can be quickly established, for example:

- The relationship between 'the' foreign culture, or perceptions of it, and the motivation for learning
- The relationship between language learning and attitudes to and/or perceptions of other cultures and peoples
- The relationship between teaching methodologies and knowledge about other cultures
- The relationship between learning (about) another culture and learners' perceptions of and/or attitudes towards their own culture
- The relationship between culture teaching (or absence thereof) and vocabulary learning
- The relationship between culture learning and the development of specific social identities, particularly national identity.

The best researched account of culture learning is undoubtedly the search for explanation of relationships between learners' understanding of other cultures and their motivation and achievement in language learning. This is an area which has been dealt with elsewhere in *Language Teaching* (Dörnyei, 1998) but it is important to note that in early research by Gardner & Lambert (1972), the notion of 'integrative' motivation – the desire to learn a language to be in some sense closer to speakers of the language, and part of their culture – was considered the best basis for success. Later research (Dörnyei, 1998) has shown that 'instrumental' motivation can be more important than 'integrative', depending on the social context in which languages are learnt. Later research has also shown that many other factors need to be taken into consideration, not least the impact of classroom conditions (Dörnyei, 2001). Where a language is dissociated in learners' perceptions from all links with native-speakers – as may be the case with English as an International Language – then 'instrumental' or 'pragmatic' motivation will be the better concept for explaining achievement.

On the other hand, integrative motivation expressed as a positive interest in peoples and cultures associated with a language, is still a significant area of research. This aspect of motivation – it is only one aspect of a very complex issue – is also related to research on attitudes. In both cases, assumptions that there are linear and uni-directional causal relationships between attitudes or motivation on the one hand and achievement in language learning on the other are misplaced. It is for this reason that researchers have constructed complex models which attempt to show the inter-relationships among attitudes, motivations, self-concepts, environmental factors and instructional factors. The complexity of such models may appear, to applied linguists and teachers, to limit severely their usefulness for teaching, and when Dörnyei & Csizer (1998) offer 'ten commandments for motivating language learners' based on research, these might seem intuitively self-evident but nonetheless reassuring because of their base in research. The significance of culture learning is reinforced by their including 'familiarise learners with the target language culture'.

The causal relationship between language learning and teaching and culture learning in the form of insights and attitudes is one which has been researched, albeit sparingly. Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991) investigated the effects of different styles of language and culture teaching on learners' perceptions and understanding of a national culture. Their conclusions were disappointing in the sense that they could find no discernible effect of teaching, but a strong presence of other factors from outside the classroom and the school. More recently Australian researchers have investigated the relationship of teaching to attitude formation, which again is disappointing in that there seems to be no causal relationship between teaching and positive attitudes (Ingram & O'Neill, 2002).

There is therefore a major area in the relationships between on the one hand teaching and on the other understanding of and attitudes towards self and other, own and foreign cultures, which needs much more research. Such research could be informed and enriched by comparative work on culture learning, comparing for example culture-specific views and reactions to communicative language teaching in China and 'the West' (Rao, 2002), in Colombia and the USA (Schulz, 2001). There is a particularly well-mined seam of research on vocabulary differences between, for example, English and Chinese (Cortazzi & Shen, 2001) or English and German (Olk, 2002) or French and English (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001). In most cases research which thus analyses speakers' understanding of apparently similar vocabulary draws out implications for teaching and learning and is thus linked to scholarship which argues for particular aims and methods. Vocabulary teaching, as we shall see, is a particular focus in scholarship too.

There are also analyses of cultural differences in other aspects of communication: different values and communication styles (FitzGerald, 2003), or different discourse strategies (Orsoni, 2001).

Research which is focused on understanding rather than explanation may not always appear to have immediate relevance to applied linguists and language teachers, particularly when it deals with phenomena outside the classroom. This is nonetheless an important area because it situates language and culture learning in social contexts. Lantolf (1999, 2000a, 2000b) has argued for a theoretical position which recognises the value of understanding processes of culture learning from the perspective of learners in informal learning contexts. Pavlenko and Lantolf have used personal stories as a basis for analysing

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'second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves' (2000). There are recent studies which analyse problems of 'identity loss' as children learn languages (Downes, 2001; Jo, 2001) or 'identity maintenance' for children of minority groups learning their heritage language (Mills, 2001). The particular role of the textbook in supporting learners' identity has also been analysed (Arbex, 2001).

The learners in some of these studies are from minority groups or find themselves in an identity-threatening situation, and there is also a growing research interest in the impact of language and culture learning on the cultural identities of learners in majority groups, especially when they spend time in another country to improve their learning (Crawshaw, Callen & Tusting, 2001; Jordan, 2001). Related research investigates the interplay between social context, perceptions of self and language learning (Miller, 2003).

2.3 Scholarship and foreign language teaching

Work which we classify as scholarship, concerned with intervention in the status quo of foreign language learning in order to develop it in a certain direction, is far more frequent than research. Whereas the quality of research will be judged by criteria of clarity of conceptual analysis, validity and reliability of quantitative data or authenticity and trustworthiness of qualitative data, and rigour in interpreting and drawing conclusions from data, scholarly work is often judged by the power of the argument and the rhetoric which sustains it, by the relevance of the argument to a given time and place, and by the support cited from research. Argument about 'what ought to be' may depend more or less closely on research and the analysis of 'what is'. Proposals for future directions may be judged, irrespective of research, as 'realistic' or 'unrealistic/ideal'. Scholarship reflects, more than research, the relationship of language learning and teaching to the social conditions in which it is located. As the contemporary world changes to a state of 'globalisation', for example, arguments about culture learning have changed too.

Contemporary scholarship is therefore concerned with and a reflection of social and political contexts, and the responses of theorists and social commentators. In Germany, for example, Kramer (1997) has argued for attention to a 'cultural studies' dimension to the teaching of English which has its roots in the critical social analysis of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall in England. Kramer argues that the study of English (*Anglistik*) needs to respond to the new ways in which people live their lives, engage in their culture, in a time of rapid change. The study of language and culture should address questions of 'how we live' and also 'how we ought to live', thus introducing an explicitly ethical dimension to teaching and learning. Starkey, too, introduces a strong ethical dimension by arguing that language and culture teaching should take note of and introduce human rights education into its aims and purposes (Starkey, 2002).

Changing social conditions are reflected in the work of Kramsch and Zarate. The former argues, like Kramer, for new purposes and re-definitions of language study to respond to 'epistemological shifts occurring in academia' (1995: XIV) and her argument that language study creates 'a third place', a privileged and questioning location, where learners gain special insights into their own and others cultures, has become widely accepted. Zarate (2003), too, redefines the nature and purposes of language and culture learning, stressing the significance of in-between or border locations and the need for language teaching to respond to the particular challenges of European integration, as nation states and national identities fuse and change.

Such authors present new perspectives and purposes. By doing so they open up new questions for research and scholarship. For example, researchers might explore the self-understanding of learners and teachers living in these newly defined conditions. Scholars who are interested in intervention and development work can find guidance in their planning from these new purposes, and new teaching objectives which follow from them.

There are some signs of this in intervention and development work already, although the analysis of the relationship of classroom practice to pedagogical aims and ethical questions is not frequent enough. We reviewed recent publications abstracted in *Language Teaching* and concluded that intervention and development work is currently often focused on the 'problems' of difference and distance, and how to overcome them. One example of this is work on teaching vocabulary, mentioned earlier, where teachers attempt to teach differences through 'culturally loaded' words (Qi, 2001; Galisson, 2000). Another is the use of language corpora to teach differences in pragmatics (Berrier, 2001).

Culture learning is perceived as less feasible if confined to the classroom than language learning. It needs to be experiential and experience of difference has to be at the centre of learners' and teachers' attention. Unsurprisingly, new communication technologies are promoted as a means of overcoming distance and giving learners experience of interacting with native speakers. Email contacts (Liaw & Johnson, 2001; Belz, 2001; Jogan, Heredia & Aguilera, 2001), electronic conferencing (Truscott & Morley, 2001) and the internet as a source of information (Herron *et al.*, 2002; Gruber-Miller & Benton, 2001) are representative of this trend. Tandem-learning, originally developed as a means of

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enhancing linguistic competence, is a means of creating opportunities for culture learning (Rohrbach & Winiger, 2001; Kötter, 2001). Where visits and exchanges are offered to language learners for the same purposes, there are similar attempts to create culture learning (Gohard-Radenkovic, 2001; Harbon, 2002; Breugnot, 2001).

Implicit in these approaches is the assumption that interaction with people who embody a culture, who are native speakers of a language, is crucial. This then leads to debate and argument for (and against) the use of native speakers as teachers (Hinkel, 2001; Jiang, 2001). The debate about the advantages of non-native and native speakers with respect to teaching language (Medgyes, 1994; Widdowson, 2003: 156) is thus beginning to be extended to teaching culture, and the related question of the relationship between teachers' experience of other cultures and their introduction of a cultural dimension into their teaching is being investigated (Aleksandrowicz-Pedich & Lazar, 2002).

Analysis of the cultural content of textbooks is a well-established area and insofar as it has begun to develop theoretically well-founded criteria, might be better classified as research into the effects of teaching on learners' perceptions (Sercu, 2000). Reports on the difficulties of using textbooks written in one country when teaching in another (Yakhontova, 2001) are however like reports of difficulties of using Western communication technology in non-Western countries (Smith, 2001; Takagaki, 2001; Feng & Byram 2002). The authors adopt a more intercultural perspective in content analysis, and argue for intercultural representation in selecting textbook materials and analysis of intention and interpretation in handling authentic texts in the classroom. Here the scholarly purpose, the argument for a viewpoint is quite explicit.

2.4 Research and scholarship in second language teaching-and-learning

The distinction between foreign and second language learning is often considered by those concerned with Second Language Acquisition research as unimportant. Research on 'bilingual education' where students learn through the medium of another language than their first or dominant language would not make a distinction between learners who are immigrants to another country learning through the official language of that country, and indigenous learners who simply go to a school where it has been decided to teach them through the medium of another language. It is however important when thinking about the cultural issues involved. There is the inevitability of some kind of culture learning when learners live in another culture, as immigrants, in contrast to the lack of such learning outside the classroom in the case of indigenous learners. The latter are exposed to language learning only in the classroom. The learning of English is however a special case in many countries, because of the dominance of English-language media, and the inevitable exposure to manifestations of US American culture.

Where some Second Language Acquisition research does make a distinction is between tutored and untutored learning, the latter often being the experience of adult immigrants whereas child immigrants are provided with formal, tutored language learning opportunities (Perdue, 2000). Despite the distinction, this research seeks to answer questions about the acquisition of language as a system, what paths are taken by learners, what relationships there are among attitudes and motivation factors, why they stop learning so that their language fossilises. Further questions which need to be asked concern how people, children and adults, acquire the concepts of their new cultural environment, the 'keywords' which distinguish one language from another (Wierzbicka, 1997b) the 'rich points' of a culture (Agar, 1991). As Lantolf puts it:

> Although it may be possible for people to develop an intellectual understanding and tolerance of other cultures, a more interesting question, perhaps, is if, and to what extent, it is possible for people to become cognitively like members of other cultures; that is, can adults learn to construct and see the world through culturally different eyes. (1999: 29)

Lantolf then provides a useful survey of research which has examined the acquisition of lexis and metaphors, but points out that this is still at an early stage.

Another recent development is beginning to extend the range of interest of Second Language Acquisition in the way we have suggested is necessary. Norton (2000) argues that language acquisition is influenced by social relationships, by the social identities which immigrants are allowed to develop by the society in which they live. By careful case studies, she shows that the questions concerning the rate of acquisition, motivation, fossilisation, precisely those questions which focus on language as a system, can be better explained by attention to the social conditions and the social identities present in the experience. Miller (2003) has carried out similar work with children, studying in depth the cases of ten immigrant children in Australia, to analyse the ways in which their self-representations impact on their language acquisition. Both of these are looking for *explanation* but also seek to *understand* the experience from learners' perspectives.

In an attempt to understand the experience, particularly of adult language learners, Pavlenko (1998) has analysed autobiographical accounts of language learning, notably in what she describes as 'acclaimed literary masterpieces' whose authors have demonstrated a heightened sensitivity and ability to recall and reflect on their learning experience. What

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is particularly interesting is that, though she starts with a focus on Second Language Acquisition and a search for further insight into the acquisition of language as system, she ends with questions about identity, about the possible incompatibilities of living in two languages. The people she cites, though highly sensitive and articulate authors, such as Ewa Hoffmann, Julien Green or Salman Rushdie, are not language and culture theorists. There is very little reflection by bilingual linguists on their experience, yet the examples of Wierzbicka (1997a) and Paulston (1992) suggest that there is rich potential for those researchers who have similar experience.

In second language learning, then, there are more questions than answers, and research is only just beginning, but the distinction between 'pure' research and 'committed' scholarship, is just as valid.

3. Teaching and curriculum development

Our distinction between research and scholarship means that we take the view that the relationship between teaching and research/scholarship is determined by the 'scholars' rather than 'researchers', those who have a specific view of 'what ought to be' in teaching and learning, 'what ought to be' the purposes, processes and outcomes. In the following we shall see that this is reflected in work which introduces new approaches to teaching, in other words work which develops the curriculum towards specific ends with specific underlying values. Even where work reported in the literature does not present its underlying values, it is inevitable that *culture* teaching is infused with values in ways which *language* teaching can avoid.

Three main perspectives are identifiable in views on what ought to be done in teaching for intercultural competence and communication, even though there is inevitable overlap among them:

- Culture teaching is moving towards an ethnographic perspective;
- Culture teaching is moving towards a critical perspective;
- Culture teaching focuses on preparation for residence in another country, often without attention to language learning.

The first two perspectives are found in the work which arises from general education, in schooling or higher education. The third is associated more with the world of work, business and commerce.

Before considering these three in more detail, we start with discussions of context in language education as these discussions seem to formulate the major thrust in theorising contemporary efforts in language and culture teaching. This is followed by a presentation of general theoretical underpinnings of the approaches in question respectively, with major works reviewed for specific arguments and practical ideas of culture teaching.

3.1 Context and language-and-culture teaching

Most of the recent literature on teaching culture has apparently arisen from the increasing importance attached to *context* in theoretical discussions in sociolinguistics, cultural studies teaching and intercultural communication. Hymes (1974) identifies eight factors that he takes as essential aspects to make up context in interpersonal communication. He wittily summarises them in the acronym *SPEAKING* which stands for setting (time and place), participants, end (purpose), act sequence (form and content of an utterance), key (tone and nonverbal clues), instrumentalities (choice of channel and of code), norms of interaction and interpretation, and genre. In language and culture teaching, Kramsch's (1993) monograph encapsulated this in the title *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. In discussing interrelationships between texts people generate and contexts shaping them or shaped by them, Halliday (1989) coins the notion of *intertextual context* by which he refers to historical factors and the accumulation of all other contextual aspects. He asserts that in communication in general the past and the present experiences come together to shape the intertextual context.

Gudykunst & Kim (1992) argue that in intercultural interactions two types of context come into play, *external context and internal context*. The former refers to the settings or locations where the interaction takes place and the meanings the society attaches to them, whereas the latter, internal context, is the culture the interactants bring to the encounters. In intercultural communication, misunderstanding is much more likely to occur because the internal contexts, that is, the methods interactants use to perceive the situations and each other and the meanings they associate with the settings, can differ greatly from one culture to another. Thus, it is essential for language learners to be effective in culture learning.

These views are largely shared by Kramsch (ibid.) who summarises the discussions of the notion of context along five lines: linguistic, situational, interactional, cultural and intertextual. She argues that teachers need to help learners of foreign languages discover the potential meanings through explorations of the context of the discourse under study. The more contextual clues learners can identify, the more likely their learning becomes meaningful. The fruits of this view can now be seen in contemporary collections of articles and monographs describing classroom methods which focus on the interplay between language and culture (for example: Fantini, 1997; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999; Morgan & Cain, 2000; Moran, 2001; Byram & Grundy, 2002).

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3.2 Ethnographic approaches

The extensive discussions on context have resulted, first of all, in the view of adopting systematically an ethnographic approach to culture learning and teaching. The practice of ethnography originates from anthropology and was initially a research methodology developed by anthropologists such as Malinowski (1922) to study exotic societies by living with local inhabitants, that is, by observing their culture 'from inside'. Malinowski (1923) also asserted on the basis of his ethnographic study that one could understand a language in its context of situation, arguing that meaning only comes from real and active participation in relevant situations.

In the past few decades, the ethnographic approach has gained currency in the literature of sociolinguistics. Particularly since Hymes (1974) proposed an ethnographic framework which takes into account various factors involved in speaking, the ethnographic approach has been adopted repeatedly by sociolinguistic researchers to conduct empirical studies into the interrelationships between language and society (e.g., Hill & Hill, 1986; Milroy, 1987; Lindenfeld, 1990). Sociolinguists usually define ethnography as a disciplined way to observe, ask, record, reflect, compare, analyse and report. Hymes further notes that:

> Of all forms of scientific knowledge, ethnography is the most open, the most compatible with a democratic way of life, the least likely to produce a world in which experts control knowledge at the expense of those who are studied. The skills of ethnography are enhancements of skills all normal persons employ in everyday life. . . . It (ethnography) mediates between what members of a given community know and do, and accumulates comparative understanding of what members of communities generally have known and done. (1981: 57)

Ethnography has attracted language educators partly because access to countries where a target language is spoken has become increasingly easier for language learners, and partly because language educators and scholars have realised that language teaching can benefit from application of other disciplines rather than drawing solely on theoretical linguistics. The value of ethnography is particularly noticeable as the literature on culture learning and cultural studies teaching has grown and was present already in some of the earliest writings. Discussions about the close relationship between language and sociocultural patterns in the literature of cultural studies, anthropology and sociolinguistics prompted language education scholars such as Paulston (1974), McLeod (1976), Damen (1987) and Byram (1989a) to examine the relevance of anthropological, sociolinguistic and cultural studies methodology for language and culture teaching.

More recently, coupled with social changes of the late twentieth century that are encapsulated in the words 'globalisation' and 'internationalisation', an increasing number of educational institutions particularly in the industrialised countries have developed programmes for students to study abroad. Most of these programmes are claimed to be part of their agendas to internationalise educational systems (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Kauffmann *et al.*, 1992) and many have the dual purposes of improving proficiency in the target language and developing their intercultural competence and ethnographic skills (Byram, 1989b; Coleman, 1995; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street, 2001).

3.2.1 Ethnographic study in naturalistic settings

An ethnographic perspective in language education, first of all, takes naturalistic settings as most effective and central to culture learning. This view is best illustrated in the literature on study abroad. According to Murphy-Lejeune (2002), in 1996, UNESCO estimated that the number of internationally mobile students reached 1,400,000 worldwide and projected an increase of 50,000 students each year in the years to come. For example, in the 1990s, the United States dispatched approximately 71,000 undergraduates each year to other countries (Freed, 1995), and in Europe, under the European Union's SOCRATES programme alone, nearly 200,000 students study abroad each year (Coleman, 1997). The ethnographic experience of these internationally mobile students attracts the attention of researchers of various disciplines including those in language and culture learning and acquisition. Research findings, particularly those obtained from in-depth interviews, often show a close relationship between students' ethnographic experience and their intellectual development (including development of learners' linguistic competence) (Dyson, 1988; DeKeyser, 1991), international perspectives and positive attitudes towards otherness (Carlson *et al.*, 1990; Kauffmann *et al.*, 1992; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). In her summary article of interviews of 50 students who spent a year in a European country other than in their own, Murphy-Lejeune (2003: 113) states that the experience is generally positively felt by many interviewees as an adaptation process. This process does not always bring about a drastic change in personality but it evidently leads to a 'personal expansion, an opening of one's potential universe'.

Many language educators think that these study-abroad programmes ought to be opportunities not only to develop learners' linguistic competence but their cultural awareness and intercultural competence. Armstrong (1984) researched more than a hundred high-school students who participated in a seven-week language study programme in Mexico and found that the stay positively influenced the students' attitude towards the host culture and the target language and led to a higher level of cultural

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awareness. In the European context, the proximity of countries with different languages and the advantages of living in a multilingual continent, have led to major increases in the number of young learners experiencing other cultures which can be exploited with an ethnographic approach (Byram & Snow, 1997). This is further encouraged within the European Union by the existence of programmes of financial support such as COMENIUS, and as visits and exchanges become increasingly frequent, language teachers often find it necessary to equip themselves with ethnographic skills (Dark *et al.*, 1997).

Having studied the effects of studying abroad on university-level students, Jurasek (1995) concludes that in learning another language it is important for a learner to engage in the ethnographic process of observing, participating, describing, analysing, and interpreting. This engagement is much more significant than the product of the study itself. He further suggests that as a consequence of such an approach learners will raise their awareness with regard to perception and perspective and improve their ability to recognise what things might look like from the perspective of members of another culture.

Perhaps, the most comprehensive ethnographic programme for language students is the one that was designed and carried out by researchers at a British university (see Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street 2001; Barro, Jordan & Roberts, 1998). The programme was conducted over a period of three years in three distinct phases. During the second year of their BA programme, the students were introduced to ethnography through a semester-long module. At this initial phase, the students not only acquired basic concepts but also familiarised themselves with ethnographic methods by interrogating their own familiar environment and behaviours and reflecting on taken-for-granted assumptions. Armed with these skills, the students then spent their third year abroad to carry out their ethnographic study. In the last phase, they were asked to analyse their 'field work' data and write up their ethnographic experience in the target language. Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street conclude that:

> Language learners as ethnographers are inevitably engaged with the otherness of their new environment not just as an opportunity to improve linguistic competence and their ability to produce appropriate utterances, but as a whole social being who are developing, defining and being defined in terms of their interactions with other social beings. As ethnographers and intercultural speakers, they negotiate a particular relationship with those around them, a relationship traditionally described as participant observation, although this fails to capture the complexity of the reflexive effect on the linguist-ethnographer. (2001: 237)

Most ethnographic projects such as this and study-abroad programmes described above have reportedly produced positive impact on learners in terms of intercultural awareness, interest in otherness, intellectual and personal development. Nevertheless, some research findings indicate that negative experience in foreign countries can reinforce stereotypes (Coleman, 1998) and some students even feel that the year abroad is a 'lost year' as they lose contact with their home school and their fellow students (Lewis & Stickler, 2000). In response to these, education scholars and institutions have used or experimented with various measures to help achieve the specified aims. These include formal training of students before residence abroad, as in Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street (2001), regular visits by home institutions and regular report or diary writing by students (Lewis & Stickler, 2000). Most of the measures are reported to be effective in bringing about positive outcomes.

In summary, in his overview article, Coleman (1997) points out that preparation is essential for bringing about the desired outcome. To optimise the positive impact on students studying abroad, clear objectives should be laid down and made familiar to all involved. Before and during their residence abroad, students ought to be made aware of their own motivation, attitude, aptitude, and learning styles and develop their ethnographic skills and (meta)cognitive and affective strategies.

3.2.2 Ethnographic study in structured settings

Much support is generated for ethnographic learning in naturalistic settings to develop students' skills to observe complex cultural phenomena, to interact with otherness with an open mind and to analyse and interpret ethnographic data. Recent literature on ethnography has also expanded to professional development and culture teaching in a structured language classroom. Language education scholars have explored a range of ways in which teachers as well as learners can be encouraged to 'live an ethnographic life', depending on the context of learning and resources available. Both research findings and theoretical discussions demonstrate a strong interest in the ethnographic perspective for culture learning and teaching, whether it takes place in the country where the target language is spoken or in a structured language classroom.

In discussing ethnography for culture teaching and learning in language education, many scholars maintain that teachers first of all need to be ethnographers themselves capable of dealing with cultural issues with understanding and sensitivity. It is mistaken to assume that teachers can competently provide explanations of complex issues to their students by simply drawing on text information and personal experience. Damen (1987) is one of the early promoters of ethnography for professional

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development of language teachers and for culture teaching in language classrooms. She suggests seven steps for teachers, pre-service or in-service, to plan an individual ethnographic project. She names the procedure 'pragmatic ethnography' because she states that the procedure is to 'serve personal and practical purposes and not to provide scientific data and theory' (p. 63). The seven steps are summarised as follows:

1. Select a target group for ethnographic study
2. Find informant(s) able to represent the group
3. Find information about the group through secondary sources such as handbooks and journals, etc.
4. Interview the informant(s)
5. Analyse the interview data with the information obtained from secondary sources to form cultural hypotheses
6. Reflect on own references in order to understand given behaviours and meanings
7. Apply the insights into teaching materials selection, lesson planning and classroom teaching.

Although this model does not explicitly suggest that the teacher ask the students to use the same approach to culture learning, Step 7 attempts to link the teacher's ethnographic learning experience with his/her teaching practice.

Various innovative techniques using ethnographic approach are experimented in many professional development programmes. In a French teacher training programme, Zarate (1991) required teacher trainees to conduct observation in three localities: one from a list of localities provided by the trainers, one that was frequented by the individual trainee, and one with relatively pluralistic representations. The trainees were required to keep a diary with a minimal requirement in format. Though Zarate points out that the gains of this type of training are not easy to pinpoint precisely, the challenge of culture teaching traditions is clear: the teacher trainees are encouraged to take up a spectator's position and reflect critically and objectively on the culture which they are supposed to deal with in their own classrooms.

Literature documenting language teachers' attempts to study their students' perceptions of language learning, attitudes and classroom behaviour using an ethnographic approach is increasing (Canagarajah, 1993; Atkinson & Ramanathan 1995; Barkhuizen, 1998). The findings of most of these studies shed new lights on materials selection, lesson planning and classroom teaching as Damen expects. That is the very reason why Holliday (1994) argues that each time a language teacher meets a new group of students or a curriculum planner enters a new institution she/he should apply ethnographic skills to discovering the 'hidden agendas' and life objectives of their students. It is the hidden objectives of his/her students that determine whether they accept or reject the curricular innovations and the teaching and learning methodology used by the teacher. 'The teacher cannot afford to be anything but a researcher' (p. 31). In a later article, Holliday (1996) further states that in ethnographic studies into teaching English as an international language a teacher should not restrict research to empirical research on verbal data but develop a 'sociological imagination', the ability to locate him/herself and his/her actions (as a teacher cum researcher) critically within a wider community or world scenario.

In recent years, even more significant is the fact that many attempts have been made to equip students with ethnographic techniques to conduct language-and-culture projects themselves in their own classrooms and neighbouring communities. Robinson-Stuart & Nocon (1996) report an experimental study they carried out in an American university. In this study, the students studying Spanish as a foreign language were trained to employ ethnographic interview skills to study the local Spanish speakers. Both quantitative and qualitative results reveal that most language students benefited cognitively, affectively and intellectually as they demonstrated a more positive attitude towards the cultural perspectives of local target language speakers, showed more interest in learning the target language and practised the life skill of active listening. In Byram & Cain (1998), an experiment carried out in two schools in France and England using an ethnographic approach is described, arguing for greater efforts in exploring other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and ethnography in language teaching practice. Carel (2001) reports a project which made use of information technology to develop in students cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence in the classroom. For this, she designed and implemented an interactive computer courseware package which enabled students to use ethnographic skills to observe and analyse cultural phenomena, to do virtual fieldwork and reflect on their own culture and their previous views of the target culture. Similarly, a project in Bulgaria has explored the ways in which the skills of the ethnographer in collecting and analysing data and studying their meanings comparatively with data from one's own culture, can be brought into the classroom (e.g., Topuzova, 2001). In his monograph, Corbett (2003) also argues for ethnography as one of the most important features of the intercultural approach. As ethnographic skills such as observing, interviewing, analysing and reporting are all vital skills for students when they encounter otherness first hand, these skills need to be trained and incorporated into language curricula. He offers practical suggestions and methods to conduct interviews, to make use of resources and to explore cultures in general using an ethnographic approach. Finally, Fleming (1998, 2003) shows how drama teaching, as a unique

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form of classroom teaching, can be linked with ethnographic methodology to enable learners to see others' behaviour and their own through the eyes of 'made strangers', a process of active participant observation and reflection.

The potential of the internet for virtual ethnography seems obvious but has not yet been fully explored. A project involving learners of French in the USA and learners of English in France demonstrated how the interaction can be used for collecting data from fellow learners, analysing and comparing interpretations of 'the same' phenomena which then leads into in-depth understanding of cultural difference (Furstenberg & Levet, 2001). There are also opportunities to use the internet to encourage learners to acquire more knowledge about a country (e.g., Osuna & Meskill, 1998) but this is not adding more than an attractive and rapid way of acquiring information. For the moment the emphasis is on finding ways of enabling learners to interact and learn from each other synchronously or asynchronously. Particularly interesting work has been done in real-time interaction of learners of German in the USA and learners of English in Germany, at university level. One of the advantages appears to be that the multimedia environment is cognitively demanding and encourages critical thinking despite the limited linguistic competence of learners in the early stages of language acquisition (von der Emde, Schneider & Kötter, 2001; von der Emde & Schneider, 2003). This then leads to research not only on the learning involved but also on the nature of the cross-cultural interaction among learners using web fora (Hanna & de Nooy, 2003).

The purpose of ethnography is 'to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange', and we must bear in mind that perhaps the prime way of making the strange familiar is through the reading of literature from another time or place. Kramsch has shown this on many occasions, most recently in an article in which she shows how a short story read in a German class can lead to further investigations and research on her students' understanding (Kramsch, 2003). Bredella and his associates have placed literature at the centre of their teaching philosophy and demonstrated how poems, stories and novels can be the foundation for a methodology which develops empathy and sensitivity to the lives and cultures of others in quite different circumstances (e.g., Delanoy, Köberl & Tschachler, 1993; Bredella, 2000; Burwitz-Melzer, 2001).

3.3 Critical Approaches

Another major response of language educators and scholars to the ever changing socio-political and economical context is reflected in the heated discussions on the notion of a critical perspective for language and culture teaching. Much of the discussion is clearly driven by three most powerful social and academic forces identifiable in today's world. Firstly, the debate on the notion of identity fundamentally challenges traditional aims and philosophies in education in general. The trend of globalisation and internationalisation is not an imagined phenomenon but a genuine force changing our society and (re)shaping cultural identities of individuals. Many authors in Bennett (1998), for example, argue that cultural identities of individuals are no longer based solely on geographical locations or nationality but often, among other social factors such as gender, age, economic class, etc., on internalised lived experience in more than one geographic setting incorporating more than one culture. The need to 'rethink' cultural differences and identities is directly related to the issue of what kind of world educators should prepare their students for, and this has clear implications for setting educational objectives.

The second force that drives the conceptual change in the critical direction is taking shape in the literature of a critical pedagogy. This is fundamentally an educational philosophy to encourage educators to take teaching as a dynamic process of constructing knowledge with learners, not as a set course to transmit a body of 'hard' knowledge (Freire, 1974, 1995, 1998; Giroux, 1992, 1997). In this process, from the viewpoint of critical pedagogists, students should not be treated as passive consumers but constructors of knowledge who engage in creative cultural development. The critical pedagogy is in essence developed to encourage critical evaluation of existing assumptions regarding the relationships between culture, nation-states, and national identity and to question the presumed norms in a 'common culture'. The theoretical underpinnings evident in these discussions point directly towards the core issue of how culture should be dealt with in a changing context in terms of social dynamics and educational ideology.

The third major driving force towards a critical approach is very direct and is formulated in discussions among language educators and linguists themselves of the teaching of English in the ever-changing socio-political context. In particular, the debates on the effects of English as an international language or lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000; Knapp & Meierkord, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2003; Widdowson, 2003) and on the impact of the global spread of English on other less powerful languages (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Canagarajah, 1999; Crystal, 2000) have resulted in reassessment and redefinition of many 'common-sense' perceptions and assumptions with respect to notions such as native speakers, standard languages, national identities, homogeneous target cultures, and revisiting of the firmly-held belief that language and culture are inextricably bound together (Byram & Risager, 1999; Risager, 2003). These

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debates and reassessments clearly suggest that the pragmatic business-as-usual approaches commonly advocated ought to be questioned and strongly challenged. Language educators need to define what culture they should teach and explore ways in culture teaching in the wider context of general education.

3.3.1 Culture teaching and political education

It is widely acknowledged by educationists and language researchers such as those cited immediately above that education is never neutral and foreign language education has a political role to play in any education system of the world. Many scholars and educators therefore argue that foreign language teachers should take social and political responsibilities in the education of the young in the contemporary world. Byram (1997a), for example, places political education firmly at the centre of his model for intercultural communicative competence on the basis of detailed analyses of the political contexts of foreign/second language education in many countries including those in the Middle East and Europe. He suggests that insights from citizenship education, education for democracy, human rights and peace education, and cultural studies can be drawn to establish criteria of evaluation and mediation between cultures. Byram & Risager (1999) further elaborate this stance with data from their empirical studies in two European countries. They show how geopolitical changes affect language educators' perceptions of language teaching and analyse and recommend ways to respond to these changes in language education.

In her monograph on critical citizenship, Guilherme puts even greater and more explicit emphasis on the political dimension for foreign language and culture education. She states that:

> Education is always political and the disciplines dealing with language and culture even more so because they involve issues of identification and representation. Therefore, it is not critical cultural awareness per se that makes foreign language/culture education political since education 'is necessarily political' (Wringe, 1984: 43). However, critical cultural awareness makes the political nature of foreign language/culture education more evident by denying that it is neutral even when it intends or pretends to be so. Foreign language/culture education has a political role which, on the one hand, is particular within the curriculum, by engaging in cultural politics, and, on the other hand, adds to a broader political component, namely education for democratic citizenship. (2002: 154–155)

The critical model she proposes integrates three 'components' which are all politically based. Firstly, she argues for human rights education and education for democratic citizenship to promote critical cultural awareness in teaching a foreign language and culture. The second constituent is an interdisciplinary one which consists of cultural studies, intercultural communication and critical pedagogy. She suggests, however, that the integration of the three, particularly critical pedagogy, in foreign language/culture education, though important and attempted in some studies, requires further research. The third component comprises a series of 'operations', pedagogical strategies that function at various levels in terms of local, national and global geopolitics and in relation to 'existential' references, namely attitudes, values and beliefs. These operations include cognitive notions such as analysing and evaluating, affective notions such as appreciating and pragmatic notions such as experiencing and acting.

As an initial step towards a critical perspective in language and culture teaching, a number of monographs have appeared recently which provide theoretical underpinnings and practical ideas for foreign language teacher training. A common feature of these writings is their attempts to deal explicitly and critically with the social, political and ideological aspects in language and language learning and teaching. Nieto (1999, 2002) addresses issues of cultural diversity and identity in relation to language education in American classrooms and advocates community and classroom activities in settings ranging from multicultural classrooms to district or national levels. In carrying out these activities, in-service and pre-service language educators are encouraged to reflect on their practice and perceptions of language teaching and learning, conduct ethnographic field work and 'experience' the critical perspective through activities such as curriculum design. Reagan & Osborn (2002) link foreign language education with critical pedagogy and propose what they call the 'metalinguistic content' for foreign language education, moving beyond pragmatic pedagogical concerns to the social and political domains relevant to language teaching.

The purpose for some of these writers is not only to make learners take new perspectives and reflect on their own, but to focus on some principled and universal meanings, in order to avoid the relativism of post-modernism. Corbett sees this as 'neo-humanist', placing respect for individuals at the heart of the enterprise:

> The intercultural learner moves amongst cultures, in a process of continual negotiation, learning to cope with the inevitable changes, in a manner that is ultimately empowering and enriching. The home culture is never denied nor demeaned, yet the intercultural learner will find his or her attitudes and beliefs challenged by contact with others, and the process of interaction will lead to the kind of personal growth characterised by 'progressive' curricula. The social (or 'reconstructionist') outcome will be a generation of learners who are trained (to different degrees) in 'intercultural diplomacy' – who will consequently have learnt to cope with the stresses of living in the multicultural global village that the world has become. (2003: 211)

3.3.2 Culture taught as a dialogic process

An important feature of a critical perspective in language education is the dialogic approach which

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emphasises a teacher-student relationship: mutual respect, freedom of expression and dialogic sharing. A dialogic approach to language and culture teaching moves away from the traditional concept of teaching knowledge as an 'I/It' phenomenon (I teach it, you learn it) to a teaching method that problematises the very concepts under study (Tomic, 2000). These include the concepts of 'culture' itself, 'cultural identity', 'carriers of culture' and 'non-verbal communication' (Hoffman, 1999; Woodward, 1997; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Tomic argues that in culture teaching and learning it is the individual's voice that has more resonance than the 'culture'. Language learners undergo the empowering process as they realise that each person's voice counts.

Based on the view that language and culture learning is a dialogic process of interaction with others, Morgan & Cain (2000) conducted a project that aimed to enable secondary students in two schools of two countries (England and France) to learn about each other's culture and their own and learn how to decentre and take the other's perspective. Morgan & Cain make detailed analysis of the materials the students themselves produced and of the students' reactions to the project and demonstrate how the project helped students engage in the dialogic process. In addition, they state that such a project could benefit not only the students through constant intra-textual, inter-textual and illuminative dialogues throughout the process, but also teachers and researchers because it provided them with numerous opportunities to interact with students, to understand them in different ways, and with access to a wealth of cultural data produced by students themselves.

The articles in Fenner (2001) also represent a dialogic perspective in dealing with culture in a classroom context. Based on theories exploring the interrelationship between text and reader and reading and writing processes as dynamic dialogues, the authors examine the interactions between the learners themselves, the cultures involved, learners and teachers, and texts and readers. Common to all the articles is the fact that the practices they present are based on classroom activities using authentic texts ranging from literary texts, to drama, to internet materials. Interestingly, the activities the language educators organised in their classrooms are also claimed to be 'authentic', in the sense the texts under study are 'non-finite and open to learner's interpretations' (ibid.: 7). Fenner further states that this type of 'authentic' task 'gave the learners scope for personal reflection and opinion forming, and classroom work thus became part of their personal sociocultural development'. (ibid.). This argument coincides with Feng & Byram's (2002) notion of intercultural authenticity.

The dialogic nature of intercultural authenticity is clear. It is true that many of the texts or discourses traditionally defined as authentic texts are produced by native speakers for the consumption of other native speakers of that language. It is thus not difficult to find in the literature that some argue against using authentic texts in a language classroom on the ground that it is almost impossible for the classroom to provide the contextual conditions for the authentic language data to be authenticated by learners. However, intercultural authenticity regards the issue of inauthentic context not as an obstacle but as an opportunity to explore the language and culture, including the context, from all angles through dialogues. First, it can encourage students' voices, not silence them, by asking what their initial response to and interpretation of the discourse is. Second, it can lead to discussions of the context, the possible intended audience and the intended meaning. And third, it may enable both the students and the teacher to gain a multifaceted perspective through negotiations and mediation.

3.3.3 Culture taught as knowledge subject to scrutiny

The most conventional and also the most criticised dimension of culture teaching is what critics call the facts-oriented approach in which culture is basically viewed as civilisation, the 'big C' culture, as well as everyday lives, the 'small c' culture (Oswalt, 1970; Brooks, 1975; Chastain, 1976). In this facts-oriented approach, culture is normally dissected into small segments which are listed as topics for teaching. Many critics take this approach as inappropriate or even damaging, arguing that it ignores the fact that the major component of what we call the culture 'is a social construct, a product of self and other perceptions' (Kramsch, 1993: 205). It may well lead to the teaching of stereotypes. This criticism is widely accepted as few scholars in cultural studies teaching and intercultural communication nowadays make attempts to list cultural areas or cultural inventories for cultural studies or language teaching programmes.

Nonetheless, the facts-oriented perspective in teaching culture is not entirely abandoned, particularly in language teaching situations where learners have limited opportunities to be exposed to otherness and relatively fewer resources to explore the target culture. In effect, many language educators in these contexts have been making constant efforts to address the theoretical concerns of this approach to develop it into a 'critical model'. Hu & Gao (1997), for example, argue that the majority of millions of foreign language learners in China are too ignorant of the basic formulaic facts of the culture they are studying. The knowledge of the facts is undoubtedly necessary as a starting point for culture learning. They warn of the risks and negative implications in teaching stereotypical knowledge as they point out that facts only will inevitably lead to superficial learning and may enhance stereotypes

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and ethnocentrism. To deal with this paradox, they propose an approach where first learners are taught stereotypical knowledge (to build an open 'bridge' in their figurative terms). Immediately, this knowledge is put under scrutiny, by providing learners with a variety of representations of the cultural product or concept under discussion. This is to make learners aware that there are hidden 'barriers' along the seemingly straight, easy-to-cross 'bridge'. The repetition of the process will effectively make learners culturally sophisticated and eventually obtain the 'key' to becoming intercultural speakers. In the last decade or so, the numerous source materials used for culture teaching in China (Hu, 1995; Wang, 1993a, 1993b; Zhu, 1994, 1991; Deng & Liu, 1989) apparently point towards this knowledge-for-scrutiny approach. This knowledge-for-scrutiny approach is theoretically backed up by Cortazzi & Jin (1996a, 1996b, 2001) and Jin & Cortazzi (1993, 1998) whose research consistently shows evidence of a strong knowledge emphasis in Chinese culture of learning and suggests a synergy model to bridge the gaps.

In a similar line of thought, Doyé (1999) puts forward a 'strategy for cultural-studies' for foreign language classrooms that starts with stereotypical information. The twelve-step procedure, in summary, engages learners in exploring pre-knowledge, creating cognitive dissonance, replacing stereotypical images, exploiting related sources of information and non-verbal communication, comparing others with own and moving beyond the culture of the target language. This process not only enriches learners' *knowledge* by studying the culture from different angles, but also improves their *skills* in comparing and discovering by exploring related sources, and enables them to become open-minded and critical, by reflecting on their 'natural' way of looking at others' cultures and perhaps their own. Doyé calls the knowledge, skills, and attitudes thus obtained the key domains (cognitive, pragmatic and attitudinal) of foreign language teaching for intercultural communication. He argues that the exploitation of the potential of existing strategies and concepts such as cultural studies and world studies strategies and intercultural communication may lead to a model that is required to teach English as a global language.

3.4 Culture teaching and culture training

The work reviewed so far has general educational purposes as well as the intention of developing learners' practical competences. We have seen that Hymes stressed the democratic character of ethnography, and we have seen the relationship of culture teaching to critical pedagogy with its democratic principles and focus on critical analysis. The location for this work is above all the foreign or second language classroom in schools or universities, and this has two important implications.

The first of these is that language and culture are seen as inseparable in the learning process; students learn a language and its cultural implications, even where they are learning it as a lingua franca. They learn to communicate in a new language and this in itself is part of the experience of decentring which gives them a fresh perspective, a critical perspective, on the taken-for-granted world which surrounds them. Their competence is both intercultural and communicative (Byram, 1997a).

The second implication is that teachers of languages who might have previously seen themselves as developing in their learners skills and knowledge, perhaps with a hope that this would lead to attitude change, now find themselves engaged with values. The perspectives here are based on democratic values, on challenging power relations and traditions. Teachers have to handle questions of moral relativity as learners compare and contrast the values and traditions of their own and other societies. The focus on communication skills is not lost but in principle it is not possible to ignore the significance of the implicit process of challenge and questioning.

In practice, the significance of this democratic, educational dimension can be watered down, as teachers prepare their learners for examinations which do not, and perhaps should not, attempt to assess the effect of values and moral education on learners. One of the effects of contemporary emphasis on 'quality and standards' in most education systems is to reinforce 'teaching to the test'.

It is also important to bear in mind this difference between principle and practice as we turn to the third approach to teaching: work which trains people for sojourns in other countries. Here, in principle, the emphasis is on skills and knowledge for practical purposes, but the educational effects in practice can also include the decentring and challenge which leads to re-assessment of the taken-for-granted world. On the other hand, the distinction between training for intercultural competence without a focus on language learning, and the combination of language and culture learning in general education is usually clear. Culture teaching in a training perspective focuses exclusively on the specific information of the country where the sojourner is going for a short or long stay and offers specific communication patterns, the do's and don'ts, for living and working in that context. The approach does not usually take the language level of the sojourner into account and is used particularly for short training programmes for personnel going abroad for business and studying purposes. Numerous texts with titles such as 'Living in Japan', 'Communicating with Arabs', 'Studying in the U.S.A.', etc. are written as resource books for culture specific study.

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The theoretical basis for this work is largely psychological. Bennett's model for the development of intercultural sensitivity (1993) is often cited, and Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001) offer a recent review and analysis of psychological theory in this field. An alternative approach is to focus on the linguistic foundation for intercultural relationships. Trainers in this approach try to ensure that, irrespective of whose language is being used, learners become aware of the significance of speech acts, turn-taking, register directness/indirectness and so on (Müller-Jacquier, 2000). Often the assumption is that learners will not have time to acquire a new language, will use a lingua franca, usually English, and therefore need to understand these other features to become sensitive to the nature of the communication. Here the underlying theoretical basis is a comparative linguistic analysis of discourse, most significantly represented in the work of Scollon & Scollon (1995), and presented in its practical implications in Pan, Scollon & Scollon (2002).

The analysis of work on cross-cultural training would need an article in itself, and insofar as this work does not focus on language teaching and learning, would be beyond the scope of this journal. There are many handbooks and manuals (e.g., Fowler & Mumfort, 1995, 1999; Cushner & Brislin, 1997; Kohls & Knight, 1994). Many of these have been produced in the USA where the notion of cross-cultural training has been strong, but in the last decade there has been an increasing interest in Europe too. The work of Hofstede (1991) and Trompenaars (1993) is widely cited, and there are practical handbooks and guides increasingly available (e.g., Gibson, 2000; Hofstede, Peterson & Hofstede, 2002). There are also many materials which remain copyright and not widely available for commercial reasons. The main thrust of all this work has been to prepare people to go to other countries, but it also has relevance in giving those who are immigrant to a country an introduction and a programme of transition. This applies particularly to professionals entering a workforce, and in Britain for example there has been a very recent development of materials for health professionals from other countries seeking work in Britain.

What is evident and carefully documented in Dahlen's (1997) critique of the way these interculturalists 'package' knowledge of culture, is that there is a close relationship with the business world and with the marketplace. Dahlen argues that this leads to an approach to culture which is a commodification of a dated concept of culture, concluding with some irony:

> Could there, despite everything, be ways to open the interculturalist enterprise to the views of culture which are now more current in anthropology? Perhaps, but hardly without some long and serious conversations between anthropologists and the interculturalists. (p. 179)

More generally, there is a need for conversations between interculturalists and academics for mutual benefit. One noteworthy attempt to do this, and then to present the findings for a general public is Geoffroy's (2001) study of the processes of intercultural communication in an Anglo-French company, which *inter alia* demonstrates that language learning cannot be ignored even where those involved perceive the issues as rooted in the psychology of the individual or the nation. This kind of study is still rare however and it is strange that there has been little cross-fertilisation among those who prepare students for study abroad – with their focus on ethnography – and those who prepare business people for working abroad – with their focus on psychology. Perhaps one bridge is offered by recent work which explores the implications for language learning of a sociocultural theory of mind (Lantolf, 2000b). Here the perspective taken is that learning is mediated by interaction with other people in a given sociocultural context, and that we can better understand the learning of other languages by analysing how that interaction takes place. The significance for culture teaching and training is yet to be determined, but it suggests that research is needed to analyse the ways in which people learn other cultures and learn about other cultures in interaction with people who embody them. It is to the research agenda in general, that we turn next.

4. Taking a position and identifying research needs

One of the purposes of a review article is to evaluate, and not only present, research and scholarship. Where there is no disagreement about the purposes of research, then the task is to clarify criteria for good theories and make judgements about which research best meets those criteria.

Evaluation of intervention and development work is less simple because there often remain implicit purposes, because the accounts of what is done are not always sufficiently detailed, and because experimental conditions are not rigorous. Here, teachers read teachers' accounts and rely on their professional intuition and judgement. This is not without value since internalised professional criteria are not arbitrary; they reflect current theories as transmitted in teacher education. At the same time, of course, they remain often unarticulated and therefore not open to review and revision.

Evaluation of scholarship which is focused on 'what ought to be' and argues for a particular position – such as those mentioned earlier associated with Kramsch, Kramer, Starkey and Zarate – is a more complex issue. There are no simple criteria beyond those of logical, clear and well-supported argument. Behind these, there is often a philosophical position,

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an ideology of human interaction, beliefs about the nature of human beings and the societies they form. Discussion of aims and purposes of culture and language teaching and learning at this level is quickly seen to be related to judgements of values and desirable education.

In her discussion of the ways in which language teaching should change in universities in the USA, as a consequence of 'major upheavals that are shaking at the foundation of the old idea of the university', Kramsch argues that 'relevance' is a crucial issue, that there is:

> Renewed pressure on universities to serve national political and economic interests of the time by justifying their choice of the knowledge they produce and transmit, and by demonstrating its relevance to the current needs of society. Foreign languages are particularly vulnerable to this pressure. (1995: XVI)

She argues that language should be taught as social practice and that we should teach 'meanings that are relevant both to the native speakers and to our students'. If these were representative views then language and culture study would be, first, a means to other ends and, second, an acquisition of knowledge of relevant meanings. Kramsch goes on, however, to say that learners can be made to reflect on their own social upbringing and cultural values as a consequence of study. The overlap between scholarship, and a specific view of 'what ought to be', and teaching which reflects a purpose, thus becomes evident and takes us back to our earlier discussion of critical approaches to teaching. These perspectives may appear to be self-evidently desirable, and yet the emphasis on the individual might be considered 'Western' or European and not take sufficient note of Asian concepts of the individual and society (Lee, 2001; Parmenter, 2003).

It is clear, therefore, that where culture teaching-and-learning takes place in an educational context, questions of values and ideology are inevitable. Once this is accepted, there are implications for the evaluation of research and scholarship, which go beyond technical discussions of best theories. This means that, if the position outlined above – let us call it language and political education – is accepted, then research and scholarship on culture teaching and learning can be judged not only in terms of its rigour and clarity, but also in terms of the contribution it makes to understanding current practice and developing new, 'neo-humanist' practices, whilst bearing in mind the issues of cultural relativity. This means there should be research which investigates the relationship between teaching styles, materials, and methods, and the ability to take new perspectives, to be critical, to understand and act according to the principles of democratic citizenship.

An alternative to this ideology-driven approach to evaluation and setting a research agenda, is to identify gaps. When research on culture learning is compared with that on language learning, the most obvious gap is the lack of work on 'acquisition'. Sercu (forthcoming) points out that empirical research on the acquisition of intercultural competence 'is still very limited, and at any rate far more limited than that of studies investigating second language acquisition', and in fact she is obliged to analyse work which focuses mainly on language acquisition in her survey. She nonetheless presents a discussion of the variables which would have to be taken into consideration in acquisition studies: teacher variables, learner variables, teaching materials, assessment processes. This approach assumes however that culture acquisition can be treated in the same way as language acquisition. It may not be quite so simple, not least because of the difficulty of delineating the 'object' to be acquired, which is much easier with language.

An alternative perspective which might be extended to culture learning is suggested by the distinction made by Sfard (1998) between the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor. Pavlenko & Lantolf (2000) apply this to language learning. The acquisition metaphor presents learning as the ability to internalise knowledge as an object, as a commodity. Language learning is conceptualised as the internalisation of rules and specific linguistic entities. The participation metaphor makes us think of learning as 'a process of becoming a member of a certain community' (Sfard, 1998: 6). Sfard goes on to describe learning of any kind as:

> The ability to communicate in the language of this community and act according to its particular norms. The norms themselves are to be negotiated in the process of consolidating the community. While the learners are newcomers and potential reformers of the practice, the teachers are the preservers of its continuity.

The underlying image is that of socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) which involves both participation in the community and the internalisation of its beliefs, values and behaviours, its culture. Sfard's other suggestion that only newcomers reform, that teachers are preservers of tradition, is however contentious. Teaching within some educational traditions is focused precisely on critical analysis of the norms and this is crucial to culture teaching too, as we have shown above.

Nonetheless, the use of this metaphor of participation (combined with acquisition as Sfard says) is particularly apposite for culture teaching provided that the critical dimension of teaching is not forgotten. Culture learning can thus be conceptualised as socialisation, by the teacher as mediator, into another culture. The teacher acts as mediator between learners and those who are already members of the language-and-culture group of which they seek understanding. At the same time, if it is axiomatic for the teacher that learners should reflect critically and analytically on their own culture, the participation and socialisation process will not be focused

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exclusively on other cultures. For it is not the purpose of teaching, we would contend, to change learners into members of another culture, but to make them part of the group who see themselves as mediators, able to compare, juxtapose and analyse (Byram, 1997b).

From this perspective, learners become members of a community whose discourse marks them out as able to reflect, analyse and compare. The process of researching this would therefore be focused on how teachers and learners interact, how their discourse reveals their shared position as mediators, how their language reveals the acquisition of new concepts and rules whilst simultaneously revealing their ability to decentre from their own and others' concepts to better understand both.

This may also offer an avenue to explore the assessment of culture learning, which is another major gap in the research. Research in language testing has made substantial progress in describing precise levels of attainment. However there is no comparable description of levels of culture learning, or of intercultural competence, even though there are a number of conceptual frameworks which define intercultural competence and the behaviour which would be indicative of it (Byram 1997a; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2000).

5. Conclusion

Our review has shown that activity in teaching and researching the cultural dimension and intercultural competence in language teaching has developed rapidly in the last decades. We have also argued that this work cannot avoid engagement with and challenges to values and ideas, and that this is, if not a new direction for language teachers and researchers, a new emphasis. It reminds us that language teaching has always been susceptible to political and social influences, whether it was the use of English teaching in Germany in the 1920s to boost the self-esteem of German pupils (Neuner, 1988: 36), or the use of English teaching in former colonial countries to reassert Western hegemony (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Widdowson, 2003). It suggests however that the contribution might also be positive – the development of critical awareness, the pursuit of democratic processes and values – whilst reminding us that even these need to be challenged.

The increase in the volume of work does not inevitably mean an improvement in quality, and there is a need to develop more systematically a programme of research rather than *ad hoc* efforts which may not have a lasting effect. This is the task for the research and teaching community.

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