

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CULTURE, CULTURE TEACHING, AND CULTURE
EXPLORATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

This study attempts to offer a conceptual, historiographic and critical analysis of the place of culture in second language education. It seeks to provide answers to the following questions: How has “culture” in the anthropological sense of the term been conceptualized in second language education and how have these conceptualizations been translated into directions for classroom practice? An anthropological view of culture as the meanings assigned to objects, events, and relationships and negotiated between culture bearers, forms the theoretical foundation of the study. It is argued that inconsistencies in the conceptualizations of culture of language education theorists who addressed the topic up to the mid 1980s have led to inadequate practices and to the subordinate role of culture teaching in language education. Current critical approaches to culture teaching are examined and provide a background for the author’s understanding of the issue. The study introduces the notion “culture exploration” as a way of conceptualizing cultural instruction in the field of adult second language education. It highlights the features of culture exploration: ethnographic participant observation in and outside the classroom, and reflective and critical classroom discussions, focusing on students’ “pragmatic” ethnographies, which are organized along the lines of steps of applying Freirean dialogues in adult language classes. In addition, it outlines the author’s viewpoint on the goals of culture exploration: gaining awareness of oneself as a cultural being and positioned subject, gaining awareness of the interrelation between language and culture, as well as creating conditions for facilitating students’ coping with culture shock and the ambiguity of cross-cultural interactions. It is argued that culture exploration will allow adult second language learners to develop coherent understandings of their cultural experiences in the target community and use that knowledge to act more effectively for their own ends in the context of the target culture.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my parents Anka and Ilia, who nurtured my inquisitiveness, as well as to my colleagues at the Institute for Foreign Students in Bulgaria, who fostered an atmosphere of conducting rigorous research to search for ways to improve practices in teaching English to adult learners.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to offer a conceptual, historiographic and critical analysis of the place of culture in second language education. It seeks to provide answers to the following questions: What is meant by “culture” and how has culture teaching been addressed in the works of second language education theorists? More specifically, the questions which will guide this analysis are: How has “culture” in the anthropological sense of the term been conceptualized in second language education and how have these conceptualizations been translated into directions for classroom practice? The study will also present the author’s view of the place of culture in language classrooms. It introduces the notion “culture exploration” as a way of conceptualizing cultural instruction in the field of adult second language education and highlights the features of culture exploration: ethnographic participant observation (Spradley, 1980) in and outside the classroom and critical classroom discussions (Auerbach and Burgess 1985; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Freire, 1970; Wallerstein, 1983) focusing on students’ “pragmatic” (Damen, 1987) ethnographies. In addition, it outlines the author’s viewpoint on the goals of culture exploration: gaining awareness of oneself as a “cultural being” (Valdes, 1986) and “positioned subject” (Rosaldo, 1993), gaining awareness of the interrelation between language and culture, assisting students in coping with the ambiguity of cross-cultural interactions and “culture shock” (Brown, 1980).

This introduction will provide a brief overview of the background and the theoretical foundations for this study and the chapters that follow.

Background

This study is the result of my efforts to search for ways to assist adult immigrants to a country in their everyday dealings with a new culture through language and culture classes. The impetus for the study stems from a view that language proficiency involves cultural competence and my personal experience as a recent immigrant to Canada is a case to argue the validity of this point. I studied English as a foreign language for over 10 years and taught it to adults for 7 years in my native country, Bulgaria. Upon arrival in Canada I was confident that as a fluent speaker of the language who was also equipped with ample information about Canadian society, its history and its institutions, I would have few difficulties in coping with the new environment. Of course, I expected that there would be differences between me and the Canadians I was going to meet. But I assumed that I could predict them on most occasions. For example, I knew that Canadians are “generally” very punctual or that I should call in and arrange a date before visiting someone, instead of just dropping by at their place. Upon reflection, I realize now that I must have come to Canada with “the belief that national cultures with high degrees of internal consistency exist and that reliable predictions can be made on the basis of similarities and differences between cultures” (Whalley, 1995, p. 237). Unfortunately, however, problems started immediately after my arrival. They consisted mainly in my understanding the words when speaking with my interlocutors but not understanding the underlying meanings. An invitation by a new friend to have coffee together resulted in each of us paying her own bill; discussions with a Canadian on common words like ‘forgiveness’ led me to the realm of ‘religion’ and ‘sin’ instead of to the comfortable, for me, understanding of the term as ‘excusing a minor offence’; a long, lively and friendly conversation with another Canadian at a party obviously meant nothing to her because the next time I met her she would hardly say “hello”. I was in shock. Countless incidents of this type in my everyday dealings with

people led me to believe that either there was something wrong with me or my knowledge of English and Canada was indeed very limited. I was frustrated. I felt disappointed and deceived by the educational system which had left me with the expectation that knowledge received of and about a language and culture in a language classroom, or from a variety of written texts, allowed one to live effectively in a community of that language and culture bearers. Things were not getting easier, regardless of my learning new concepts like 'mainstream' or 'political correctness'. There were (and still are) situations when my verbal or non-verbal behaviour produced a look of shock on the face of my interlocutor despite the correct grammatical and pragmatic use of English.

Fortunately, some of the courses I took in the Master's program at the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University led me to ponder about the inextricable tie between language and culture. I started researching this area and, being a teacher, I felt the need to dwell on issues related to the approach to culture in language classrooms. Dissatisfied with what I found in the mainstream literature on the topic, I realized the need to examine conceptualizations of culture and culture teaching in second language education. Thanks to some current critical approaches to the place of culture in language classrooms (Kramsch, 1993a, Whalley, 1995) I started to develop an awareness that we are all cultural beings. What I take this to mean is that regardless of the level of our target language skills or the cultural information on the target society which we have, we are affected in our verbal and non-verbal behaviour in our new environment by the conceptualizations and understandings of the world we have developed in our socialization (or enculturation) in a specific community.

Theoretical Foundations

"Culture is a universal fact of human life" (Damen, 1987, p. 88). It is deeply ingrained in a person's ways of acting and being in the world. Language, the means of

communication among members of a culture, is culture's most visible and available expression (Brown, 1980, p. 34). In other words, language is much more than just a means of communication, it is a reflection of culture and a major vehicle for the transmission and, in fact, creation of culture.

Unlike foreign language classes, second language classes take place within the second language community. Thus, they unavoidably operate on the principle of sociocultural immersion. Consequently, culture in the second language classroom cannot be “an expendable fifth skill, tacked on to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing” because it is “in the background right from day one, challenging the students’ ability to make sense of the world around them” (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 1). The shared conventions of language use, which make communication possible, are cultural as well as grammatical (Brögger, 1992, p. 25). Language creates a discourse which requires a cultural competence in the student in order to be understood (*ibid.*, p. 12). Therefore, cultural instruction seems essential for an in-depth understanding of the language. However, as language expresses and embodies the values and meanings which members of a cultural group share because of their socialization in it and identification with it, “language teaching always and inevitably has meant language and culture teaching” (Byram & Esarte-Sarries, 1991b, p. 5). Indeed, second language instruction has been regarded as involving the socialization of learners into a new worldview (Harrison, 1990). This is because it is believed that in acquiring language one acquires culture. This process, however, needs to be brought to awareness, especially with adult second language learners. Overlooking its significance can have devastating effects on the adults’ self-esteem and their ability to cope with the new environment. As Kramsch (1988) suggests,

The acquisition of the social meanings of the foreign words is predicated on a change in perspective that does not occur by itself, not through the mere fact of learning new lexical items in the classroom, nor even by living the culture in the target country. It has to be developed consciously through such cross-cultural skills as putting things in relation with one another and exposing socially significant meaning systems (p. 75).

Byram, furthermore, argues that

to teach culture without language is fundamentally flawed and to separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated ...as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena. The consequence is that learners...assume that the foreign language is an epiphenomenon of their own language, and that it refers to and embodies their existing understandings and interpretations of their own and the foreign cultures (in Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 18).

As is evident from my experience referred to earlier, I have been the subject of exactly this type of deception. Thus, I would like to argue that students are not fully learning the language if they are lacking the cultural meanings by which it is defined because in order to operate effectively in a target language community they need “knowledge of what the language means as well as what it says” (Valdes, 1986, p. 2). In order to approach cultural meanings, however, we need a clearer understanding of what culture means and involves.

An anthropological view of culture as negotiated meanings between culture bearers forms the theoretical foundation for this particular conceptual analysis of the place of culture in language teaching. The “study of culture involves the analysis of the collective fabric of meaning that defines people’s way of life” (Geertz cited in Brögger, 1992, p. 33). In other words, culture seen as “the meaning that can be attributed to people’s verbal and non-verbal behaviour in social life” (ibid.) informs this study. From this perspective, understanding a culture would mean, in semiotic terms, “understanding the signs by which native speakers of the language make sense of and give sense to the world around them” (Kramersch, 1988, p. 64). In this context, culture teaching could be viewed as enabling language proficiency. Indeed, as language use is indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture, language study seems to be “an initiation into a kind of social practice that is at the boundary of two or more cultures” (Kramersch, 1993a, p. 9). In the time of communicative language teaching methodology, informed by a view of language as a social practice, culture should become “the very core of language teaching” (ibid. p. 8).

Overview of the Study

The discipline of cultural anthropology, which studies culture, offers insights into the nature of culture which could be (and to some extent have been) fruitful for second language education theorists interested in culture instruction in language classrooms. In researching the area of culture teaching, I found out that a consistent and thorough investigation of anthropological definitions and theories of culture from the point of view of the language educator was lacking. At a time of a boom in communicative language pedagogy and when it is claimed that “[i]n general language teaching theory, (inter)cultural studies may, in fact, be in the process of assuming the position and prestige that literary studies used to have” (Buttjes, 1991a, p. 11) this seems a serious oversight. Therefore I felt compelled to address this issue.

The next chapter provides a brief overview of definitions, approaches, and theories of culture in anthropological literature from the rise of the discipline to the present day. It presents a view with regard to the most suitable among them for informing inquiries in the approach to culture in language education. One of the conclusions reached is that theories of culture which link language and culture and search to interpret the cultural meanings of events or activities are the most productive for the conceptualization of culture in language teaching.

Apart from Stern (1983, 1992), who traces developments in culture teaching chronologically, there is little systematic treatment of the history of the place of culture in language education among theoreticians interested in the area. Chapters three and four offer a historiographic and critical analysis of some inconsistencies in language education theorists' conceptualizations of culture prevalent up to the mid 1980s (and present even today) and of the inappropriate, in my view, insistence on the separation of language teaching and culture teaching. Chapter three discusses the efforts of language education

theorists to legitimize an anthropological conceptualization of culture for the purposes of language education. Chapter four elaborates on ways and means for culture teaching. Both chapters examine possible inadequacies in directions for the treatment of culture in language classrooms and thus offer some plausible answers to the question of why culture has always played a minor and ambiguous role in language education.

Chapter five presents a view of the interrelationship between language and culture which has influenced current approaches to culture in language education. It also discusses a possible reason for the insistence, currently gaining ground, on the need for the integration of language and culture instruction in the classroom and dwells on the views of leading theorists, namely Byram and Kramersch who argue for that need. In addition, it points to the significance of employing ethnography in language classes (cf. Byram, 1989; Byram & Morgan, 1994) as well as to the urgency to facilitate students in a search for their own cultural space, or "the third place" in a second language and culture environment (Kramersch, 1993a).

Chapter six builds on Byram's and Kramersch's ideas and presents my understanding of the place of culture in language classes. A possible approach to culture in adult second language classrooms named 'culture exploration' is offered. I argue that with a view to the legacy of the term "culture teaching", as well as developments in the concept of culture in anthropology and inquiries in other areas, talking about 'culture teaching' is misleading. So far culture teaching has mainly led to presenting static, dubiously generalizable cultural patterns and facts to students but has not assisted them in their efforts to live a full life in the target community. Culture exploration consists of equipping students with the techniques of ethnographic participant observation to be employed in and outside the classroom which are combined with holding classroom discussions on students' ethnographies along the lines of steps used in applying Freirean dialogues in adult language classes (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein, 1983). The critical slant of the analysis presented is provided by reference to critical pedagogy in language education.

Critical pedagogy regards education as a dialogical process that needs to be based on double-voicedness (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 13). It also sees “the role of education not only as a reflection of the social order, but as an instrument of social change” (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 13). It is argued that by employing participant observation techniques and by exploring their experiences in the target culture through reflective and critical dialogues, students will develop an understanding of humans as cultural beings, of the relationship between language and culture in interactions, and of the necessity to live with the ambiguity inherent in cross-cultural encounters. The culture exploration process is meant to encourage students to name their experience of the target community culture, reflect on it and search for, and one hopes, reach a personal reconciliation of the contradictions between their own and the target cultures. Thus students will be in a position to develop their own voice in the new environment and empowered to act to fulfill their own goals.

The conclusion positions me as the author within the context of this inquiry, summarizes the presented analysis, and highlights topics for further exploration of cultural instruction in language teaching.

Chapter Two

Culture in Anthropology

This chapter examines briefly the concept of culture in anthropology, its gradual emergence and refinement, but also its ambiguity and contested reality, as well as the different theories that attempt to explain the nature of culture. It aims to present an overview of the field that is readily understandable for people trained in linguistics and language teaching methodology with a focus on developments in anthropology which have had, or should have had, an impact on culture teaching theorizing in second language education. In addition, it attempts to demonstrate that language education theorists should be very cautious when adopting a single definition of culture amidst the myriad of available ones. It also suggests that the points of reference to ideas found in anthropological theories of culture are rather limited in the works of language education theoreticians discussing the issue of culture teaching up to the mid 1980s and, occasionally, even today.

Origins of the Concept of Culture

Cultural anthropology, the branch of anthropology which I assume to be of greatest significance for addressing culture in language pedagogy, deals with the description and analysis of the cultures of past and present ages. The impulse behind the development of cultural anthropology lies in the ever present human interest in exploring differences in cultural practices. Indeed, the roots of cultural anthropology can be traced far back through the history and intellectual traditions of human civilization. "The Bible, Homer,...Chinese

scholars of the Han dynasty...[have all shown] an interest in the distinctive life-ways of different peoples” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 3).

Throughout the comparatively short history of anthropology as a distinct field of inquiry there have been numerous shifts in the conceptualization of culture. From the beginnings of the discipline, culture has been regarded as its core concept. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) compare it to categories such as gravity in physics, disease in medicine, and evolution in biology in “explanatory importance and in generality of application” (p. 3). Kaplan and Manners (1970) point out that it refers to “a class of phenomena conceptualized by anthropologists [in their efforts] to deal with the questions they are trying to answer” (p. 3), which could be summed up as “why different peoples have distinctive ways of life” (ibid.).

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) point out that the word “culture” was established in the English language with its modern anthropological meaning by Tylor in 1871 when “after some hesitation as against civilization, [he] borrowed the word culture from German where by his time it had become well recognized [having grown out] of the older meaning of cultivation” (p. 9). In its most generic sense the word “culture” in Latin, and all the other languages which borrowed the root, retains the primary notion of cultivation or nurturing applied to individuals. This was also the older meaning of “civilization”. Indeed, both terms contained the idea of betterment toward perfection. The German concept “kultur”, which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, designated “the distinctive ‘higher’ values or enlightenment of a society” (ibid., p. 35). At that time the Romance languages and English still used “civilization” to denote social improvement, refinement or progress. By the nineteenth century the basic, specifically anthropological notion of culture, crystallized in an explicit generalized form, first around the idea of “custom”. Custom is indeed “a common-sense concept that has served as a matrix for the development of the more refined and technical anthropological concept of culture” (Sapir cited in ibid., p. 125). In Germany, though not yet defined, “culture” as a concept was present in the

works of late eighteenth century historians who were trying “to cover the totality of the known world of custom and ideology” (ibid., p. 146).

In 1871, in his major work *Primitive Culture*, Tylor attempted to isolate and clarify the concept of culture as such. He acknowledged his obligation to the German scholar Klemm in using the term and gave birth to the scientific concept of culture offering its first formal definition in the opening sentence of his book: “Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 43). From that time onwards the word has retained its scientific denotation and continues to be debated as anthropologists (and other social scientists) have attempted to delimit the meaning of the “complex whole” by dissecting the various notions which have been subsumed under this label. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) point out, however, that Tylor’s definition had a profound impact on those shaping anthropology and for almost half a century the term was being used rather freely for advancing various anthropological theories without any systematic theorizing about it (p. 151). Indeed, the line of inquiry into conceptualizations of culture was secondary in the developments of anthropology as a discipline till the 1920s and 1930s for reasons which will be addressed in the next sections.

Developments in Anthropological Thought

Classic Evolutionary Theory

Anthropology began to take shape as a distinct field of study in the mid-nineteenth century. However, toward the middle of the eighteenth century, during the period known as the Enlightenment, the first systematic attempts to offer scientific theories of cultural differences began to emerge. Thanks to the full bloom of the Age of Exploration, many of the greatest minds of Europe began to ponder over the nature of the world and of human

beings. Greatly influenced by the developments in the physical sciences, social philosophers of the time sought universal laws governing human structures and human nature (Harris, 1968; Nanda, 1994).

Referring to the attempts of early anthropologists to understand the origin, causes, and development of culture, Marcus and Fisher (1986) point out that “[i]n the mid- and late nineteenth century, as a burgeoning field of Western scholarship in an era imbued by a pervasive ideology of social progress, [cultural anthropology] was dominated by hopes for a general science of Man” (p. 17). Preoccupied by this task, individual “armchair” scholars spent little time theorizing on the concept of culture, but instead “pursued ambitious intellectual projects that sought the origins of modern institutions, rituals, customs, and habits of thought through the contrasts of evolutionary stages in the development of human society” (ibid., p. 17). Evolutionary theorists postulated that cultures evolved in conjunction with the evolution of human races and the material aspect of a society, i.e. its level of technology and method of providing food, was the basis upon which other cultural elements were built. During this period Tylor’s (1871) understanding of culture as a “complex whole” was assumed, i.e. culture was viewed as the sum total of the characteristics of a society with habits or customs invariably discussed in anthropologists’ works.

Historical Particularism and Cultural Relativism

At the turn of the twentieth century, a critical transition occurred in the nature of anthropological scholarship. Marcus and Fisher (1986) explain it with the new context of the professionalization of the social sciences into specialized disciplines of the university which allowed for divisions of academic labor and the advent of distinctive methods and standards. The shift was characterized with a distinctive method, ethnography, becoming the center of and “the substantive justification” (ibid., p. 19) for cultural anthropology.

In North America, Boas and his students conducted fieldwork among American Indians and Eskimos. These anthropologists saw the need to challenge the existing evolutionary schemes for being too ethnocentric in putting Europeans at the top of the evolutionary scale, as well as for being too general or speculative (Garbarino, 1983; Harris, 1968, Nanda, 1994) after coming to the realization that they were not dealing with primitive languages and cultures. They did not spend much time theorizing on the concept of culture, either, as their efforts were focused on discouraging the “overzealous commitment to a model of generalizing, law discovering science” (Marcus & Fisher, 1986, p. 20). Stressing the importance of carrying out meticulous data collection in the field, Boasians presented a position known as “historical particularism”. They argued that each culture was the product of discrete historical events and circumstances and could be best understood and explained if the unique path that it had followed was reconstructed. In an attempt to come up with a set of methodological guidelines, Boasians also pointed out that each society could be judged only in its own terms because values are relative to their cultural matrix. Thus, they developed the notion of “cultural relativism” holding that there are no higher or lower forms of culture as there are no universal standards. The concept of “cultural relativism” has been extremely influential in developments in cultural anthropology and is of central importance when discussing culture in the language classroom.

Boas, and some of his students, especially Sapir, also came to be known as anthropological linguists because they were deeply concerned with the relationship between language and culture. The language/culture connection will be explored in another chapter of this study. Here I will only point out that theorizing which relates culture to language has strong traditions in anthropology and, as we will see later, has not been addressed sufficiently by language education theorists interested in culture teaching.

During this period, attempts at definitions of culture were usually along the lines of Tylor’s (1871) definition. Definitions which emphasized tradition, or social heritage as an

inherent element of culture also began to appear. An example of the so-called “historical” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) class of definitions is Sapir’s definition from 1921: “culture [is]...the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives” (cited in *ibid.*, p. 47).

Functionalism and Structural Functionalism

In the 1920s British social anthropology was dominated by a research perspective known as “functionalism” (Garbarino, 1983; Harris, 1968). Its main proponent, Bronislaw Malinowski, was interested in how cultures work and argued that the basic task of anthropology is to describe the recurrent functions of customs and institutions rather than to explain the origins of cultural differences and similarities. Malinowski maintained that via its institutions, and the level of its technology, culture functions to meet the biological, social, and psychological needs of human beings living in a society in a specific environment. One of his most important contributions to anthropology was the insistence on the importance of carrying out rigorous fieldwork in order to provide valid and reliable ethnographic descriptions. Indeed, anthropologists owe to him the concept of participant observation, i.e. the idea that “to understand another society one must be immersed in its lifeways, participate in whatever is suitable and possible, and carefully observe the interactions and behaviour of members of that society” (Garbarino, 1983, p. 55). For Malinowski language was closely related to his anthropological inquiries and he viewed language as “essentially rooted in the reality of the culture” (Malinowski, 1923 cited in Stern, 1983, p. 207).

Another very influential figure in British anthropology from the 1930s well into the 1950s, was Radcliffe-Brown. His theory of “structural functionalism” focused on how various elements of culture (he preferred the term “social structure”) function to maintain social order and equilibrium. An important contribution of both functionalism and structural

functionalism to developments in anthropology in the first part of this century was the insistence on the need to study institutions, roles, and relationships *in context* as the whole cultural system of a society is integrated. Both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown seemed to perceive culture in historical terms: "Culture comprises inherited artifacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values" (Malinowski, 1931, cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 47); "[Culture] is the process by which in a given social group or social class language, beliefs, ideas, aesthetic tastes, knowledge, skills and usages of many kinds are handed on...from person to person and from one generation to another" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1949 cited in *ibid.*, p. 48).

Culture and Personality

In the United States, in the 1920s and 1930s, the anti-evolutionism of Boas, developments in learning, and Gestalt psychology, and the writings of Sigmund Freud set the stage for the emergence of the approach known as "culture and personality". Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, both students of Boas, were pioneers in the propagation of culture and personality theories. In her search for the impact of culture on individuals, Benedict argued that each culture is a unique configuration of integrated values, or themes, dominated by a particular theme, or ethos, which shapes all major institutions such as family, religion, or politics (Nanda, 1994). She also suggested that people assume certain personality characteristics in keeping with the dominant themes present in their cultures. Thus Benedict maintained that there is a range of potential themes closely linked in cultures and individual psyches, and it is possible to categorize whole cultures according to which of these themes prevail in a society. The search for dominant themes or personality types led to national character studies and efforts to describe complex societies on the basis of configuration, i.e. a cluster of characteristics, continued even in the 1950s. Within the context of cultural anthropology this research strategy later became unpopular because the

characteristics were considered too simplistic and the descriptions too idiosyncratic (Garbarino, 1983). Configuration approaches, however, guided many intercultural communication theorists whose works, as we shall see later, have had an impact on culture teaching in second language classrooms.

Broader Theorizing on Culture as a Concept

At the time of “culture and personality” approaches there was a greater focus on theorizing about the concept of culture itself. Indeed, the period from the 1920s up to the 1950s was very fruitful for defining culture in various terms (cf. Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). In their monograph *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952) Kroeber and Kluckhohn were able to compile 164 definitions of the term, most of them introduced in the second third of the twentieth century. Kroeber and Kluckhohn offered a taxonomy illustrating developments in the concept in terms of categories of definitions based on principal emphasis: descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, and genetic. Constructed from various points of view, these definitions were substantive, descriptive, explanatory, functional or epistemological in nature. This fact alone is bound to complicate matters for language teaching theorists searching for a concise definition of the term readily applicable to the classroom context.

In 1929 the American anthropologist Wissler initiated the “Rule or Way” conceptualization of culture which belongs to the “normative” class of definitions in Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s (1952) taxonomy. A good example of this trend is: “A culture refers to the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete ‘design for living’”. (Kroeber cited in *ibid.*, p. 51). In other words, culture began to be viewed as a set of rules governing behaviour. Around the same time, the notion of culture as an organization or a network of rules developed and became explicit in the next class of “structural” definitions. The patterning factor in culture, typical of the structural group, stemmed from Ruth

Benedict's influence following her conceptualization of dominant "themes" in a culture (1934). It could be exemplified by Turney-High's (1949) definition: "Culture is....the functioning, patterned totality of group-accepted and -transmitted inventions, material and non-material" (cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 61). Thus, from this perspective culture was conceived as a complex of relations of ordered and interrelated parts which comprise a whole. Organization became a universal feature of culture and culture was viewed as a conceptual model based on and interpreting behaviour.

Reflecting the growing interrelation between anthropology and psychology, another group of definitions, which placed an emphasis on culture as being learnt, was widespread in the 1940s. A concise definition of this class is one by Kluckhohn (1942): "Culture consists in all transmitted social learning" (cited in *ibid.*, p. 58).

Culture and Behaviour

Kroeber and Kluckhohn's attempt to clarify and synthesize the various conceptions of culture, which indicates the appreciation that anthropologists were having difficulty in defining what it is that they study, also offered a number of definitions which linked culture to overt behaviour in the 1940s and 1950s. This was a period when some anthropologists continued to be interested in the evolution of human culture and were still committed to broad generalizations and causal explanations. Leslie White and Julian Steward, who worked in this period, focused their research interests on technological advancement as the primary force for cultural evolution and the role of the interaction of natural conditions with cultural factors as the cause for cultural similarities and differences. The cultural materialist Marvin Harris, prominent in the 1960s and even today, argued that the material constraints of human existence are the most basic aspect of culture which affects the ways humans satisfy basic needs and reproduce within environmental and biological limits (Harris, 1968; Garbarino, 1983; Nanda, 1994). It was argued that "[i]f anthropology is to become natural

science, it must deal only in observable and empirical entities" (Kluckhohn, 1962, p. 28) and culture was perceived as constituting the distinctive ways of behaving and the characteristic products of behaviour of a group (ibid., p. 21). In a review of theories of culture, Keesing (1974) called such anthropologists "cultural adaptationists" and explained that for them "economies and their social correlates" are primary in a culture whereas ideational systems are viewed as "secondary, derived, or epiphenomenal" (p. 76). Keesing summarized their conceptualization of culture in the following way: "[c]ultures are systems (of socially transmitted behaviour patterns) that serve to relate human communities to their ecological settings" (ibid., p. 75). The concept of culture so defined emphasized the observable and the material.

Criticisms of conceptualizations of culture as behaviour abound in anthropological literature from the early 1950s. For example, in their monograph from 1952 Kroeber and Kluckhohn make the following statement:

Whether behaviour is to be included in culture remains a matter of dispute. The behaviour in question is of course the concrete behaviour of individual human beings, not any collective abstraction. The two present authors incline strongly to exclude behaviour as such from culture....First, there also is human behaviour not determined by culture, so that behaviour as such cannot be used as a differentiating criteria of culture. Second, culture being basically a form or pattern or design or way, it is an abstraction from concrete human behaviour, but is not itself behaviour (p. 155).

Later the behavioural view of culture was critiqued in the following terms:

If cultures are regarded as statistically significant recurrences of behaviour not specifically attributable to biological inheritance, then we have coined an empty word that at once ignores the symbolic and moral component of human behaviour and is oblivious to the behavioural requirements of systems of social action (Murphy, 1971, p. 49).

Ideational Theories of Culture

Although attempts to link culture to ideas and symbols were apparent in some definitions of the concept from the late 1930s and early 1940s (cf. Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), it was research strategies, which began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s, that paid special attention to the *meanings* cultural elements have for the members of a society. The so-called “ideational theories of culture” (Keesing, 1974, p. 77) that focused on cultures as systems of ideas or organizations of cognitive knowledge, grew out of the application of linguistic methods and models to the analysis of culture. For the proponents of these theories,

Linguistics became a model for emulation, both because language was seen as central to culture, and because linguistics seemed to have developed a more rigorous way of eliciting culturally patterned phenomena, and of defining these phenomena in terms of so-called deep structures not conscious to speakers (Marcus & Fisher, 1986, p. 28).

In France, structuralism, closely associated with the work of the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, gained wide acceptance. Structuralism attempted to find a universal grammar or syntax for all cultural systems. Levi-Strauss drew not only on Chomsky’s structural linguistics, but also on developments in computer technology, game theory, or systems analysis, in an effort to understand the mental structures that, he claimed, underlie human culture and, especially, cultural systems of perception and classification of the world. Analyzing forms of social activity as though they were languages, he argued that cultures are shared creations of human minds and that humans are driven by a universal impulse toward classification. He also maintained that binary oppositions, i.e. dualistic contrasts such as hot/cold, good/evil, man/woman aspects of a culture (Nanda, 1994). In other words, structuralists vie

device for classifying and categorizing the world, as “language-writ-large” (Kaplan & Manner, 1970, p. 171).

In the US the view that culture should be viewed as the collective ideas existing in the minds of members of a society gained ground among the proponents of a research strategy known as New Ethnography, also referred to as ethnoscience, ethnosemantics, componential analysis, or cognitive anthropology (Kaplan & Manner, 1970; Keesing, 1974; Nanda, 1994). In 1956, in his seminal article *Componential Analysis and the Study of Meaning*, Ward Goodenough, the main advocate of this approach, argued that culture is what the individual must know in order to operate successfully within his/her society and consists of conceptual principles and cognitive rules which do not exist outside the culture bearers. Identifying

culture with rules, meanings, and classifications in *language* [italics added] that give clues to the ways in which people perceive and understand their experiences, [c]ognitive anthropologists define culture as a “blueprint for action” (not action itself); a “grammar”, or a system of rules, for behaviour; and a “code” for anthropologists to break (Nanda, 1994, p. 55).

In other words, for ethnoscientists, cultures were “epistemologically in the same realm as language...inferred ideational codes lying behind the realm of observable events” (Keesing, 1974, p. 77). The discovery of the structural principles of specific cultures was sought by a careful analysis of ethnographic data and to avoid imposing his/her classifications, the new ethnographers used only the native language to get the informants’ classification.

Contemporary Anthropology

Another approach, which emerged in the early 1970s, also addresses ideological rather than material aspects of culture and is known as symbolic, or interpretive anthropology. Influenced by postmodernism, interpretive anthropology is a major

contemporary approach to the study of culture, along with cultural materialism. Interpretivists conceptualize culture as a system of shared symbols and meanings. Focusing on how human beings perceive, classify, and attribute cultural meaning to the physical environment and social behaviour which surround them, interpretive anthropology emphasizes the mental and symbolic aspects of culture as these are understood by the members of a society (Nanda, 1994).

The most prominent advocate of the symbolic approach is the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. One of his most persistent interests as anthropologist has been a redefinition of the concept of culture. In fact, the “fuzziness” (Rice, 1980, p. 3) of “culture” as a concept in anthropology has been a recurrent theme in the field since the 1950s well into the present day (cf. Clifford, 1988). Geertz points to the sterility of seeking common denominators in the substance of culture and, dissatisfied with the “theoretical diffusion” (1973, p. 5) of the term used to designate a rather “complex whole” (Tylor, 1871), argues that “even a...constricted...concept of culture, which is at least internally coherent...is...an improvement.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). This is a view I endorse, especially as I think of the need for a conceptualization of culture that could be applicable in the language education context. Defining culture as “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action” (ibid., p. 145), Geertz also suggests that the aim of anthropology is to understand the meanings of cultural acts. I would like to argue later in this study that this should also be the aim of culture exploration in the language classroom. With this regard I will elaborate elsewhere on Geertz’ concept of culture.

Geertz maintains as well that human behaviour is symbolic, i.e. it signifies something to those who engage in it. Culture consists of “socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people engage in social action” (1973, p. 123). and it is through behaviour as social action that culture is articulated. But culture is not a power that causes behaviour, instead it is a *context* within which behaviour can be understood. And since,

according to Geertz, for native participants in a culture doing something is indeed *saying* something, culture becomes a text to be interpreted. This view of culture as a text and not a way of adapting to an environment shifts the research interests of interpretivists to an in-depth analysis of a particular cultural system instead of a search for laws that should explain differences and similarities between cultures. Besides, interpretive anthropology attempts not merely to describe cultures as abstract systems, but to understand a culture as the experience of being a member of that culture, particularly through ethnographic fieldwork (Marcus & Fisher, 1986).

Culture as a Contested Reality

Current inquiries in interpretive anthropology, however, ask questions about how the ethnographer's *own* cultural system of meanings affects the interpretation and representation of other cultures (cf. Clifford, 1988). That there are some theoretical problems in ethnographic description has been recognized by anthropologists since the 1950s. Ethnographers have known for long that their perceptions as outsiders inevitably limit their descriptions of alien cultures (cf. Wallace, 1961). Besides, since the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropologists have seen the essence of their research method not in producing catalogues or encyclopedias but in contextualizing elements of culture and making systematic connections among them (Marcus & Fisher, 1986). But it has been only for the last decade that a discussion of the postmodern crisis of representation has been going on. (This discussion has been affected by the insistence of Marxist anthropologists, prominent since the 1960s, on power inequality and conflict as a normal part of human culture.) Marcus and Fisher (1986) point out that with the emergence of interpretive anthropology and the conceptualization of culture primarily as systems of meaning, ethnography as a process of gaining knowledge about a culture, and especially the process of interpretation, have come to focus. Classic forms of ethnographic writing are now

regarded as appropriating and objectifying the other, thus obscuring the power relations between the researcher and the object of study. Ethnographic rhetorical styles are viewed as reinforcing the ethnographer's authority and producing representations that were taken as the truth about other cultures. But because "self-other relations [have come to be seen as] matters of power and rhetoric...[e]xpectations about authenticity in culture [are] thrown into doubt" (Clifford, 1988, p. 10). Besides, cultural symbols and performances are being viewed as taking shape in situations of power and dominance (ibid., p. 94). Thus Marcus and Fisher argue that "the production of cultural meanings and symbols, as a central practice or process in social action, deserves more emphasis at the moment than the systematic exegesis of symbols and meanings alone" (1986, p. 85). In other words, there is currently in cultural anthropology an urge to construe cultural meanings and symbols as inherently a matter of political and economic interests as well as an explicit concern to tie interpretive ethnographic practice with the political, economic, and historic implications of its research projects.

Summary

The discussion so far has shown that the history of anthropological inquiries could be regarded as a history of grappling with and recently problematizing the concept of culture. For people trained in linguistics, who are used to classify knowledge in binary systems, it will be clear that two broad categories of conceptualizations of culture seem to have emerged and reemerged through the short history of cultural anthropology. The one could be termed idealistic and the other - materialistic. Idealists approach culture as the design or mental code for proper behaviour, as the idea of an artifact and not the artifact itself. In their analysis of a culture they seek to interpret the culture bearer's ideas of societal values and norms usually via an emic approach, i.e. by employing concepts and distinctions that are appropriate and meaningful to the natives themselves. In addition,

idealists tend to adhere to a relativist view of culture arguing that it is a totality which should be examined only in its own terms. Materialists, on the other hand, maintain that culture is observable in behaviour and products of behaviour. Employing a comparative method, they attempt to extract institutions, processes, and items from their cultural context and to relate them to institutions, processes and items in other sociocultural contexts. Interested in the similarities, as well as the differences between cultures, materialists approach cultural analysis etically, i.e. they use categories and rules appropriate to the observer of a culture in an attempt to generate scientific theories about the causes of cultural variation. An important concern for anthropologists, which I have not addressed previously, has been conceptualizing how ways of life change. Idealists and materialists differ also with respect to their views of cultural change. Materialists view change primarily as a process of technological innovation, as adaptation in the direction of equilibrium with a society's environment. Idealists, on the other hand, perceive change as the individual and collective redefinition of values and symbols, arguing that change is effected by individuals and groups making choices in an effort to construct a new socio-cultural organization viewed as more adequate in certain respects than the existing one (cf. Wallace, 1961).

Altogether, a conclusion which could be reached, is that up until the 1960s anthropologists viewed culture primarily as “featuring conceptions of organic structure, functional integration, wholeness, or historical continuity” (Clifford, 1988, p. 131). However, with the emergence of the view of cultures as texts behavioural scientists seem to have stepped aside to give way to cultural interpreters (Marcus & Fisher, 1986). Developments in anthropological theory in the last three decades point to a “shift in stress from behaviour and social structure, undergirded by the goal of a natural science of society, to meaning, symbols, and language, and to a...recognition...that social life must fundamentally be conceived as the negotiation of meanings” (ibid., p. 26). Indeed, anthropology has come to view culture “as a contested reality among various possible interpretations, espoused by parties with different situations of power relative to one

another” (ibid., p. 123). Therefore, we could probably suggest that at present anthropology has renounced its search for an ultimate truth and a single path to reach it and has settled to view as the only truth about culture it being a composite of multiple realities which cannot be described from a unitary perspective.

Anthropological Culture and Culture Teaching in the Language Classroom

What effect have these developments in anthropology had on second language education theorists interested in culture teaching? In the next chapters I will exemplify with greater detail the impact of anthropology on culture teaching. However, a brief overview, which will set the background for the discussion that follows, seems imperative at this stage of the study.

Second language educationists interested in culture shifted from a humanistic understanding of the concept, and embraced an anthropological one in the mid 1950s of this century. From that time onward, almost up to the mid 1980s, culture was an omnibus term in language education; the view of culture endorsed by language theoreticians overwhelmingly linked culture to behaviour and showed total disregard for culture theories which conceptualize culture in ideational terms. Some culture education theorists like Brooks (1964, 1968, 1974), for example, whose works will be examined in the next chapter, seemed to conceptualize culture as a “complex whole”. In anthropology in the 1950s, descriptive definitions of culture, which enumerate the content of culture, were shown to be “never exhaustive” because “[c]ulture is an abstraction and the listing of any relatively concrete phenomena confuses this issue” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 46). Despite this fact Brooks, as well as other theorists, seemed preoccupied with fixing the term culture in concrete phenomena. Other theoreticians, like Seelye (1974, 1993), for example, argued for the need to explain to students the existence of culture in functional terms in order to make the target culture less threatening. In anthropological debates,

however, it was pointed out early on that functional conceptualizations of culture “disregard the fact that cultures create needs as well as provide means of fulfilling them” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 57). This and other reservations about functional conceptualizations, which will be addressed in a subsequent chapter, were obviously disregarded by Seelye. In addition, conceptualizations of culture as a “design for living” and a “patterned totality” have had the greatest influence on developments in culture teaching in the language classroom. However, theoreticians like Brooks (1968, 1971), Damen (1987), Lado (1957), Lafayette (1978), Nostrand (1974, 1978), Rivers (1981), Seelye (1974, 1993) all seem to have taken lightly the anthropologists’ understanding that while “[t]he objects and events from which [anthropologists] make [their] abstractions do have an observable existence”, “culture as a concrete observable entity does not exist anywhere” (Kluckhohn, 1962, p. 45). Instead, as it will become clear in the next chapters, they appear to have eagerly identified culture with observable behaviour and have focused on culture teaching techniques that would assumingly allow students to understand the new for them culture and behave “appropriately” in it. Furthermore, as it will become evident in the discussion to follow, there appears to be a tension between most language education theoreticians’ conceptualizations of culture as behaviour and their constant referral to cultural meaning in language. Thus, it seems odd that up to the mid 1980s, most language education theorists interested in culture endorsed anthropological views on culture which do not account for the relationship between language and culture and there is almost no mentioning of ideational theories of culture in their works. If we recall, structuralism, ethnoscience, and interpretive anthropology, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, are all informed by linguistic methods and overwhelmingly link language to culture. Why it is that literature on culture teaching had to wait for the works of Robinson (1985), Zarate (1986), or Byram (1989) to search for connections between cultural instruction in language classes and anthropological theories which illustrate the relationship between language and culture (and

refer to familiar for language educationists linguistic models of analysis) is quite puzzling for me.

For the purposes of language pedagogy, one conclusion which could be reached at the end of the discussion on culture in anthropology is that there is a myriad of definitions of culture and language education theorists will benefit from acquainting themselves with those. For example, definitions of culture which emphasize tradition or social heritage focus on the fact that human beings act on the basis of tradition and have a social heritage springing from membership in a group with its own history. Such conceptualizations are very conducive to understanding the process of enculturation, i.e. acquiring one's native culture, as well as to explaining the resistance of adult second language students to the ways of the target culture (cf. Kramsch, 1993a). Other definitions, which place an emphasis on culture as being learnt, stress that culture is non-genetic and transmitted through inter-human learning. Such conceptualizations are conducive to tying the process of culture acquisition to current ideas in sociocultural theories of learning (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991) and thus seem to be significant for understanding the mediated character of second language learning which will be addressed later in this study.

A second conclusion refers to a contradiction with which, I believe, teachers and learners have to learn to live. On one hand, there is a need to keep in mind that, with a view to the preceding discussion of a multitude of definitions present in anthropological literature, adopting a single definition of culture would be a gross oversimplification. A single definition would simply not account for the complexity of the phenomenon of culture. On the other hand, however, a constricted internally coherent conceptualization of the term is necessary for its productive use in the classroom. In this sense, I find Geertz' (1973) definition of culture as the fabric of meaning in people's life satisfactory. It seems to offer a compromise which could relieve teachers from the current burden of presenting a bulk of cultural information with a view to familiarize students with dubious generalized cultural patterns or themes, while at the same time allows them to be rigorous in their

search for and the negotiation of the cultural meaning of any utterance or activity addressed in the classroom. The impact of anthropology on culture teaching will be further explored in the chapters to follow.

Chapter Three

Setting the Stage for Ambiguities in Culture Teaching

We cannot teach a language for long without coming face to face with social context factors which have bearing on language and language learning (Stern, 1983, p. 191).

Language cannot be separated ...from the culture in which it is deeply embedded (Rivers, 1981, p. 316).

Despite its wide acknowledgment today, culture has taken a long time to become part of language teaching, and even nowadays its place in the language classroom is not taken for granted as is, for example, the place of grammar. As Stern (1992) points out culture has always played a subordinate role in language instruction. In addition, there have been many controversies and ambiguities with regard to what culture teaching in language classes involves. This and the next chapters will attempt to analyze some of those controversies from a historiographic and critical point of view. The analysis will be grounded in the discussion offered in the previous chapter. I will try to demonstrate that many language education theorists interested in culture have only picked pieces of the anthropological puzzle and seem to have ignored in their conceptualizations of culture the lack of consensus about definitions and approaches, as well as important debates in anthropology. Occasionally, the critique offered will be grounded in logic or in my experience as a learner and teacher of English. This chapter examines conceptualizations of culture found in the writings of language education theorists till the late 1970s. It points to the ambivalences encountered in these writings which, I believe, have set up the stage for teachers' reluctance to address culture in their classrooms.

Historical Perspectives

The Humanistic Approach to Culture

If we try to trace the historical developments in teaching culture in the language classroom, we could perhaps say that a concern with culture dates back to the Reform movement of the end of the last century (Buttjes, 1991a; Stern, 1983). In the nineteenth century, language study was viewed only as preparatory for the study of literature and the main emphasis was upon formal study of language forms, mainly found in written texts, via the grammar-translation method predominant at that time. The reformers, however, (amidst whom were academic scholars like Sweet, Vietor, Passy, and Jespersen, as well as teaching practitioners) focused on spoken discourse and recognized the primacy of speech in language study. They argued that the language learning situation needs to be one of language *use* and placed an emphasis on the authentic connected text as the "heart" (White, 1988) of the teaching-learning process, rejecting the practice of working with isolated sentences. In addition, texts were not to be seen merely as offering practice of the grammar of a language, but as sources of knowledge about a country and its people. The idea that an important purpose of language learning was to learn about the speakers' culture was evident in some of the Reformers' writings. For example, in 1904, in his book *How to Teach a Foreign Language*, Jespersen pointed out that

the highest purpose in the teaching of languages may perhaps be said to be the access to the best thoughts and institutions of a foreign nation, its literature, culture - in short, the spirit of the nation in the widest sense of the word (cited in Rivers, 1981, p. 314).

Such a view reveals a somewhat humanistic approach to culture, similar to the poet and critic Matthew Arnold's definition of culture as "a pursuit of total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters that concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold, 1869 cited in Brooks, 1974, p. 25). This conceptualization of

"culture" seemed to dominate language teaching for the first half of the 20th century. It could be associated with the initial meaning of the word in European languages and shows a lack of awareness of developments in anthropology and anthropological conceptualizations of culture. Nevertheless, Buttjes believes that it "was the modern language reform movement ...that paved the way for our present concern of mediating language and culture" (Buttjes, 1991a, p. 8).

The first part of the twentieth century saw some "declarations of intent" (Byram, Esarte-Sarries, and Taylor, 1991a, p. 3) with regard to practices in culture teaching in the language classroom. Stern (1983) points to a British report, *Modern Studies*, prepared at the end of World War I which, according to him, reveals "a deliberate emphasis on the cultural aspect" (p. 247) of language teaching at school and university. Rivers (1981) quotes from a document of the Secondary Education Board of Milton, Massachusetts, from the interwar years which implies that the primary value of language study is "the breaking down of the barriers of provincialism and the building up of the spirit of international understanding and friendliness" (p. 314). Teachers believed that through acquainting students with the intellectual and artistic accomplishments of a nation they were teaching its culture. During the same period language programs in France were supplemented by the study of "civilisation" (Stern, 1983, p. 247). Altogether,

before W.W.I and in the interwar years it was beginning to be recognized that in order to make sense of a particular language some systematic knowledge of the country and its people was needed. [The focus was on] the study of the history, geography, and institutions of the country [and] on the great accomplishments of the target community in the arts, ...as well as in scientific discovery, sports, [or other areas] (Stern, 1992, p. 207).

In other words, during this period there was a vague awareness of a relationship between language and culture and for the purposes of language teaching, culture was equated with knowledge about a country and its people and encompassed a vast number of topics lumped together on seemingly intuitive grounds.

The Concept of Culture Teaching in Germany

Similarly to the scientific concept of culture, the concept of culture teaching also seems to have originated in Germany (Buttjes, 1991b; Byram et al., 1991a; Stern, 1983 and 1992). There the pedagogical concern for culture teaching has a much longer history than in other countries and the discussions of what it involves are more complex and subtle than elsewhere (Byram, 1989, p. 61). Buttjes points out that "[t]he introduction of foreign languages as a school subject and academic discipline, and the beginnings of the early cultural studies debate coincided with the appearance of the German-Prussian nation-state after 1870" (Buttjes, 1991b, p. 50) and in Germany "during the first half of the twentieth century culture was never doubted as part of foreign language curricula" (ibid., p. 49). What is more, the changes that accompanied culture teaching reflected the social and political history of the country. Perhaps because Germany "has been and continues to be the country with the most lively and prolific debate" (Byram et al., 1991a, p. 2), Stern pays special attention to the tradition of *Kulturkunde* (history of ideas) and *Landeskunde* (area study) in Germany in his work *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (1983).

In the interwar years *Kulturkunde* in foreign language teaching meant to some language educators treating language in relation to a foreign literature, history and geography, with the aim to widen the scope of language teaching. Others interpreted *Kulturkunde* as the history of ideas of another country and in teaching English as a foreign language, for example, focused on a specific historical period and discussed its philosophical and literary achievements within context. A further trend of thought, apparently influenced by Benedict's (1934) search for a culture's "themes", strove to discover the underlying "structure" or "mind" of a foreign nation (*Geist* or *Seele*) and to view historical events, current social facts, and literary and artistic works in the light of this underlying principle (Stern, 1983, p. 248).

In other countries during the same period culture teaching was not unknown either. But it was less developed and less clearly defined than in Germany. ...[I]n Britain and America [it] focused on history, institutions, and customs as well as on the distinctive contributions of the foreign country to human civilization. The teaching of culture in this sense was regarded as an educationally valuable addition to the customary language and literary studies, but it was recognized that in practice it played a subordinate role (Stern, 1983, p. 249).

Culture Teaching Terminology

Before continuing with the anthropological influences on the teaching of culture which had an impact on language teaching after World War II in replacing a humanistic approach to culture, it is perhaps reasonable to point to the different terminology used in the various countries mentioned so far. It suggests differences in emphasis and demonstrates that this issue has occupied the minds of language educators everywhere.

The best established term is that used in Germany, "*Landeskunde*", meaning literally "knowledge of the country". The French term "*civilisation*" refers in a broad sense to the way of life and institutions of a particular country. In [North America] there [seems to be] a tendency to use the word "culture" to refer to learning about customs and behaviours, thus concentrating on daily life. In Britain, the phrase used ...is usually "background studies", referring to any knowledge which supplements language learning, largely concentrated on information about customs and daily life with some reference to social institutions... [or] "area studies"...created to distinguish courses in higher education which are not devoted exclusively to literature (Byram, 1989, p. 58).

The term "cultural studies" used to denote "any information, knowledge or attitudes about the foreign culture which is evident during foreign language teaching" (Byram, 1989, p. 3) is one that Byram favours in his works on culture teaching in secondary schools in Britain, as well as Brögger (1992) who discusses issues pertaining to culture teaching in Scandinavian countries. As I am mostly interested in the developments in culture teaching in the adult second language classroom in the North American context, I will focus the following discussion on it.

Post World War II Developments

Anthropological Influences

During W.W.II American war-time language courses saw the need to turn to the social sciences in order to prepare the American army to deal both linguistically and culturally with the "mysterious" American enemies and the equally "mysterious" American allies (Damen, 1987; Stern, 1983). Consequently, around World War II "language teaching theorists began to recognize that anthropology and sociology might offer a theoretical framework for teaching about culture and society" (Stern, 1983, p. 250). As a result, language pedagogy in the postwar world took a stronger stand on the need to include culture in language classes. However, a review of the language education literature focusing on teaching culture in anthropological terms suggests that few theorists have addressed the issue. The discussion which follows examines the most comprehensive analyses of the place of "anthropological" culture in language classrooms.

In the 1950s the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in the USA showed an interest in the subject. In 1955 a session concerned with the "Place of Culture and Civilization in Language Teaching" was held. The assumption that "foreign language study gives an appreciation and understanding of other peoples and other cultures" (Wylie, 1955, p.1), although perhaps taken too readily for granted, was clearly stated and it was therefore argued that culture has a place in the language classroom. Some of the questions, which the conference committee raised, referred directly to Tylor's (1871) definition of a culture as a "complex whole": "What authority is there to portray for us a valid description of the complex whole of any culture?" and "How do you go about teaching an understanding of the complex whole?" (Toohey, 1979, p. 1).

These questions clearly indicate that language teaching theorists were beginning to embrace an anthropological view of the concept and looked up to social scientists for guidance in dealing with culture in their classrooms. The social scientists who took part in the conference, however, warned against the forming of "an exaggerated notion of [their] ability...to supply neatly packaged and fully guaranteed doses of insight into alien cultures" (Wylie, 1955, p. 5). This warning does not seem to have been taken into account by language teaching theorists at that time and even occasionally at present. Instead language educators began to grapple with questions of culture teaching methodology hoping in a positivistic manner that eventually anthropologists would tell them what exactly culture involves.

Lado's Focus on Comparisons between Cultures

Among the first post-war language theorists who were concerned with culture was Robert Lado. His discussion on culture teaching focused on ways to compare different cultures. Lado claimed that "culture" is "synonymous with the 'ways of a people'" and represents a structured system of "patterned behavior" (Lado, 1957, p. 52-53). In other words, Lado equated culture with behaviour in the tradition of many anthropologists from the 1940s (cf. Murphy, 1971). He also argued that a comparison between cultures is possible if we have a more accurate understanding of each of them. Lado maintained that an understanding of a culture could be achieved because:

Within a culture we can assume that when an individual observes a significant patterned form in a patterned distribution spot, it will have a complex of culturally patterned meanings for him.... We will expect trouble when the same form has different classification or meaning in two cultures[,] ...when the same meaning in two cultures is associated with different forms....[or] when a pattern that has the same form and the same meaning shows different distribution (Lado, 1957, p. 55-59).

Clearly Lado was grappling with the relationship between language and culture and the manifestation of cultural *meanings* but as he tried to fit them in "patterned *behaviour*" he

failed to operationalize a concept of culture in a way that could be productive in the language classroom and thus set the stage for ambiguities in treating culture in language courses. That Lado was indeed influenced in his approach to culture by developments in anthropology is also obvious in his suggestion that "[t]o prepare for a comparison of another culture with the native one it may be valuable to use the informant approach coupled with systematic observation of the culture in its normal undisturbed operation." (ibid., p. 61). I assume that he was referring to the ethnographic method used in anthropology. However, he did not make it clear how such an approach could be used by teachers or students of languages.

Language as Culture Enters the Scene

In 1960 another Northeast Conference focused on "Culture in Language Learning". The editorial committee clearly stated in the Foreword to its reports that the conference did not deal with a humanistic view of culture "as the refinement and discipline of our moral and intellectual nature" but used the term to refer "to the sum total of patterned manners, customs, norms and values which are characteristic of a society" (Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1960, p. ii). Their discussion of an anthropological concept of culture, however, was rather simplified and mainly offered examples of what could be regarded as cultural behaviour. Indeed, the focus was specifically on what were considered "categories of behaviour", lumping quite ambiguously and arbitrarily "[e]ating, kin obligations, prestige and power relations, and attitudes toward nature"(ibid., p. 22) or "norms of behaviour" which the authors simply pointed out were different for different categories of people in a society.

In my opinion, the most significant discussion at the conference was the one focusing on "language as culture" (ibid., p. 29). Indeed, there was a strong direct acknowledgment by language educators there as to the need to take into account the

relationship between language and culture in language teaching. The authors claimed that three propositions that could be made about language and culture had particular pedagogical implications. These were: "(1) Language is a part of culture.... (2) Language conveys culture so that the language teacher is also of necessity a teacher of culture. (3) Language is itself subject to culturally conditioned attitudes and beliefs, which cannot be ignored in the language classroom." (ibid.). Language was viewed as "a part of culture in the sense that every language is a complex of acquired behavior patterns, of which its native users are largely unconscious." (ibid.). This view clearly points to a behaviouristic conceptualization of both language and culture. Language was said to convey culture because it is "only in a very limited sense a medium for communicating 'universal' messages[;]...it communicates the whole complex of customs, attitudes, environmental factors, and beliefs that characterize its speakers." (ibid., p. 33). I consider this statement a mainstay for the treatment of culture in language classes and thus agree with the authors that "[t]he language teacher cannot get very far without also exposing his students to a new culture." (ibid., p. 34). However, the lack of elaboration on how language communicates "the complex whole" leaves the topic undeveloped. I also agree with the authors that "our goal [is] to make our students feel at ease in using the language ...[and] that this is impossible without also making them feel 'at home' in the culture." (ibid., p. 36). Likewise, however, the authors did not clarify in detail how this was going to be carried out and thus leave teachers only with a vague idea as to what they should aim at in culture teaching in their classrooms. With regard to the last proposition, the authors argued for a conscious attitude toward the nature of language and of culture which does not seem to have been taken up strongly by the educators who followed. An important notion which suggests growing support for anthropological conceptualizations of culture among language educators is evident in the authors' view that a culture should be approached from the point of view of "cultural relativism" and studied in its own terms "in order to comprehend the actions and ideas of its bearers" (ibid., p. 26).

Brook's Conceptualizations of Culture and Culture Teaching

Definitions of Culture

A major language teaching theoretician who emphasized the need for an anthropological approach to the study of culture was Nelson Brooks (1964, 1968, 1971, 1975). Brooks made a clear distinction between a humanistic conception of culture which refers to the "great books", "great ideas", and "artistic endeavours" (Toohey, 1979, p. 5) of a nation, called "Olympian" culture, and an anthropological concept of culture, that focuses on the way of life of a people, which he called "Hearthstone" culture (Brooks, 1971). The humanistically trained language teachers widely accepted the need to explore the great achievements of a people in the classroom on the basis of a historically developed tradition in foreign language education which, as we saw, could be traced back to the nineteenth century. Thus Brooks felt the urgency to give prominence to the "new frontier: Hearthstone culture" (Brooks, 1971, p. 57) in his works.

Brooks not only aimed at making teachers aware of the new frontier in language teaching, which involved viewing culture anthropologically, he also argued that in various social science and humanity disciplines "the concept [of culture] must be developed according to the needs and insights of those immediately concerned" (1968, p. 204). Thus he saw a need for a definition of culture that is widely agreed upon among language educationists and offered definitions and descriptions which, he hoped, "will be immediately useful [and] ...meaningful to classroom teachers of foreign languages" (ibid.).

Unfortunately, Brooks started a trend in language teaching of looking at the culture concept unproblematically by claiming that "[c]ultural anthropologists are ...reasonably clear as to what they mean by the word *culture* ... in their discipline." (ibid., p. 205). The discussion offered in the previous chapter, however, indicates otherwise. Brooks argued that the conception of culture that could be useful for language teachers should be "a

synthesis of culture as viewed by the scientist on the one hand and by the humanist on the other into an orderly and coherent program" (ibid., p. 208). Identifying five different meanings of culture: biological growth, personal refinement, literature and the fine arts, patterns for living, and the sum total of a way of life, Brooks argued that the "least well understood" was the fourth meaning of the word (ibid., p. 210). He defined patterns of living as referring "to the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them"(ibid.). This is a very vague and hardly usable conceptualization and its further elaboration does not simplify matters:

What is central in [this meaning of culture] is the interchange and the reciprocal effect of the social pattern and the individual upon each other ... what one is "expected" to think, believe, say, do, eat, wear, pay, endure, resent, honor, laugh at, fight for, and worship, in typical life situations (ibid., p.211).

The Profile of a Culture

Brooks also attempted to come up with "[t]he profile of a culture" (ibid., p. 212). He presented a scheme developed by anthropologist E.T.Hall (1959), who tried to map out the "focal points of critical importance in the fabric of a culture's makeup" (Brooks, 1968, p. 212). Although Brooks seemed to consider the so-called ten primary message systems of Hall's scheme, i.e. : Interaction, Association, Subsistence, Bisexuality, Territoriality, Temporality, Learning, Play, Defense, and Exploitation as useful for language instructors who wished to obtain a comprehensive and comparative view of their native and target cultures, he suggested that this model was limited. Its limitation was due to the fact that "there are many matters that are not brought up for consideration which may appear to those who teach the young equally important in mapping or charting the way of life of a people or a nation" (ibid., p. 213). This view suggests the arbitrariness of generalized schemes of culture, but instead of developing this point further Brooks offered another, somewhat abstract, and indeed quite arbitrary list of "matters that appear central and critical

in the analysis of a culture" (ibid.). It includes: Symbolism, Value, Authority, Order, Ceremony, Love, Honor, Humor, Beauty, Spirit. This list not only refers to categories which are likely to be pursued by teachers from a humanistic point of view, thus telling us little about "the patterns of living" in everyday life, but also is not precise enough as to give teachers more than very general directions regarding what to include in their teaching of culture. No materials for addressing these matters were suggested, nor ways to go about teaching them. It seems logical that such a lumped and confused view of culture has done little to change the situation in the classroom and has failed to accord culture a prominent place in the process of language instruction.

Topics for Culture Teaching

Elsewhere Brooks argued that "knowledge of culture is best imparted as a corollary or an obligato to the business of language learning" (Brooks, 1964, p. 123). Thus he viewed presentation of a foreign culture in the classroom as five-minute "hors d'oeuvres" (ibid., p. 124) on various cultural topics. The list of topics that he offered is overwhelming. It contains over 60 topics and I had real difficulty in trying to organize them at least in several categories: verbal behaviour (e.g. greetings, patterns of politeness, intonation patterns); artistic and other achievements (e.g. folklore, music, sports); abstract values (e.g. comradeship, cleanliness); daily activities (e.g. appointments, family meals); typical locations (e.g. cafes, parks). It seems obvious that there was no attempt to provide a unified concept of culture and again there was no indication where the information on these topics was to come from. As Stern (1983) suggests,

although it is claimed that culture is "patterned" and offers an integrated whole, in effect, what is presented is often a far from integrated miscellany of categories. No attempt is made to arrange them in any order, to control the degree of abstraction of the different headings, [or] to suggest principles of selection (p. 252).

Facing such a mixture of topics many teachers might find it difficult to know where to begin, especially as there were no instructions in terms of how to approach these topics.

In fact, practitioners would most probably assume that "anything goes". Perhaps because of such attempts by teaching theorists at simplifying matters and yet demanding that teachers be well informed and aware of "the grand design to which all parts are related" (Brooks, 1971, p. 61), culture has not occupied a prominent place in the classroom.

Culture Teaching as Presentation of Cultural "Facts"

Brooks started another unfortunate tradition in the treatment of anthropological culture in language classrooms by disregarding the difficulties in providing cultural description and the problematic nature of such description recognized by anthropologists by that time and pointed to earlier in this study. Indeed, if we look at the questions that accompany some of Brooks' topics, we can clearly discern the assumption that culture can be taught by imparting "facts", and knowledge is to come essentially on the basis of comparison and contrast of these facts with facts from the native culture. E.g.: "*Medicine and doctors* : What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? What is the equivalent of the American drugstore? How does one obtain the services of a physician?" (1964, p. 126). The assumption of equivalence or comparability, which Brooks made, appears simplistic and ethnocentric. Furthermore, it is clear again that too much is demanded from the teachers. They are assumed to be knowledgeable enough to supply the necessary data. Thus their task really appears overwhelming and impossible to achieve. Besides, the reasoning that classroom relations are those of neutral suppliers (teachers) and receivers (students) of information, unaffected in their understanding of a cultural activity by prior experience, seems obvious.

Patterns of Behaviour or Cultural Meanings

Another controversy in the treatment of culture in language teaching, which I pointed to in my discussion of Lado, is present in Brooks' works as well. On one hand, Brooks defined culture as patterns of behaviour. On the other hand, he pointed to the relationship between culture and language:

Language is a segment of and a bearer of culture and should be treated culturally and used by the students with concern for the message it bears (1971, p. 57-58). We have not taught even the beginnings of a foreign language unless we have taught what it means to those whose native language it is[;]...we cannot know what the new language means to the native speaker until we know in some systematic and fairly extensive way the meaning he [sic] attaches to the words and phrases he [sic] uses (1968, p. 206).

This line of thought resembles an ideational conception of culture characteristic for anthropologists who view culture and language as closely related. However, Brooks did not elaborate on it in his works; nor did he discuss how teachers could go about treating language culturally. Instead, Brooks' treatment of culture at one and the same time as observable in behaviour and as transmitted through language is rather ambivalent and confusing. Overall, Brooks' works seem to show inconsistency in the research priorities of language education theorists interested in culture. Brooks not only distinguished between culture with small "c", also called "Hearthstone culture" and Culture with capital "C", or "Olympian culture", he also distinguished between deep and formal culture, discussed five different ways of conceptualizing culture (as we have already seen), and at a certain point talked about individual and institutional aspects of culture (Brooks, 1975). Of course, depending on one's research perspectives and fields of interest, all these uses and meanings of culture are legitimate. However, in my opinion, such an all-encompassing approach is counterproductive in second language education. It could only confuse teachers interested in the area. Altogether, I think that one of the reasons culture has failed to occupy the

minds, hearts, and activities of language teachers is this amount of terminology which does nothing to help them in their day to day dealings with the issue of culture.

Nostrand's Conceptualization of Culture and Culture Teaching

The Emergent Model

Another prominent theoretician in the area of culture teaching, Howard Nostrand, who was writing in the 1970s, believed that for culture study to proceed in a systematic and comprehensive manner, a model for the analysis of culture, which demonstrates its integrative aspect, was necessary. This was because "[t]o the extent that a culture is an organic whole, an enumeration of its organs fails to lead toward an understanding of its nature" (1974, p. 301). In an attempt to overcome the fragmentation which results from the presentation of isolated bits of cultural information, Nostrand (1978) developed the so-called Emergent Model, clearly influenced by anthropological models for the analysis of culture (cf. Hall, 1959). The Emergent Model organized approximately 30 topics under the following headings: Culture, Society, Conflicts, Ecology and technology, Individual, and Cross-cultural environment. Nostrand maintained that his model is applicable to all cultures and provides a proper emphasis in the sense that it is amenable to a teachable understanding of a culture (1978). A concise overview of Nostrand's Emergent Model is offered in Seelye (1993):

1. The Culture. Value system, habits of thought, assumptions about reality, verifiable knowledge, art forms, language, paralanguage, and kinesics.
2. The Society. Organized under institutions: familial, religious, economic-occupational, political and judicial, educational, intellectual-aesthetic, recreational, the mass media, stratification and mobility, social properties (le savoir-vivre, status by age, group and sex, ethnic/religious and other minorities).
3. Conflicts. Interpersonal and intergroup conflict, intrapersonal conflict.
4. The Ecology and Technology. Exploitation of physical resources, exploitation of plants and animals, demographic control, health care and accident prevention, settlement and territorial organization, travel and transportation.
5. The Individual. Integration at the organismic level, intrapersonal variability, interpersonal variation.

6. The Cross-Cultural Environment. Attitudes toward other cultures and toward international and supranational organizations (Seelye, 1993, p.133).

I agree with Stern that "[i]n spite of the merits of this scheme, it is questionable whether its wide categories, which can be suitable for comprehensive anthropological inquiries, are always sufficiently relevant, manageable, and applicable in the context of language teaching" (1983, p. 253). Besides, it is clear from this classification that Nostrand assumed that if students are presented with or engaged in the search for *information* about these headings, they will be able to come to an understanding of a target culture. In other words, the idea that culture could be taught via imparting knowledge on various topics, once they are integrated tightly in a comprehensive and structured inventory, began to gain a firm ground in language education theory. It could be argued that Nostrand has claimed that structured descriptive knowledge of a phenomenon should be coupled with experience of this same phenomenon for students to come to understand it (Nostrand, 1974, p. 274). However, he clearly downplayed the role of the students' experiencing of culture when he suggested that

if we give experience of some situation in a foreign culture but leave the learner to draw his own inferences about what is going on, he will draw the wrong inferences from his own culture rather than the truer inferences we can give him (Nostrand, 1966, p. 23).

Likewise, when discussing the experiential techniques which he suggested for culture teaching, among which he placed dialogues, Nostrand maintained that "[i]f one samples students' ideas about what patterns they imagine are illustrated in a dialogue, one will be convinced that *accurate knowledge* [italics added] should be provided on main points as soon as possible" (1974, p. 285). This view seems to indicate that Nostrand assumed teachers to be the authoritative figures who *transfer* unquestionable knowledge about a target culture to passive students whose main role is to receive it and absorb it.

The Culture Subsystem

A more thorough analysis of Nostrand's Culture subsystem exemplifies the becoming-chronic ambiguity in the conceptualization of culture which characterizes the writings of most language education theoreticians interested in culture almost till the mid 1980s. Nostrand believed that special attention should be paid to three topics in this subsystem: values, habits of thought and assumptions about reality (or world view). He argued that they constitute the 'ground meaning' on which culture members base their lives. They are "the basis of what makes sense to bearers of the culture and a 'vantage ground' [for the outsider] from which to understand the *meaning* [italics added] which an act or event takes on in that culture" (1978, p. 280). Once again such reasoning resembles an ideational, or more specifically, a Geertzian conceptualization of "culture". Indeed, Nostrand seemed to be aiming at a semiotic approach that would address the cultural *meaning* of, or the signs behind the activities of culture bearers. Instead of focusing on symbolic meaning, however, he searched, as we will see further, for set conventions, as well as for categories to *name* habits or assumptions on the premise that once we are familiar with those we will be able to communicate in and understand a culture. Nostrand did not offer operative definitions of the three main cultural elements. Value is seen as "a pervasive, or recurrent motive, need, aspiration or other preoccupying concern"; habits of thought refer to "cognitive style and modes of procedure", while world picture is "[b]eliefs, assumptions of fact" (1978, p. 282-284). In other words, teachers (and students) are to make sense of three abstract categories whose unification under the banner "ground meaning" of a culture does not simplify matters. Besides, these notions become even more complicated as the "ground meaning" of a culture is equated with the main themes of a culture:

A working concept of the ground meaning can be further unified: if we add to each major value the habits and assumptions of fact essential for a full perception of the

value, we arrive at the culture's main themes. These themes, with their interaction of cultural support or conflict, are probably the most concise of all descriptive knowledge that is true to fact enough to be useful (*ibid.*, p. 280).

Culture Themes

Although the explanation quoted above of what themes involve does not appear particularly useful for the practical dealings of classroom teachers, Nostrand's attempt to *name* the main themes in French culture seems to have been considered a significant advancement in culture teaching (Damen, 1987; Rivers, 1981; Seelye, 1993). Clearly influenced by the writings of the anthropologist Benedict, Nostrand claimed that a society is characterized by a few basic themes which give it unity and specific character and saw themes as "the way of formulating a 'lifestyle' of a people" (1966, p. 20). Of course, as Mounin (1984) warns, the search for generalizations about a society could lead to clichés (in Stern, 1992). Besides, if we examine a formulation of a theme in French culture given by Nostrand we could perhaps be more aware of the danger of setting in a concrete descriptive form "values" or "habits of thought". Nostrand believed that one of the major themes in French culture is "The art of living" by which he meant: "enjoyment of the lifestyle one has chosen; imaginativeness and capacity for abstract thought" (1978, p. 282). This statement is not only rather vague, but also presents a rather powerful generalization about French people lumped in one whole.

Goals of Culture Teaching

I would like to conclude my discussion of Nostrand with a note on his belief that "[w]e should look to the social sciences for an understanding of those aspects of a sociocultural whole that permit verifiable description" (1966, p. 17). Nostrand seemed to be unaware of discussions in anthropology about the difficulties encountered in providing

verifiable descriptions of cultures. He also insisted that "the idea that cultures and societies are highly patterned realities [should be]...constantly referred to in our teaching of descriptive information about any one culture" (ibid., p. 8). On the basis of these two assumptions, Nostrand argued that the abilities which need to be developed in language students in terms of cultural understanding are: to describe a pattern or to ascribe it to a subculture of which it is typical, to recognize a pattern in an instance of behaviour, to "explain" a pattern in terms of its functional relation to other patterns or in causal terms, to predict a probable reaction to a given situation, to select an approved attitude, to evaluate the basis given for a descriptive generalization (Seelye, 1993, p. 135).

On one hand, the techniques which Nostrand (1974) suggested for teaching culture do not seem conducive to developing these highly ambitious outcomes of the learning process, which would require a detailed scholarly knowledge of the target culture. On the other hand, the confusion that teachers would be thrown in if they deal at the same time with the ground meaning of a culture (which demands a semiotic approach), a culture's main themes (which call for naming generalizations), and a culture's patterns (which require the search for interrelations) seems overwhelming. It is small wonder that teachers, faced with an awesome task, prefer altogether to forget about it or avoid it. Thus, I would like to suggest that if we put ourselves in the position of teachers who want to gain a clearer picture as to what exactly could be involved in addressing culture in language classes, we would be helpless.

I believe that the most important contribution Nostrand made to the discussion of culture in language teaching was the inclusion of conflict as a legitimate aspect of culture. A whole section of his model "is reserved for an eventual bringing together of all the patterns of behaviour... which form the antithesis of the established system" (1978, p. 280) and deals "with an elaborated description of the conflicts both between and within the categories of the other sections" (ibid., p. 289). It is unfortunate, however, that this inclusion of

conflicts in a culture was not taken up by language education theorists almost until the beginning of the 1990s.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to note that at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century culture teaching was understood in language pedagogy to mean "that training which tends to develop the higher faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and the intellectual comprehension" (Massachusetts report cited in Rivers, 1981, p. 315-316) thus linking culture to the humanities and literature in language education. In the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s of this century theorists interested in culture teaching started to recognize the place of anthropology in assisting them to conceptualize culture for the purposes of language teaching. Given the long tradition in teacher training and language classrooms of linking language teaching to literature (cf. Howatt, 1984), they seem to have had to strive hard to legitimize anthropological conceptualizations of culture in language education. However, they also set the stage for ambiguities and inconsistencies in culture teaching which in turn led to limited, and thus unsatisfactory, practices in cultural instruction in language classrooms. In addition, the view of culture as the sum total of a people's life and systems of patterned behaviour overwhelmingly affected the approach to culture in language teaching for almost 40 years. By the early 1960s, anthropology had demonstrated an enormous amount of variation and sophistication in theorizing about and defining culture, and approaches which link culture to language were already in place. Despite this fact, culture teaching theoreticians in language education seemed to cling to behaviouristic views of culture regardless of the fact that these obviously did not fit well with the theorists' intuitive sense of the need to relate language and culture teaching evident in their occasional referral to language as a bearer of culture.

Chapter Four

Teaching Culture as a Separate Skill in the Language Classroom

This chapter will explore the continually ambivalent conceptualizations of culture offered by second language theorists writing on this topic from the mid 1970s till the mid 1980s. A greater emphasis will be placed, however, on the suggested ways and means of teaching culture because, at that time, theorists began to focus more on techniques for presenting culture in language classrooms. As Stern (1992) points out, "[w]riters on culture were eager to show that, even if the concept of culture was somewhat vague, cultural goals could be expressed in clear and unambiguous terms" (p. 212). I will try to demonstrate that the recommended approaches seem unsatisfactory not only because of the ambiguous conceptualizations of culture implicit in them, but also because they promote the teaching of culture as a separate skill in the classroom. Thus they require that pedagogues spend time specifically on developing this "skill" apart from their main task to teach a second *language*. The critique made will derive from insights in anthropology as well as from my personal experience as a second language user and teacher.

Seelye's Conceptualization of Culture and Culture Teaching

A Broad View of Culture

One of the theoreticians with an enviable reputation in the area of culture teaching is the American Ned Seelye. He first addressed the issue of culture teaching in the early 1970. His book *Teaching Culture* (1974) was considered a classic on the subject (Chang, 1986) and its third revised edition was published in 1993. My critique of Seelye's views will

focus on this latest edition of the book. I see both conceptual and practical problems in Seelye's understanding of culture and its role in language education and I will attempt to address them together in the discussion that follows.

Seelye takes, in my opinion, a rather absurd stand on culture by refusing altogether to define it (1974, 1993). Referring to Kroeber and Kluckhohn's monograph (1952), Seelye argues that "culture emerges from [their] analysis as a very broad aspect embracing all aspects of human life" (1993, p. 15). I consider this a rather hasty conclusion as it does not account for the controversies surrounding the concept in anthropology and for the diversity of conceptualizations in the anthropologists' work. Another hasty conclusion that Seelye makes is that the teaching profession has reached a consensus regarding the concept of culture. He maintains that "[t]he most widely accepted usage now regards culture as a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life, from folktales to carved whales" (ibid., p.22). He also argues that "teachers...have finally been content to shrug [their] shoulders and admit that it does not really matter how [culture] is defined as long as the definition is broad" (ibid., p. 23). As this study attempts to point out, not only has a consensus not been reached with regard to culture teaching in the language classroom, but also the mixed bag of cultural elements addressed in language classes is rather inconsistent, confusing, and controversial. However, Seelye does not seem to be disturbed by his gross simplification of the culture issue and even exclaims to teachers: "Avoid being a wimp! Reach for as broad an understanding of the target culture as *your* [italics added] interests and energies allow" (ibid., p. 16). Assuming that "[t]he controversy over the definition of culture has led to a dead end" (ibid.), Seelye, as Toohey (1979) points out, "[dismisses] definitional debates about culture as 'colossal wastes of time'" (p. 4). Toohey also points to "the logical difficulties of trying to operationalize a category which is too broad" (ibid., p. 2) as well as to Seelye's lack of appreciation of the complexity of cultural systems and the difficulties in providing descriptions of culture which anthropologists have come to recognize (ibid., p. 16).

Seelye as a Functionalist

Despite Seelye's insistence on as broad a conceptualization of culture as imaginable, he himself takes a functionalist stand on the issue.

The culture of each population is a response to present needs (Seelye, 1993, p. 240).

People act the way they do to satisfy universal physical and psychological needs[;] ...[they] have banded together to meet these needs [and] [p]redictably different bands of people have developed different ways of doing so. [Besides] [w]hen an individual attempts to satisfy a basic need he or she usually has to employ many interacting cultural patterns that form a relatively cohesive structure (ibid., p. 117).

In other words, Seelye assumes, like Malinowski for example, that culture should be approached on the premise that human beings in all societies have to meet "basic needs such as food and shelter, for love and affection, and for self-respect" (ibid.). In addition, he believes that once an outsider to a culture observes what target culture bearers are doing and has reached an explanation as to what needs they are satisfying with their action, he or she has gained an understanding of this particular aspect of the culture.

When an observer of the human scene sees how a given behaviour fits into the larger cultural context to enable the actor to satisfy a need everyone can identify with, the behaviour makes sense and no longer seems quite bizarre. It is at this point that understanding of another way of life begins to achieve significance (ibid., p. 121).

Thus, the patterned conventional way people use to meet universal needs provides an entry to an understanding of their culture. "The two principles that people everywhere satisfy some basic needs and that many different patterns interact in concert for basic needs to be satisfied... help us ask significant questions about relationships in the target culture" (ibid., p.45). One way to critique a functionalist approach to culture is evidenced in Toohey's review of the 1974 edition of Seelye's *Teaching Culture*. She points to social scientists who argue that "if groups are composed of members whose behaviour, thoughts and feelings are determined and functionally integrated by the cultures to which they belong, change and intentional action and conflict cannot be accounted for" (Toohey, 1979, p. 22).

From a methodological point of view, another difficulty I see in this approach lies in the fact that once we consider "needs" as a starting point for the culture of a people or social group, we will have to *name* all kinds of needs. In addition, we will have to provide what I would assume to be a rather exhaustive list of 'universal' human needs for students to refer to as a framework that could guide them in their search for an understanding of a target culture. I believe that such a list could only be arbitrary and just present another inventory for teachers and students to focus on. This time, however, this will be an inventory of needs rather than themes (cf. Nostrand, 1978) or topics (cf. Brooks, 1964). In fact the approach to culture remains the same, i.e. the task of culture teaching theoreticians in language pedagogy is assumed to be to find the "best" way to dissect the "complex whole" of culture in order to make it teachable. Students then will simply have to fill in a set chart of themes or needs with examples (as if engaging in a "fill in the blanks" exercise so typical for language practice in the classroom). In other words, the assumption that culture is knowledge that can be taught continues to reign on the stage of language education. Indeed, having refused to define culture, Seelye makes the main focus of his books an exposition of techniques and means to transmit cultural knowledge to language students.

Goals of Culture Teaching

Seelye maintains that in order to focus on something as all-inclusive as culture, our first task is to identify our teaching goals subsumed under the following "supergoal": "[a]ll students will develop the cultural understandings, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture" (1993, p. 29). The goals Seelye proposes in an attempt to avoid the impossibility to "isolate a manageable stack of facts" (ibid., p. xii) coincide with the skills he believes students need to develop in order to penetrate a culture:

Goal 1 - Interest: The student shows curiosity about another culture (or another segment or subculture of one's own culture) and empathy toward its members.

Goal 2 - Who: The student recognizes that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave.

Goal 3 - What: The student realizes that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of people when they think, act, and react to the world around them.

Goal 4 - Where and When: The student recognizes that situational variables and convention shape behaviour in important ways.

Goal 5 - Why: The student understands that people generally act the way they do because they are using options their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs, and that cultural patterns are interrelated and tend to support need satisfaction mutually.

Goal 6 - Exploration: The student can evaluate a generalization about the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating it, and has the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal observation (*ibid.*, p. 31).

I would like to comment on some of the ways Seelye offers to teachers to follow in order to reach these goals. One of the activities Seelye suggests for attaining the first goal is interviewing informants. Some of the questions that Seelye suggests students could ask concern "the things people like and dislike and the way people (but not necessarily the person interviewed) relate to each other" (*ibid.*, p. 50). Among the questions proposed are: "Would a typical person from [X] want a large or small family? ...Where do teenagers go for recreation? ...Do wives like to hold jobs outside of the home?" (*ibid.*) Amidst questions that he cautions should probably be avoided are: "What do you do?... Do you have your own house/car/TV? ...What are your ethnic origins?" (*ibid.*).

It seems to me that the examples given speak for themselves. If somebody asked me the "permissible" questions in an attempt to gain an understanding of my native culture, I would quite simply be at a loss at giving a reasonable response without making gross generalizations. At the same time, I think that hardly any Bulgarian would be offended if asked about their occupation, possessions, or origins. Thus, although Seelye claims that he is promoting intercultural understanding, I believe that his view on what questions to ask or not to ask target culture bearers is purely ethnocentric, and does not take into account the prevalent in anthropology position of cultural relativism and respect for native categories one needs to adopt when approaching another culture. Not only are the questions ripe with

ethnocentrism, but they also clearly demand generalizations for answers. Thus, Seelye's approach seems to ask students to search for generalizable laws that could be discerned in any behaviour which, in view of the discussion in a previous chapter, does not seem to be a productive way to approach culture (cf. Clifford, 1988; Marcus & Fisher, 1986).

In relation to his goal 2, Seelye believes that "social variables enable one to *predict* [italics added] behaviour in the target culture" (p. 84). To be able to predict something, you have to be aware of all the variables involved in a situation and this, I believe, is simply impossible in human interactions. Therefore I think that Seelye is mistaken. His suggestion would lead students directly to unwarranted stereotyping. It seems to assume that a category of people that share many social variables, like middle-aged white Canadian women teachers, for example, would react in the same (or similar) way in a given situation, which is again a generalization. What I think awareness of social variables predicts is that there will be differences in verbal or other behaviour depending on one's age, race, education, sex, etc. However, to try and point exactly to *the* difference and name it will mean oversimplifying the situation and the social variables.

Regarding goal 3, Seelye asks the question: "How can an understanding of the relation between culture and semantics be developed? One way is for students to experience directly the cultural connotations of common words such as "man", "house", "standing," and "walking" by "observing these objects and activities as they occur in the target culture" (ibid., p. 99-100). Although I disagree with some of the activities Seelye proposes to develop this skill (cf. ibid., p.51, p.107-109), this one seems easily defensible. In another chapter I will argue that such an approach to the target culture as experienced through the target language should be the main staple in classrooms oriented towards culture exploration.

My critique of Seelye's formulation of his 4th goal of culture teaching, which addresses situation variables, could be summarized as follows: maintaining that situation variables and convention 'shape' behaviour could lead to oversimplification and an

assumption by teachers and students that once you are aware of a number of variables, you will have no problem communicating in a situation. It would have been more accurate to say that situational variables 'affect' behaviour and thus leave room for the unpredictability that accompanies any one situation due to its uniqueness. This would make teachers and students cautious in generalizing about any situation. I agree with Seelye that "many situations cue conventional responses" (ibid., p. 112). However, activities like preparing brief scenarios on index cards about common everyday situations, which Seelye suggests, are not sufficient to prepare students for the world outside the classroom. Teachers and students are left with the notion that that is all there is to learn to be able to deal with a particular situation. This is misleading, and as indicated in the introduction, I consider myself to have been deceived in this way. There are always things a foreigner or an immigrant could blunder over in a target culture situation, so they better be prepared to accept that and try to overcome blunders partly by being more observant in every situation. I am not saying that activities like the ones mentioned above are not needed or not important. What I am trying to reiterate is that students need to be made aware that conventional responses to situations practiced in the classroom will be of only rudimentary support when learners are faced with similar real situations in the target community.

Discussing his fifth goal Seelye suggests that "[t]he question students of intercultural communication can ask of any observed or reported behaviour in the target culture is: What universal need is the individual trying to satisfy?" (ibid., p. 117-118). He quickly points out as well that

In addition to asking what basic human need the observed behaviour helps people in that society to satisfy, there are important auxiliary questions to ask also: Is the observed behaviour a frequently used behavioural option or is its occurrence rare in that society? What substitute behavioural patterns does the society allow for the satisfaction of that need? What complementary behavioural patterns are commonly associated with the observed behaviour? (ibid., p. 121).

It seems impossible to me that a student (or a teacher for that matter) would be able to answer these questions without a very profound investigation in the society and knowledge of sometimes quite distinct subcultures. How many of them, though, would

have the time, training or the research interest to do it? Certainly, the activities which Seelye suggests do not offer a deep probing into a society's way of life. For example: "Seek to determine how religion fits into the tapestry of rural Latin American culture by interviewing someone from that background" (ibid., p. 137). Such an isolated activity hardly allows students to gain awareness of the place of religion in the life of a "generalized" Latin American rural community. Besides, as already pointed out, analyses of culture in functional terms have been critiqued in anthropology since the 1950s. Thus, this looks like an inappropriate way to approach culture in the language classroom.

The last of Seelye's goals focuses on the need to develop the following skills in students: evaluating the relative truth of cultural generalizations and researching another culture (Seelye, 1993). Researching a culture is to be done via employing bibliographic techniques to media sources and interviewing target culture bearers and is not addressed in great detail by Seelye. I would like to comment on the specific activities suggested which are aimed at developing the skill of evaluating generalizations. Students are given statements about a culture and asked to mark them as true or false and give reasons for their answers. From my point of view, which is based on the assumption that culture cannot be presented as imparting knowledge or facts if our aim is to facilitate learners' understanding of it, this approach is unproductive. It simply asks students to make a judgment about a generalization on cultural information like "Flamenco is the music most popular in Spain" (p. 142) by finding evidence to support their judgment. In this case, for instance, students may probably find out and even remember that flamenco is not the most popular music in Spain, but will be at a loss as to what its meaning and place in a Spaniard's life is. Therefore they will have not gained any understanding into the concept of flamenco music in the mind of a Spaniard. I, of course, do not mean to suggest that the "meaning" of flamenco to Spanish people can be pinpointed and expressed in a neat sentence, paragraph or even a book. As this example clearly points out, the contextualization of cultural generalizations, i.e. matters such as when the generalization was made, what part of Spain,

or which Spaniards it refers to, etc., is of no importance for Seelye. Naturally, I agree with the view that students need to develop the skill to evaluate generalizations about a culture. However, I would suggest that the way to do it is to present learners with statements that point to the *meaning* of an event, activity, phenomenon, etc. and ask them to analyze why they think the particular author of the statement has made it and what then the event, activity, phenomenon means to him/her.

Culture Assimilators, Capsules and Clusters

Finally, I would like to discuss briefly the three techniques Seelye suggests for teaching concepts pertaining to a culture - culture assimilators, culture capsules, and culture clusters - because these techniques have been widely proposed in culture teaching literature (Damen, 1987; Lafayette, 1978; Rivers, 1981). For examples and activities related to the techniques the reader is referred to Lafayette (1978) and Seelye (1993, pp. 162-187).

Culture assimilators are "episodes of target cultural behaviour which describe a 'critical incident' of cross-cultural interaction that could be found 'puzzling' or 'conflictful'" but that "can be interpreted in a fairly unequivocal manner, given sufficient knowledge about the other's culture" (Seelye, 1993, p. 163). Once the episode is presented, multiple-choice testing is applied, i.e. four answers are suggested, only one of which is "correct". Assimilators seem dangerous, however. Not only could they lead to unfounded generalizations and stereotyping, but also to the development of rigid thinking with the expectation for a single "correct" answer in any given situation. The second technique Seelye suggests seems similarly flawed. As Seelye explains:

A culture capsule consists of a paragraph or so of explanation of one minimal difference between an American and a target custom, along with several illustrative photos or relevant realia (ibid., p.174)....The student has to identify culturally appropriate explanations of the cross-cultural difference for the described situation (ibid., p.177).

I agree with Nostrand who maintains that "[t]he atomistic approach of culture capsules reflects and abets [a] tendency to seek satisfaction in 'knowing' isolated particulars to the neglect of the interrelations that give them their true meaning" (1974, p. 300). Besides, this technique is clearly reductionist and based on the assumption that American or a target culture customs can be easily isolated and compared.

Clusters, on the other hand, consist of "about three culture capsules that develop related topics, plus one 30-minute classroom simulation that integrates the information contained in the capsules" (Seelye, 1993, p. 177). Clearly, all three techniques are based on the assumption that culture can be taught via imparting cultural information. In addition, their aim seems to be to train learners in behaviour "appropriate" for a generalized "national group" of target culture bearers. Besides, they offer activities that deal specifically with teaching culture on top of all other activities language teachers need to include in their classrooms. What is needed, however, is a difference in approaching culture. With the way culture is promoted to be presented, no wonder there is little of it in the classroom. First, who will retain the presented information? As Seelye himself says: "Many students forget all the facts...[and] [e]ducation is difficult to justify on the basis of the 'facts' learned." (ibid., p. 149). Besides, teachers will waste so much valuable time if they teach table manners, for instance, as suggested in the cluster Seelye gives as an example, time that could be used to *practice* the language. Thus I believe that one of the reasons culture has not caught up with language in the second language classroom is that teachers are not given usable ways to integrate it with their everyday work.

In conclusion of my discussion on Seelye I would like to say that I hope I have been able to demonstrate that there are many dangers and pitfalls that teachers will be faced with if they follow Seelye's approach to conceptualizing and teaching culture. It clearly demonstrates that Seelye's references to the anthropological literature are outdated and do not account for current anthropologists' disillusionment with their methods of analysis as leading to generalizations about a national culture. The approach is all the more harmful

because it has gained prominence and has been widely acclaimed as *the* way to go in culture teaching (Rivers, 1981; Damen, 1987).

River's Approach to Culture

Another good example of the already pointed to ambiguity in conceptualizing and teaching culture in the language classroom can be discerned in River's writings on the subject (1981). Rivers uses culture as an omnibus term to refer to "all aspects of shared life in a community" (1981, p. 316). She also maintains that "[d]espite variations within a group... certain patterns of behaviour and value systems may be discerned which are integral parts of the cultural whole" (ibid.), clearly unconcerned with criticisms in anthropology on generalizations about a culture. Thus she believes that

for depth of cultural understanding it is necessary to see how such patterns function in relation to each other and to appreciate their place within the cultural system.... [L]earners ... need not only to understand the cultural influences at work in the behaviour of others, but also to recognize the profound influence patterns of their own culture exert over their thoughts, their activities, and their forms of linguistic expression (ibid., p. 317).

In fact, she points to a form of reflexivity for students to engage in. But how is it going to be achieved? "The study of language should bring home to students the realization that there are many ways of looking at things, many ways of doing and expressing things, and that differences do not necessarily represent moral issues of right and wrong" (ibid., p. 319). So if this is going to be achieved through the study of language, then the interrelation between language and culture which offers insights into language as a bearer of culture gains importance. Indeed, Rivers points to the language/culture connection, clearly approaching it from a semiotic perspective:

A language is learned and used within ...a context [of shared life in a community] drawing from the culture distinctive meanings and functions (ibid., p. 316). Once students have realized that a new language is much more than a code to be cracked in order to transform ideas back into the familiar ones of the native language, they have gained an important insight into the meaning of culture (ibid., p. 321).

Rivers also offers Bever's distinction between different components of meaning, these being: semantic meaning, cultural ideas, and personal ideas where cultural ideas are said to represent the nonsemantic aspects of a concept which derive from shared life in the culture (ibid., p. 321). "When students have learned to make these distinctions of meaning, they will begin to observe many things for themselves which will help them to understand and absorb the new culture" (ibid.). This type of reasoning leads us again to a Geertzian conceptualization of culture. Geertz, for example, makes the claim that in order to "gain access to the conceptual world" (1973, p. 24) of target culture bearers, we need to decode the cultural messages imbedded in their activities and language. However, Rivers does not develop this line of thought, but as we already saw, shifts her focus to behaviour, and values, and culture as a whole. Besides, the activities Rivers suggests, do not seem to do what she would like them to do, i.e. encourage students "to go beyond facts, so that they begin to perceive and experience vicariously the deeper levels of the culture of the speakers of the language" (ibid., p. 325). For example, when she discusses an approach she calls "experiencing the culture through language use", she concludes that "[t]hrough language use students become conscious of correct levels of discourse and behaviour; ...they begin to perceive the expectations within the society and to glimpse the values which are basic to the various forms of behaviour" (ibid., p. 326). In other words, through language use students learn "correct" knowledge about cultural *behaviour*. The other activities she suggests: dialogues, role-plays, interactions with native speakers in the language classroom, etc. do not seem to be addressing the cultural meaning of events, activities, phenomena, either, but instead again focus on culturally appropriate behaviour. Here is an example: "Each dialogue should be constructed around an experience compatible with the age and interests of the students, one which will clearly demonstrate behaviour culturally appropriate for speakers of that particular language" (ibid., p. 326). In the context of such notions of what culture teaching involves, it seems to me that the whole discussion of the

interrelationship between language and culture and the need to search for the meaning of culture, which River offers, is rendered irrelevant.

Finally, I am prone to insist that apparently many language education theoreticians have intuitively felt what conception of culture could be most fruitful for the language classroom, but do not continue on that line. Instead they fall back into categories like behaviour or values which have occupied anthropologists for a long time, but have not been taken as lightly in cultural anthropology as they seem to be in language pedagogy. On the basis of those categories language theoreticians suggest activities whose aim is to teach students a desired norm of cultural behaviour they are to adhere to.

Culture Teaching and Intercultural Communication Theory

Another language education theorist, Damen, tries to link inquiries in culture teaching to inquiries in intercultural communication (1987). Intercultural communication training programs are usually aimed at preparing those who travel abroad, i.e. diplomats, business people, humanitarian organizations volunteers, etc., for the cultural ways of the host country. The strategies used are culture-bound and Western in perspective and focus on cross-cultural differences with a special emphasis on non-verbal behaviour such as body language or eye contact. Damen maintains that "[t]he techniques to develop cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills are now being used in the field of second language learning" (Damen, 1987, p. 32). She distinguishes between two schools of thought concerning intercultural communication theory, research, and practice and calls their supporters respectively "cultural critics" and "cultural dialogists" (ibid., p. 237).

As Damen points out: "[a]dherents to the cultural critical point of view regard cultural differences as potential barriers and advocate understanding of these barriers, and respecting the differences" (ibid.). Their training methods consist of initial presentation of factual material and descriptions of cultural patterns, assumptions, and values in a

contrastive framework later accompanied by methods to explain and illustrate cross-cultural differences with an emphasis placed on the identification of critical differences and culturally appropriate solutions (ibid., p. 239-40). "Their approach focuses on the need to understand cultural processes and components, but is most directly concerned with understanding the whys and wherefores of a particular group" (ibid., p. 244). In this sense it is closely related to functionalism in anthropology as it assumes that cultural patterns and themes are related to universal needs and conditions. As the analysis offered in this and the previous chapters suggests, it seems that the views of cultural critics have gained ground within the context of second language teaching. On that basis many textbooks specifically geared to develop intercultural communication skills in second language learners (e.g. *Beyond Language. Intercultural Communication for English as a Second Language*, D. Levine & M. Adelman, 1982; *The Culture Puzzle. Cross-Cultural Communication for English as a Second Language*, D. Levine, J. Baxter, & P. McNulty, 1987) employ contrastive methods by setting up and examining systematically the contrastive qualities of one or more cultural groups through selected readings usually followed by discussions and role-plays. Damen warns, however, that intercultural communication as a field has borrowed its foundations from Western social sciences, and thus its methodologies carry the stamp of Western logic, rhetoric, and explanation and could reflect bias or be inappropriate in some cultural contexts (ibid., p. 22). She argues that "[o]ur true/false Western tradition disdains ambiguity [while] [a]t least in instances of intercultural communication, ambiguity is the name of the game" (ibid., p. 11). As she points out

communication, even among those who share [the same culture], is highly colored by personal perception so that what each person perceives affects what occurs between that person and another. Because no two persons are alike, all acts of human communication are in some manner intercultural (ibid., p. 22).

It seems, though, that language education theorists interested in culture teaching, are not aware of the pitfalls inherent in treating unproblematically intercultural communication methods in the second language classroom.

Stern's Cultural Syllabus

Culture and Systematic Information

Stern, another prominent theoretician with highly versatile interests and respected views in the area of second language education, gives his own account of what culture and its teaching should consist of in the language classroom (1992). He favours a "threefold classification" (ibid., p. 210) of the term "culture" suggested by Hammerly (1982, 1986) that distinguishes between: a) information (or factual) culture, which refers to "the information ...the average educated native knows about his society" (1986, p. 513), b) behavioural culture or "the sum of everyday life" (ibid., p. 514) including actual behaviour, attitudes, and values, and c) achievement (or accomplishment) culture which refers to "the artistic and literary accomplishments of a society" (ibid., p. 515). In other words, Stern prefers to focus on what teachers should conceive of culture in their practical dealings rather than elaborate on the concept itself. However, the distinctions, as presented, remain vague and do not lead to a conceptualization of culture on other than intuitive grounds. Besides, the division suggested again presents teachers with an awesome task demanding that they spend time aside from teaching language to teach a rather large amount of cultural information. This view of Stern's also points to an assumption that culture is knowledge to be taught and learnt via imparting information. Indeed, Stern believes that "[t]he lack of information is a deficiency which has some bearing on the scantiness of culture teaching" (1992, p. 222). He reiterates his point by maintaining that

language teachers who do not want to neglect the cultural component need accessible and reliable information. However, at present they are ...faced ...with the absence of resources, lack of cultural research, the patchiness of documentation, and the overall shortage of systematic descriptive accounts of cultural data (ibid.).

Such accounts, however, seem prone to generalizations and stereotypes and, as seen in a previous chapter, are not taken lightly by current cultural anthropologists. Besides, at

present, with postmodern theory well in place, ambitious monographs claiming to document systematically the everyday life of target cultures are doubtful to appear.

The Different Perspectives on a Target Culture

An important point that Stern makes is that a weakness in the treatment of culture has been the failure to distinguish clearly the different perspectives under which it can be studied (i.e. the second language learner's perspective, the native speaker's perspective and the perspective of scholarship) (ibid., p. 216). Stern claims that the native speaker's perspective "gives culture teaching a definite direction, and makes it much more manageable, relevant and appropriate" (ibid., p. 217). Thus what matters is "to sensitize the learner to the way places, persons, and historical events are perceived by ordinary members of the speech community and what their significance is for these members" (ibid.). Stern suggests that this could be done if learners talk to native speakers, ask questions, listen attentively, watch what people do, and consult the target culture's media (ibid.). However, he does not seem to offer a systematic training for students in acquiring the necessary skills to gain an understanding of the native's perspective.

The Place of Culture in Language

A point which Stern makes, with which I disagree, is that language educators should make a distinction between a sociolinguistic-semantic-functional treatment of language and the specific contributions of a cultural syllabus. Stern sees the main problems of culture teaching not in sociolinguistics but in the treatment of other aspects of culture beyond language (ibid., p. 238-39). Stern does recognize the cultural embeddedness of language and insists that second language instruction is not possible without placing language items into a sociocultural context. However, he sees in this principle merely the

confirmation of a sociosemantic and pragmatic view of language and argues that "[t]he reality of people and places constitutes the specific contribution of a culture syllabus" (ibid., p. 211). It is true that advancements in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, which will be touched upon in the next chapter, have led to current teaching materials that recognize linguistic variation dependent on sociocultural context with regards to situations and participants. However, such variation is usually presented as unquestioned fact and more often than not left uninterpreted with regard to its cultural meaning and its representation of power relations inherent in interactions. Therefore, I believe that much more attention should be paid to culture *in* language than Stern accords it.

A Deliberate Approach to a Target Culture

As already mentioned, Stern places great emphasis on a distinct cultural syllabus in second language classrooms. It is to be integrated with a language syllabus, a communicative activities syllabus, and a general language education syllabus and is said to refer "to the life of the target language community" and to constitute "a deliberate and intellectual approach to the target culture" (ibid., p. 27). Its aim seems to be to lead to cultural knowledge which has been defined as "(a) the control of sociocultural rules and information which are part of the native speaker's intuitive cultural competence; and (b) systematic conceptual knowledge about L2 culture and society" (ibid., p. 83). In other words, there is again the already chronic insistence among language education theoreticians on the need to present students with a bulk of cultural information. I believe that while this approach may be appropriate for foreign teachers of the target language and culture and perhaps very advanced second language learners, it could actually impede the development of language proficiency in lower level students as it will take aside valuable time from language practice. Stern also believes that learners should acquire the skills to conduct themselves in socioculturally appropriate ways, and thus sees culture teaching to a large

extent as behavioural (ibid., p. 218) Despite these views, Stern's multidimensional approach to second language curriculum recognizes some important objectives for culture treatment in the classroom. For example, some of the goals of the general language education syllabus which Stern proposes aim "to encourage students' reflection on the nature of... culture, to promote openness towards other [culture groups], and to develop an active, self-reliant approach to ...[culture] learning" (ibid., p. 363). Amongst the main topic areas identified is cultural awareness, i.e. recognition that cultures are dynamic, stable yet changeable, diverse, invested with their own codes and symbols, transmitted in many different ways, and participated in with varying degrees of success (ibid.).

I consider Stern's main contribution to the theory of culture treatment in the classroom his insistence on the need to take into account the learners' own interests and needs in approaching culture. As he points out

The literature on culture teaching has too readily assumed that the approach to culture is either that of the humanities or that of social science. The informal and subjective perspective has never been completely left out but it has not been assessed for what its specific contributions might be (ibid., p.218).

Discussing the various existing schemes of cultural description Stern critiques them for being "too encyclopedic" and not geared "to the specific needs of the second language learner" (ibid., p. 220). and maintains that "[t]he areas for a cultural syllabus can be kept to manageable proportions if we remember the L2 perspective" (ibid.) Nevertheless, even he does not accord much importance to the learner's perspective when he claims that while an informal and personal entry into a foreign culture is possible and appropriate "such a subjective approach needs a more objective input as a corrective and as a source of systematic information (ibid., p. 222).

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter I would like to note that language education theorists productive in the 1970s and 1980s took for granted that culture needs to be addressed from

an anthropological perspective in language classes. Thus they focused their attention on ways and means to approach culture in the classroom. Techniques were developed and activities suggested which have led to the treatment of culture as a separate skill in the language classroom. Culture was to be acquired mainly via presenting students with information viewed as "cultural" on arbitrary grounds. Culture teaching theorists also seemed to assume that inculcating "appropriate" cultural behaviour in students was one of the main goals of culture teaching. Thus the subordinate role of culture in language classes is perhaps due to the continuous ambiguity and inconsistency with which the concept has been treated by language education theorists and to the overwhelming task which teachers face if they wish to follow these theorists' suggestions regarding the inclusion of culture in their everyday work alongside their main duty to teach language.

Finally, I would like to quote at length from Robinson's (1985) critique of the approaches to culture discussed in the last two chapters. Robinson argues that "[t]he current trend of second language educators is to view culture from behaviourist and/or functionalist perspectives" (1985, p. 8) and classroom practices tend to reflect those (ibid., p. 13).

From the behaviourist point of view, culture consists of discrete behaviours or set of behaviours ...[and] [i]n the language classroom this concept of culture often leads to study of discrete practices or institutions...[The focus is] on the behaviour itself rather than on an understanding or explanation of why it is taking place, or under what circumstances it occurs (ibid., p. 8).

The functionalist approach to culture is an attempt at making sense out of social behaviours. ...Again, culture is viewed as a social phenomenon. However, what is shared are reasons and rules for behaving ... inferred from the behaviour[These approaches] assume that cultural behaviours and their functions can be objectively identified; ...and that the important concerns of culture, i.e., what is shared, can be observed directly or inferred from observable behaviour. [However], different perceptions and interpretations of behaviours by different observers ...result in a methodological problem for designating exactly what constitutes cultural behaviour. Once particular cultural behaviours are identified and associated with particular functions, care must be taken to avoid stereotyping. Behaviours and functions change across time, across individuals, and within individuals, from situation to situation.

There may also be some discrepancy between what people say they would do and what they actually do. In fact, people are often unaware of the reasons for their behaviours. In this regard, behaviourist and functionalist approaches to culture ask students to understand culture in a way which often eludes members of the culture themselves (ibid., p. 9-10).

Overall behaviourist and functionalist approaches reflect a notion of culture as an observable phenomenon. However, some "aspects of culture are not only non-observable, but they also elude explicit description, such as aspects of cognitive interpretations and affective reactions. Other aspects of culture may elude identification because their essence is a dynamic, symbolic process of creating meaning" (ibid., p. 8).

These ideas will be more fully addressed in the next chapter which focuses on the views of language education theorists who maintain that language and culture teaching should be integrated.

Chapter Five

Integration of Language and Culture in the Classroom

The aim of this chapter is to provide a context and background for my understanding of what approach to culture needs to be taken in adult second language classrooms. This approach will be addressed in the next chapter. Here I discuss arguments for the integration of language and culture teaching, speculate on why they developed, and elaborate on the perspectives taken by two prominent current language education theorists interested in culture teaching - Michael Byram (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1994) and Claire Kramsch (1983, 1988, 1993a, 1993b).

The Interrelationship between Language and Culture

Before discussing developments in language education theory which present an argument for the integration of language and culture in the classroom, I would like to focus briefly on views of the relationship between language and culture. This seems a logical starting point because, as is evident from previous chapters, language teaching theorists regularly refer to and grapple with this relationship. As mentioned before, this study is grounded in developments in anthropology because it has been suggested that insights in that field are most fruitful for discussions of culture in language teaching. Therefore, the views of anthropologists on the issue are given some space here.

Together with the concept of culture, the most important contribution of anthropology to language pedagogy is the notion of the interrelation between language and culture. It occupied the minds of many anthropological linguists, the most prominent perhaps being Boas, Sapir, and Whorf. Indeed, since Boas anthropologists have paid special attention to the interrelationship which they see in language and culture. Boas' work

focused on the interdependence of language, thought, and culture in North American Indian languages. He argued that language could be viewed as an analogue of culture (1911) claiming that linguistic phenomena, being less subject to conscious rationalization than ethnology, were more purely representative of the nature of cultural processes. Thus he maintained, together with his followers, that words are suited to the environments in which they are used and it is language that holds the key to understanding a culture. In other words, the idea that language cannot be addressed without reference to the culture in which it is employed was introduced early on in social science. Indeed, social scientists "have always been aware of language as an essential factor in social life" (Stern, 1983, p. 201) because "culture is only transmissible through coding, classifying and concentrating experience through some form of language" (Worsley cited in *ibid.*). Language educationists, however, have taken a long time to acknowledge the impact which social sciences could have on their field (*ibid.*).

Theory of Linguistic Relativity

In the 1920s, Sapir considered language a symbolic guide to culture and called it "a guide to social reality" (cited in Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 5). His views offered the foundation to the theory of linguistic relativity which postulates that each language embodies a world view. Sapir held the view that we see the physical world as our language trains us to see it and we can only describe it as our language permits us to describe it:

It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication and reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real' world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group (Sapir cited in Damen, 1987, p. 127).

Whorf, a student of Sapir, offered a wide conception of language in relation to culture, society, and the individual. He argued that language organizes experience:

We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout one speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. ...[Language] is...the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of the mental stock in trade" (Whorf cited in Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 4).

The view expressed by Sapir and Whorf about the relations between language and thought was quite influential in the middle decades of this century. Known as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" it combines two principles. The first is "linguistic determinism", i.e. language determines the way we think. The second follows from it and is known as "linguistic relativity"; it states that the distinctions encoded in one language are not found in any other language. A modified weak version of the hypothesis is provided by Carroll (1973):

In so far as languages differ in the ways they encode objective experience, language users tend to sort out and distinguish experiences differently according to the categories provided by their respective languages. These cognitions will tend to have certain effects on behaviour (cited in Damen, 1987, p. 129).

Many social scientists have debated this hypothesis or refuted it completely. Damen (1987) briefly summarizes the strong and weak versions of it:

In its strong or deterministic version the Whorfian hypothesis can be seen as a statement that language structures perception and experience, and literally creates and defines the realities people perceive. The weaker version simply extends the principle of relativity and cultural synthesis to the language and culture relationship, indicating that different languages are associated with different world views (p. 124).

Currently the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is valued for the efforts of its proponents to articulate the existing "alliance of language, mind, and the total culture of a speech community" (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984, p. 137).

Other Views on the Language/Culture Connection

Outside the context of the theory of linguistic relativity other social scientists have grappled with the interrelationship between language and culture. As early as 1950, Taylor

maintains that “[a]spects of culture lean heavily on language for their practice and transmission” (cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 123) and conceptualizes language as “the vehicle of culture” (ibid.). Goodenough (1964) argues that “a society’s language is an aspect of its culture” (p. 37) and suggests that: “[t]he relation of language to culture...is that of part to whole” (ibid.). Spradley (1979) observes that language is ‘the primary symbol system that encodes cultural meaning in every society’ (p. 99). Notions about the language and culture connection can also be found in the sociolinguistic literature. For example, Halliday and Hasan (1985) maintain that “[l]anguage is one among a number of systems of meaning that, taken all together, constitute human culture” (p. 4). They also believe that culture itself is “more specifically describable as an integrated body of the total set of meanings available to a community; its semiotic potential” (ibid., p. 99) and thus take a Geertzian stand on the issue.

Damen (1987) argues that the nature of the language and culture connection could be conceptualized in terms of: systems of classification (in the sense that language enables its users to identify and classify their surroundings and their activities), cultural foci (in the sense that points of cultural emphasis are reflected in language through the size, specialization, and differentiation of vocabulary), world view (in the sense that language is a powerful tool in helping humans form and express different means of coping with the ‘real’ world) (p. 123-4). Discussing various influential views on language and culture developed by both anthropologists and linguists Damen concludes:

As a special form of communication, human language can be viewed as a system, as a vehicle for cultural transmission, as a formative force whose structures place their stamp upon the minds and actions of its speakers, or as only one of many modes of communication, albeit a crucial one” (ibid., p.119).

The extent to which language, culture and thought have influenced one another have been matters of controversy for almost three quarters of a century. Although it would be unwise to argue that a consensus has been reached on the issue, at present the predominant view on the matter seems to be that “languages primarily reflect rather than create

sociocultural regularities in values and orientations” and there is a “fascinating process of ongoing and intertwined conversation and interaction...[in which]..languages and societal behaviour are equal partners” (Fishman cited in Stern, 1983, p. 206). In more recent sociocultural approaches to the issue, language is viewed as a major tool for conveying sociocultural knowledge through the activities in which it is employed, i.e. it is the activity that mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge (Ochs, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

For the purposes of language pedagogy it is important to decide which view of language is the most fruitful one for conceptualizing the place of culture in the classroom. In this respect I take the position that language “impinges upon and in turn is affected by the world in which it is used [and]...gives form to, supports, limits, and sometimes obscures” (Damen, 1987, p. 131) cultural meanings in the process of their negotiation; it is a symbolic system that encodes and a tool that maintains and creates cultural realities (Ochs, 1988, p. 210). Damen (1987) points out that due to the special attributes of language, teachers cannot provide language instruction without dealing with culture and students cannot learn a language without learning about its cultural aspects. Furthermore, despite the fact that it is unreasonable to expect that the nature of the language and culture connection could be articulated in clear-cut, concrete terms, “the binding tie is secure and cannot be ignored” (ibid., p. 123). Consequently, my understanding of the place of culture in the classroom stems from the assumption that culture provides “the context without which language would remain an empty code” (Stern, 1992, p. 215) or, as Politzer put it nearly 40 years ago: “If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols” (cited in Brooks, 1964, p. 123). The approach to culture which I will propose in the next chapter will also attempt to address the issue of the activities in which language should be employed with a view to provide meaningful sociocultural knowledge for students to draw on in their dealings with the target community.

Communicative Competence and Language Teaching

Advances in Sociolinguistics

In the context of an argument for the integration of language and culture in the language classroom, which I endorse, I would like to focus more specifically on some advances in the field of sociolinguistics which seem to have provided the background for the development of this argument. Sociolinguistics began to develop as a distinct field of study in the 1960s and Stern argues that it is a social science in its own right in which “converge all the earlier efforts in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and linguistics to relate language systematically to society and culture” (Stern, 1983, p. 218). Broadly speaking, sociolinguistics is concerned with language as it is used in society and has taken three major directions: the study of language in its social context, the ethnography of communication, and the sociology of language. The branch ethnography of communication has had by far the greatest influence on developments in language pedagogy in recent decades. This field investigates communicative activity in its social setting and is concerned with the study of the social contexts and participants in acts of communication. Integrating linguistic and cultural analyses in their works, sociolinguists aim to discover the norms of interaction and of interpretation appropriate to participants in a particular situation and in that way to extend systematic knowledge of language use (cf. Riley, 1984; Thomas, 1983).

The Concept of “Communicative Competence”

In 1972, Hymes introduced the concept of “communicative competence”. He criticized Chomsky’s (1965) restricted use of the term “competence” to denote simply a

speaker's knowledge of grammar and defined communicative competence as the intuitive mastery, skill or knowledge "when to speak, when not,...what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (Hymes, 1972, p. 277). Indeed, Hymes aimed to establish what a speaker needs to know in order to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings. Saville-Troike (1982) discussed what communicative competence involves in the following terms:

Communicative competence extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles, what appropriate nonverbal behaviours are in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline, and the like - in short everything involving the use of language and other communicative dimensions in particular social settings." (p. 22-3).

In other words, the concept of communicative competence emphasizes the importance of context and interaction in communication. It recognizes the functions of diversity, register, and various language styles and brings forth an acknowledgment that sociocultural variables such as age, sex, class, etc. could affect a speaker's verbal behaviour. What this means is that language is viewed as "social behaviour" and the speaker as a "sociocultural entity" (Damen, 1987, p. 102). While communicative competence implies linguistic competence, its main focus is indeed the "grasp of social and cultural rules and meanings" (Stern, 1983, p. 229) that are carried out by an utterance in a specific setting.

The Communicative Approach

The notion of communicative competence has led to the currently widespread 'communicative approach' to language teaching which considers developing communicative competence in students the essential goal in language pedagogy. Language education theorists and textbook writers have turned to the ethnography of communication

to assist them to identify what a second language learner needs to know to be able to communicate appropriately in the target language in various settings. This has led to a recognition of the socio-cultural aspect of language in the field of instruction, a concern with styles and purposes of communication, the insistence on the use of 'authentic' language in classroom materials, and the development of an awareness that there are no culture-free or out-of-context linguistic patterns which students can practice.

Through its focus on the functions of language and language in use, the communicative approach has brought the attention of language teachers to cultural influences on processes of language use. Besides, the communicative approach has committed teachers to provide opportunities for meaningful communicative interaction for the learners and the hidden assumption behind this objective is that "'meaningful' is culture-bound and culture-specific." (Damen, 1987, p. 212).

Communicative Competence and Cultural Competence

Savignon (1983) has called for regarding communicative competence more as a particular view of language, rather than as a concept which could be operationalized in terms of measurable student goals. In her view, the aim of communicative teaching should be not so much to provide students with discrete items to be learnt but to develop an ability to interpret discourse in its social context. Saville-Troike (1983) makes the claim that the concept of communicative competence should be embedded in the notion of cultural competence because to be able to interpret the meaning of linguistic behaviour one should be familiar with the cultural meaning of the context in which it occurs (p. 131-2). On that basis, Lessard-Clouston (1992) concludes that cultural competence is, in fact, the basis of communicative competence and culture is crucial for the development of communicative competence in language students. In the context of such arguments it seems reasonable to maintain that the need to bring culture as an active force into the language classroom has

been triggered by the development of interest in students' communicative competence (Damen, 1987, p. 55). Indeed, Brögger argues that "the field of cultural studies finds its *raison d'être* in an extended concept of communication, according to which the use of language demands a cultural as well as a linguistic competence" (1992, p.13). Thus, it seems to me that the call for an integration of language and culture teaching, which gained ground in language education theory around the mid 1980s, is not related to closer ties between culture teaching theorizing and contemporary approaches to culture in anthropology. Instead, it is perhaps due to the fact that by this time the communicative approach to language teaching, which, thanks to advances in sociolinguistics, more than any other approaches focuses on the cultural aspects of language use, was already in full gear.

Byram and Ethnography in Language Education

Toward the Integration of Language and Culture Teaching

Among the most ardent proponents of the idea that in the language classroom language and culture instruction should be integrated is the British language education theorist Byram (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1994). Byram (1989) points out that despite ample theorizing on cultural instruction in second language education, in practice culture teaching has not gained a firm ground because the major concern of language teachers is with language and the rest they see merely as 'background' or 'context'. He argues, however, that culture should not be considered simply as incidental to the 'real business' of language teaching and instead has a legitimate place as an integral component of language teaching (ibid., p. 4). This is because it plays a role in the instruction process at least "in the sense that words in the foreign language refer to meanings in a *particular* [italics added] culture creating a semantic relationship which the learner needs to comprehend" (ibid., p. 4). Ideas

found in treatments of the interrelationship between language and culture in anthropology and sociolinguistics echo in Byram's works:

language pre-eminently embodies the values and meanings of a culture, refers to cultural artifacts and signals people's cultural identity... The meanings of a particular language point to the culture of a particular social grouping, and the analysis of those meanings - their comprehension by learners and other speakers - involves the analysis and comprehension of that culture" (1989, p. 41).

Thus Byram argues that the tendency to treat language independently of the culture to which it refers disregards the nature of language (*ibid.*). Instead, language and culture should be studied in an integral manner and aspects of culture need to be approached through the language items which refer to express them. This is because as soon as semantic interference or transfer from the native to the target language arises, the interdependence of language learning and culture learning becomes evident (*ibid.*, p. 42.). As language embodies the values and artifacts of a culture through referential meanings, to be able to teach these linguistic meanings, the language teacher needs an analysis of the values and artifacts to which they refer that is not linguistic in nature (*ibid.*, p. 43).

Cultural Studies

Understandably, the analysis which Byram proposes to be taken into account is the analysis of culture encountered in the field of cultural anthropology. Recognizing the lack of a single authoritative view within anthropology of the concept of 'culture', Byram adopts Geertz's (1973) 'symbols and meanings' conceptualization probably on the grounds that such a view "clearly puts language, as one of the principal carriers of meanings, at the centre of an account of a particular culture, and reinforces the argument ...that language teaching inevitably involves teaching culture" (1989, p. 43). On that basis Byram offers a theory of 'Cultural Studies' in language teaching. He uses the term to refer to any information, knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about the foreign culture which are

taught and learnt “overtly and implicitly”, “consciously and incidentally” when students are participating in language lessons (1989, p. 3; 1991a, p. xi). In the context of Byram’s insistence on the integration of language and culture, the model he proposes for language and culture teaching contains four components: language learning, language awareness, cultural awareness, and cultural experience and the whole process is represented as a circle of mutually supporting parts (1989, 1991a, 1991b). The principles which he believes should guide teachers' methods, and are to be applied in “teaching-and-learning language-and-culture”, are comparison, "provision of information about a foreign country", and fieldwork (1994, p. 41).

Ethnographic Fieldwork in Culture Teaching

Byram is among the first to propose the need to incorporate methods of cultural analysis, i.e. ethnographic fieldwork, when teaching culture. He offers an elaborate scheme, from which I would like to quote at length, of what learners should be doing as ethnographers carrying out fieldwork on the foreign culture. In the context of one of the components in Byram’s culture teaching model, cultural experience, students are presented with aspects of the target culture and

are to experience and analyze it in a way analogous to the duality of participant observation (Spradley, 1980). On the one hand they are encouraged to become personally involved in the foreign culture in order to develop an insider’s understanding of it. On the other, they must also stand back and observe the foreign culture and their own experience of it... [T]he observation should then be fed into ‘cultural awareness’ teaching as a component on which to construct a comparative study of cultures including reflection on the native culture.” (1991a, p. 385-6).

Following the process of observation and participation students produce oral or written accounts of parts of the foreign culture which in the ‘awareness’ part of the model “become part of the resources of which comparative questions may be asked” (ibid., p. 386-7). The learner’s account is to

serve both as an activity which aids his [sic] interpretation and understanding and as a means of developing his linguistic capacity, especially his grasp of the relationship between language and culture. Above all ...the learner will acquire the perspective and procedures of the ethnographer: the attitude of someone who wishes to learn and understand others in their own terms, the techniques of asking questions of individuals and texts which establish the significance of objects and actions, the perspective which combines the viewpoint of the participant and the external observer in a critical interpretation.” (1991b, p. 12).

The advantages of this approach to culture are obvious. Instead of a model of teaching and learning in which information is transmitted from the teacher to the students “the ethnographic fieldwork model is oriented toward developing a particular mode of thinking by teaching methods of cultural analysis rather than ready-made accounts of the culture” (1991a, p. 383-4). What is more, by concentrating on teaching ‘ways of knowing’ about culture, the problem and need to describe and select from a particular culture on the uncertain basis of prediction of students’ needs is eliminated. Besides, through this approach language learning and the familiarization with the target culture take place simultaneously (1991b, p. 11).

Problematizing Some of Byram’s Conceptualizations

There is an aspect of Byram’s conceptualization of the learner as ethnographer which I find problematic. Byram argues that an important factor “in acquiring an understanding of another culture is to perceive its values, meanings, and behaviours from the standpoint of a member of that culture”(1991b, p. 171). This is a view I endorse. Yet Byram claims that “[t]his involves an ability to give up or, better, suspend the native culture viewpoint” (ibid.). Although Byram views the suspension as “temporary” and leading to “the relativization of both target and native cultures” (ibid., p. 201) and indicates that “it is neither realistic nor desirable to require the learner to abandon the native culture viewpoint” (ibid. p. 171), such conceptualization is over-simplistic and seems to ignore the point that “meaning is relational” and “understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in

relation with one's own" (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 205). Besides, from contemporary discussions of ethnographic methods, it is clear that all ethnography is allegorical and ethnographers' portraits of other cultures are in fact figures of their own culture's prevailing preoccupations (Clifford, 1986). What this means is that "the study of a second culture can only be a contrastive process, a dialogue between two ways of living and viewing the world" (Moorjani & Field, 1988, p. 26) and it is futile to attempt to view the target culture strictly 'on its own terms' without reference to the native culture of the investigators (*ibid.*). Thus, I believe that the relativization of the target and native culture could only come from the *dialogue* between the two. Furthermore, Byram's claim seems to imply that "a view from nowhere" (Toohey, personal communication) is possible, i.e. that one can put aside one's class, gender, or sexuality as well as those of the observed when conducting ethnographies.

With regard to the method of comparison which Byram proposes, the theoretician attempts to assign to this method a role more complex than simple contrasting of similarities and differences between cultures. He believes that it could be envisioned "as a step towards the *acceptance* [italics added] of other perspectives, and *the valuing of them as equally acceptable within their own terms* [italics added]" (Byram & Morgan, 1994, p. 177). However, he does not make it clear how exactly students will begin to value other perspectives as equally acceptable through contrasting them with their own.

Cultural Knowledge

What I find especially disappointing in Byram's works, however, is his insistence on the place of systematic information as cultural knowledge to be presented to students. This is indeed discouraging when viewed in the context of Byram's pioneering position on the need for "a conception of language and culture learning as a preparation for the unpredictable" (1991b, p. 10), where the teacher is not the authority carrying out the

selection of materials and the learner is an ethnographer. Here is Byram's view on the place of knowledge in culture teaching: "In order to communicate interculturally, students need some factual knowledge. They need to know historical and geographical facts, facts about the society and its institutions, facts about socialization through formal ceremonies, religious and secular, and so on" (1994, p. 136).

Obviously, Byram is not concerned by whom and for whom this "factual" knowledge is constructed. He also proposes some categories for the content of culture learning "presented either as structured information or integrated into linguistic learning" (ibid., p. 51). These are: social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behaviour, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life cycle, national history, national geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and cultural identity (ibid., p. 51-2). Of course, it would be absurd to argue that students have no need of "facts" about a culture in order to communicate in a satisfactory manner with its representatives. However, coming again with *the* topics of culture teaching like many of his predecessors Byram, in my opinion, is stripping the students of their role as autonomous ethnographers who explore the culture of the target community to search for the "facts" that they consider important and meaningful in their struggle to incorporate these "facts" in their own understanding of the community's way of life.

Perhaps because Byram discusses culture teaching in the context of *foreign* and not *second* language teaching, and this mainly for high school students, he insists on the acquisition of structured knowledge in the study of the culture's "artefacts" as well as from "sociological sources" (1991b, p. 171). However, the question still remains as to who makes the selection of these artefacts and sociological sources. It is also not always clear how significant are the students' efforts in ethnographic analysis in the context of statements like: "because [students'] own ethnographies are unlikely to be complete or sufficiently thorough, other ethnographies, by anthropologists or journalists for example, should also be included" (1991a, p. 387).

Byram's Conceptualization of Cultural Meaning

Another area of Byram's conceptualization of culture teaching which I find problematic is related to Byram's understanding of cultural meanings. Byram argues that "[c]ultural meanings are objects [sic] created by [a cultural] group ..[which] exist independently of any single group member" (1989, p. 91). He also claims that the meanings of cultural artefacts are acquired by cultural bearers "from the norms and constitutive rules which are *recognized and agreed by all* [italics added] and which, independently of individuals, are part of social reality" (ibid., p. 84). Such views lead him to maintain that "to teach culture is to teach *the* [italics added] systems of meanings and *the* [italics added] symbols which carry the meanings" (ibid., p. 43).

In other words, Byram seems to believe that there is *a* code in a culture which is shared by culture bearers (apparently perceived as a homogeneous group) and can be deciphered. I find this unacceptable, convinced as I am by arguments from socio-cultural theory which view meaning as dialogic. For Bakhtin (1986), for example, meaning is an active *process* and not a static entity (cf. also Wertch, 1991). It is not in the language or culture, but constantly negotiated and renegotiated (Kuna, 1991) and located in specific, situated fields of social interaction (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is always under construction with each new occasion of use (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) and possesses a social history (Bakhtin, 1981) being inextricably linked to historical, cultural, and institutional settings (Wertsch, 1991). Moreover, the individual, social and cultural levels are inseparable and thus we cannot seek the impact of culture on the individual as if culture and the individual are separate entities (Rogoff, Radziszewska, & Masiello, 1995). From this perspective, it would be reasonable to argue that *the* meanings in a culture are unteachable due to their variety, their being co-constituent of the individuals using them and, in fact, their inherent nature of being recreated and renegotiated in each particular context with the

histories, intentions, actions, and interactions of the participants involved. Indeed, if we try to teach *the* meanings in *a* culture the teaching process will again lead to information acquisition.

I would like to end my discussion of Byram's contribution to the field of culture teaching by mentioning his innovative insistence on the emancipatory function that Cultural Studies should have in the language classroom. By this Byram means that learners need to develop a critical understanding of the way of life of the target community by searching for ideological and biased viewpoints. In addition, students need to go beyond the mere acceptance of social situations as inevitable and unalterable, and, consequently, analyze their own social environment critically (1989, 1994). Finally, I consider Byram's statement: "language teaching does involve culture teaching whether teachers wish it or not" (1991a, p. 6) a staple and axiom for the need to approach explicitly the place of culture in language teaching.

Kramsch and the "Third Place" in Culture Learning

Culture as Conflict

Another prominent language education theorist promoting the idea that language and culture teaching should be integrated in the language classroom is Kramsch (1983, 1988, 1993a, 1993b). I will present her point of view quoting at length from her works, especially *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993a), because I believe that a presentation of someone's ideas can best be accomplished by 'appropriating' that person's voice. The assumption that language and culture need to be integrated in language education is indeed the context for the development of Kramsch's ideas. As she puts it: "language use is indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture" (1993a, p. 9); "every time we say something, we perform a cultural act" (1995, workshop), and "[c]ulture in

language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing [because it] is always in the background, right from day one" (1993a, p. 1). The insights that come from Kramsch's discussion of the subject of culture teaching are numerous and essentially call for the recognition of complexity and the tolerance of ambiguity in language instruction. In my view, the most innovative of them is the notion that in the context of language learning, culture is *conflict*; it is a "struggle between the learners' meanings and those of the native speakers" (ibid., p. 24) because "when one culture enters into contact with another", "[t]here is always a potential source of conflict" (ibid., p. 1). Kramsch bases this conceptualization of culture on the following line of thought:

Culture is not a relatively harmonious and stable pool of significations, but a confrontation between groups occupying different, sometimes opposing positions in the map of social relations, and the process of making meanings (which is, after all, the process of culture) is a social struggle, as different groups struggle to establish meanings that serve their interests (Fiske cited in ibid., p. 24).

Such understanding of culture leads Kramsch to argue that instead of searching for "bridges" (i.e. similarities across cultures) we should seek in cross-cultural education "a deep understanding of the boundaries" (ibid., p. 228) (i.e. the conflicts and differences between cultures). This is because

In the post-structuralist era of the 1980s and 1990s...scholars are less optimistic about the possibility of finding universal bridges [across cultures]...; the notion of national culture itself has become significantly more differentiated than it used to be...[and] advances in pragmatics and in sociolinguistics have shown how unreliable our very frames of reference are" (ibid., p. 224).

Teaching the Boundary through Dialogue

Thus, Kramsch maintains that "[w]e can teach the boundary, we cannot teach the bridge" (ibid., p. 228). The assumption is that the process of cross-cultural understanding starts with "an initial misunderstanding of the source of misunderstanding, followed by

attempts to explain the problem within one's own frame of reference, and then the necessary switch to the other person's frame of reference" (1993b, p. 356). The approach which Kramersch suggests for teaching the boundaries is classroom dialogue.

It is through dialogue with others... that learners discover which ways of talking and listening they share with others and which are unique to them (1993a, p. 27). Through dialogue and the search for each other's understanding, each person tries to see the world through the other's eyes without losing site of him or herself. The goal is not a balance of opposites, or a moderate pluralism of opinions but a paradoxical, irreducible confrontation that may change one in the process. The aim is to disengage oneself from one's usual frame and see from the other's perspective (ibid., p. 231).

Kramersch's notion of the classroom dialogue is predicated on Bakhtin's (1981) understanding of meaning as dialogic within a political, historical and economic context and discourse as double-voiced. Drawing on Bakhtin's work, Kramersch maintains that "[t]ext and context cannot exist outside the individual voices that create them" (ibid., p. 14) and at the same time, however, "[i]n all human interactions, the particular voices of the individual mingle with the voices of the social communities from which they draw" (ibid., p. 19). Thus, the aim in the classroom is to create a double voiced discourse through which students would acquire not an understanding of another "national group" but "an understanding of 'difference' per se" (1993b, p. 350). In double-voiced discourse

the speaker pays attention to the companion's point of view, even while pursuing her own agenda. As a result the voice of the self is enmeshed with and regulated by the voice of the other (Sheldon, 1992: 99). In that type of orientation, teacher and learners are interested not only in talking and listening to others talk, but in genuinely exploring the intentions, frames of reference, and reactions of the other participants in the classroom dialogue (1993a, p. 28).

Furthermore, by

identifying and discussing the dialogic context itself, the participants in the dialogue are given validity and importance as speakers and hearers in that dialogue; their contributions are given breadth and depth. By attending both to their own agenda and to that of their interlocutors, language learners can start using the foreign language not merely as imperfect speakers, but as speakers in their own right (ibid.)

as well as develop as both social and individual speakers. This seems a constructive approach to cultural instruction because by probing into their own assumptions and those of their interlocutors, as well as by analyzing the context and the "history" of their classroom discussions, students can come to the realization that using language is a way of acting in the world and is saturated with cultural meanings.

Double-Voicedness and Critical Language Pedagogy

The idea of a double-voiced classroom discourse is subsumed under a need for critical language pedagogy whose aim is to address the issue of "how learners can use the system for their own purposes, to create a culture of the third kind in which they can express their own meanings without being hostage to the meanings of either their own or the target speech communities" (ibid., p.13-14). Here is how critical pedagogy is to be realized in the classroom: "Applying a critical pedagogy of culture would mean ...attempting to understand the intentions behind the words [in a text] and making explicit the social and historical tradition which accounts for the target language style of presentation of the facts" (ibid., p. 195-6). It has to be pointed out that for Kramsch teaching culture has to do with addressing thoroughly the context of production and reception of texts dealt with in the *foreign* language classroom. Indeed, Kramsch emphasizes the necessity to "teach context explicitly and not assume that it is transparent and agreed upon by everyone in the class" (ibid., p. 78) and argues for recognition of the fact that "a large part of what we call culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions" (ibid., p. 205).

In that respect, Kramsch is not satisfied with the mere transmission of cultural information and the accompanying meta-information in language classes. She demands that teachers focus on the *negotiation* of this information by the learners and thus insists on the recognition of the particular 'third culture' or 'third place' which she believes students

create for themselves out of the interaction of their understandings of their native and the target culture.

The Third Place - Being on the Fence

The third place is the place where the learner “*creates meaning*” (ibid., p. 236). The teacher’s responsibility in the process of the creation of this ‘third place’ seems to be “to give learners a ‘space’ to make their own meanings, and help them interpret those meanings” (ibid., p. 26). Kramersch argues that the development of a third perspective would “enable learners to take both an insider’s and an outsider’s view on C1 [the native culture] and C2 [the target culture]” (ibid., p. 210) and that cross-cultural education should seek to establish precisely that third place. Kramersch also argues that the culture that emerges through the dialogues is of a different kind from either C1 or C2. What is more, “[i]t does not offer any certainties, nor does it resolve any conflicts” (ibid., p.232). What it does is give “voice to feelings of being forever ‘betwixt and between’”, of “being on the fence” (ibid., p. 234), of experiencing “the back-and-forth of cultural ‘border crossings’” (1993b, p. 356).

Kramersch also suggests specific classroom activities whose aim is “to identify and explore the boundary and explore oneself in the process” (1993a, p. 232). These activities require that students adopt different ways of looking at language forms, cultural meanings, the learners’ own interpretations of cultural events, and the linguistic representations of those events. (For examples of activities to be incorporated in classrooms to enable students to enter “a different logical type” (Bateson cited in ibid.) see Kramersch, 1983, p. 446-448 and 1993a, p. 229-231.) The result of experiencing the boundary is discovering that both the native and target cultures are much less monolithic than originally perceived and that each includes a myriad of potential changes. Of course, the boundary is not an “actual event” but, rather, a “state of mind”, “a positioning of the learner at the intersection

of multiple social roles and individual choices” (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 234). At this intersection of multiple native and target cultures, learners are to define for themselves what the ‘third place’ that they have engaged in seeking will look like. What is more, “[n]obody, least of all the teacher, can tell them where that very personal place is [because] for each learner it will be differently located, and will make different sense at different times” (ibid., p. 257).

An Approach to Cross-Cultural Understanding

Within the framework of the search for the third place through texts in the foreign language classroom Kramsch suggests a four step approach to cross-cultural understanding which involves: reconstruction of the context of production and reception of the text within the foreign culture; construction with the learners of their own context of reception; examination of the way each culture views the other; and laying the ground for a dialogue that could lead to change (ibid., p.210). These same steps are conceptualized in a workshop conducted by Kramsch in 1995 as: observation and interpretation of C2; contextualization of the C1 interpretation of C2; identification of the different categories and norms of interpretation used in the C1 and the C2; acceptance of the incommensurabilities and the performance of an imaginative leap based on common human experience. This approach seems to offer a constructive framework for the focus on culture in adult second language teaching contexts. A view as to how to implement it in the classroom will be presented in the next chapter.

As a final comment on Kramsch’s conceptualization of culture I would like to point to her insistence that

experiencing differences does not automatically come with learning a foreign code. [Instead] [t]exts must be authenticated, [and] cultural contexts... created [because] [i]t is by observing, documenting, and interpreting teachers’ and learners’ experience of difference that we can understand what it means to teach culture in the language class (1993b, p. 357).

This schematic account of the most powerful, in my view, ideas found in Byram's and Kramsch's works by no means does justice to the nuances, emphases, and shifts in the publications of these two language education theorists. The aim of this analysis, however, has been two-fold: to present from a historiographic point of view the most recent trends and developments in the conceptualization of the place of culture in the language classroom as well as to provide the context and background for my own conceptualization of what an approach to culture in adult second language teaching should involve. This conceptualization will be discussed in the next chapter of the study.

Chapter Six

Culture Exploration in the Adult Second Language Classroom

Introduction

I would like to start the discussion of my own conceptualization of the place of culture in second language education with the view which Brooks (1968) has expressed and which I share that “a suitable concept of culture needs first of all to be made explicit” and “expressed in terms that will be usable” (p. 20) in the language classroom. I am suggesting an approach to cultural instruction which I call ‘culture exploration’ and which involves applying ethnographic techniques to investigate the target culture in and outside the classroom and engaging in reflective and critical classroom dialogue in the process of language and culture learning. This approach builds on ideas discussed by Byram (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1994) and Kramsch (1983, 1988, 1993a, 1993b) and, I hope, adds something new to the current call for an integration of language and culture in language instruction.

In this chapter I will present an argument for the conceptualization of the approach to culture as ‘exploration’ and not ‘teaching’ and the organization of classroom reflections/discussions on culture via applying a Freirean understanding of educational dialogue in language education (cf. Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein, 1983). In this relation I view culture exploration as leading to “praxis”, i.e. as facilitating a process of “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1970, p.33).

I will argue that this approach is suited for adult second learners of a language. I believe it is important to keep that in mind because, as will become obvious from the discussion that follows, ideas related to culture exploration may need serious adaptation

before they can be applied in foreign language classrooms and in classrooms with younger learners. In addition, although I believe that a discussion of the merits of culture exploration for adult students would perhaps require a thorough study, I will describe briefly the social and educational context which I had in mind when conceptualizing the approach. I envisage culture exploration taking place in ethnically and culturally heterogeneous classes of adult immigrants to a country who have opportunities to interact with and observe the activities of native members of their new community. I assume that students at an advanced level of the second language would be most eloquent in discussions of their cultural experiences in the new environment. Nevertheless, I hope that students at the intermediate, or even beginner level, would be able to address in a less sophisticated manner their cultural experiences in target settings, especially if assisted by bilingual teaching aids in the classroom. Despite the contextualization made here, I believe that the principles of culture exploration hold true for most conceivable language teaching settings.

The relationship between language and culture was examined in the previous chapter. The theoretical foundations for this study were addressed in the introductory chapter. Here I would only reiterate briefly that language and culture instruction need to be integrated because language is not self-contained and cannot be understood "without reference to the culture of which it is a part and the social relations which it mediates" (Nostrand, 1966, p. 2). Furthermore, I believe that culture should be *explicitly* addressed in the language classroom, which does not mean "that it is neatly explained, but that it is put to questioning and hypothesis formulation" (Zarate, 1986, p.23, my translation). This is necessary because "by teaching a language one is inevitably already teaching culture implicitly" (McLeod, 1976, p. 212). From that argument follows another: as "one cannot separate language from culture...teaching language only will leave the students social cripples" (ibid., p. 213). In addition, as Crawford-Lange & Lange (1984) suggest, the students' involvement with the target culture begins as soon as the students start *using* the

language at even the most elementary level. With the currently predominant communicative approach this means on the first day in the classroom.

Culture Teaching or Culture Exploration?

With no claims to address the term “teaching” in language education in general, I would like to present my argument with regard to why I believe conceptualizing the approach to culture in language instruction in other terms than *culture teaching* is important. First of all, “[t]he use of words involves a process of naming, and naming is a source of power” (Brögger, 1992, p. 126). As Coe puts it: “how we name things influences how we perceive them” (in Kaye, 1991) and goes on: “when you put a name on something you do not just represent it, you bring into focus how you see it” (ibid.). I would like to argue that the legacy of the term ‘culture teaching’ as well as current contentions in the fields of culture instruction theorizing, cultural anthropology, and socio-cultural theory make it imperative that we reconceptualize our understanding of what goes on and should go on in the classroom when culture is addressed.

Legacy of the Term “Culture Teaching”

In two previous chapters of this study I discussed at length the predominantly ambiguous conceptualizations of the term culture and the prevalent current practices in culture teaching which focus on the *presentation* of cultural “facts” and information. A common positivistic assumption has been that eventually culture teaching, relying on systematic accounts of cultural data provided by anthropologists, will be able to provide students with *the* knowledge with respect to *the* situations in which cultural misunderstandings could occur (cf. Nostrand, 1974, 1978; Rivers, 1981; Seelye, 1974, 1993; Stern, 1983, 1992). In other words, the way the term “culture teaching” has been

used, it seems to suggest that culture can be taught by presenting certainties, fixed knowable items, and concrete answers to questions such as ‘why, what, how’. It was argued earlier that this way of approaching culture could lead to stereotyping as well as equipping students with some static sets of problematically generalized features pertaining to a culture.

Current Culture Instruction Theorizing

A line of reasoning which would support my argument that a reconceptualization of the term “culture teaching” is needed has developed among language education theorists in recent years. For example, Sauv  (1996) makes the following point about culture: “how possible is it to teach something when we cannot even be fully conscious of it?” (p. 17) and goes on: “I am more comfortable with the notion of enabling the acquisition of culture; I am less comfortable with the idea of trying to teach it” (ibid.). In other words, the conceptualization “culture teaching” seems to disregard the fact that we are dealing with something which has not been and probably can never be fully articulated in words and in human consciousness.

Furthermore, some have argued the impossibility of teaching culture in its complexity and totality in the classroom (Byram, 1989; Kramsch 1993a; Zarate, 1986). First of all, “culture is realized through the tangible experiences of everyday life” (Kane, 1991, p. 243). Therefore,

No ...course can ever give the full, rich range of social and cultural context on which cultural natives draw... Sociocultural contexts cannot be reduced to an inventory to be “mastered” like grammatical knowledge [because] they are not only too rich and various but also in constant flux as people reshape them through speaking and other forms of social action (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 5).

As Sauv  puts it: “[w]e always have to talk about culture in relation to a *particular* [italics added] context” (1996, p. 18). At the same time, as Kramsch points out, a general

rethinking of language as social practice suggests new ways of looking at the teaching of language and culture and one of them is “replac[ing] the presentation, prescription of cultural facts and behaviours by the teaching of a process that applies itself to understanding ‘otherness’ (1993a, p. 285). The point I want to reiterate is that with regard to the nature of culture and language addressed earlier, conceptualizing the approach to culture in the language classroom as ‘teaching’ implies a static viewpoint and is something that I find problematic. As it was argued in another chapter, the social meanings that language carries cannot be taught. From developments in sociolinguistics we are aware that “effective communication requires that speakers and audiences agree both on the meanings of words and on the social import or values attached to choice of expression” (Gumperz, 1971, p.285). Assuming, however, that meaning emerges through social interaction (Bakhtin, 1986; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1991), it may seem useless to teach fixed cultural meanings as they in reality do not exist.

A very powerful argument which supports my view that talking about culture *teaching* is misleading is found in Crawford-Lange & Lange (1984) who believe that the acquisition and dissemination of cultural information pose severe limitations on the learning of culture. As they put it:

An information-centered, culture teaching strategy implies that the culture under study is closed, final, complete...[It also] eliminates consideration of culture at the personal level, where the individual interacts with and acts upon the culture...Although culture contains knowable facts, these facts are in constant flux. More important to an understanding of culture than the collection of facts is an appreciation of culture as a constellation of phenomena in a continual process of change, brought about by the participants in the culture as they live and work. To study culture as a body of facts is to study the characteristics of culture; to study culture as a process is to study its essence” (p.141-142)

Inspired by this argument I believe that the study of culture as a process could be named “culture exploration”.

Yet another reason why I resist using the term ‘culture teaching’ stems from disappointment with the predominant current practices in culture teaching in the classroom

which not only ignore the relevance of the students' personal experiences of the cultural ways of the target community, but are also unreliable in providing "authoritative" sources of cultural knowledge. An example will demonstrate my point. For instance, Sauv  (1996) tells us of a project she was involved in where five white, middle-class, well-educated ESL teachers attempted to create a chapter of cultural "do's" and "don'ts" for newcomers to Alberta. As she writes: "[w]e discovered that, for all we had in common, we had *major* [italics added] differences in our understandings of what was appropriate in the *most common* [italics added] of situations: what time to arrive for dinner, when to start eating, gift-giving, and so-forth." (p. 18). Kramsch (1993b) also provides a similar account of discrepancies in the perceptions of a homogeneous group of culture bearers of the significance of national culture markers. Finally, as already mentioned, through the current mainstream approach "students are taught about culture; they are not taught how to interact with culture" (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984, p. 146) which, especially in the case of adult second language students, is extremely important. These students need to learn to live and work in the new cultural environment after having spent years in being socialized, or more precisely, enculturated, in their native culture and thus carry with them a "stock of metaphors" and "categories they use to represent their experience" their native community lives by (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 43). (Perhaps a reconceptualization of the term "language learning" is also forthcoming. Becker (1984), for example, insists on defining language learning as "learning a new definition of human beings in the world" and offers a critique of mainstream language pedagogy not only as irrelevant but also as harmful by giving one the impression "that he or she can go into another language intact, the same 'human being in the world'...just saying the same things in a different way, as if those 'things' could be separated from 'saying'" (p. 217-218).)

The Predicament of Culture

Another line of thought in the direction of re-naming the approach to culture in language education stems from an understanding of what culture is taken to be in current anthropological literature. Clifford (1988) describes 'the predicament of culture' as a concept in anthropology enveloped in uncertainties, but points out that although "culture is a deeply compromised idea" he cannot "yet do without" it (p. 10). Therefore, without dwelling further on the debates on culture in the field I would only point out that language education theorists should continue to search for ways to construe the concept for the practical purposes of language instruction through gaining insights from anthropology. As already mentioned in a previous chapter, I believe that the most fruitful approach to culture in the language classroom is to view it as the meaning assigned to objects, events, and relationships in a particular context or situation by participants in or observers of the situation.

Conceptualizing 'culture' in semiotic terms, Geertz suggests that "as interworked systems of construable signs...[or] symbols, culture is not a power...to which social events, behaviours, institutions, or processes can be causally *attributed* [italics added]...[but] a context ...within which they can be intelligibly...*described* [italics added]" (1973, p. 14). In other words, culture does not give clear cut answers as to why, how, and what culture bearers are doing or saying, but provides the background for plausible interpretations of their actions. Furthermore, another cultural theorist, Raymond Williams (1977) argues that culture is not an achieved state, but views it as active and forever evolving, created by people and not a given. More recently, other anthropologists perceive culture as having an "essentially changing character and process nature" (Street cited in Whalley, 1995, p. 44) and as characterized as much by multivocality, diversity, conflicts and contradictions as by consistency (Rosaldo, 1993). Likewise, other cultural

philosophers like Giroux (1992), for example, argue that culture is dynamic and rooted in a specific social context and not some reified body of knowledge transferred from one generation to the next. Such conceptualizations of the term make it impossible, in my understanding, to “teach” culture in the sense the term has been overwhelmingly used so far in cultural instruction theorizing. Instead the current conceptualization of culture in anthropology seems to impose a view on approaching culture in the classroom as a process to be experienced and ‘processed’ by the students.

The Nature of Learning

A final reason why I believe that the term ‘culture exploration’ will be more exact than culture teaching to describe what should go on when approaching culture in the classroom stems from developments in socio-cultural theory with respect to the nature of learning. First of all, socio-cultural theory posits that individuals and culture co-constitute each other. “As individuals and groups of people develop through their shared involvement, they also contribute to transforming the cultural tools, practices and institutions of the activities in which they engage.” (Rogoff, Radziszewska & Masiello, 1995, p. 127). Reality itself is a social construct built out of an interaction between external phenomena and the subjective (but not ‘individual’) interpretation of these phenomena (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and people find themselves in biographically set situations where their social contexts affect their perceptions (Schutz, 1967). Within this framework socio-cultural theorists view learning as a “profoundly social process” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131), a ‘situated activity’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991), distributed among coparticipants and mediated by the differences of their perspectives (Hanks in Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 15).

In other words, as Toohey (1996) has suggested when applying a sociocultural approach to language acquisition, learning is not an individual act of learners “internalizing, in their individual brains, bodies of knowledge which exist independently of the situations

or the persons interacting with them” (p. 552). Transferring this line of reasoning to culture learning we could argue that culture acquisition in the classroom cannot be seen as the internalization of a discrete body of cultural knowledge. In addition, classroom communities are “specific, local, historically constructed and changing” (ibid., p. 551) and the knowledge shared and explored in the process of culture acquisition could in no way be assumed to consist of the knowable facts intended to be taught. As students will always perceive the cultural information presented to them within their own frames of reference, we cannot talk of culture teaching as the unproblematic and neutral transfer of cultural “facts”.

In an attempt to weave all these lines of reasoning I suggest that another way of perceiving the place of culture in the classroom is needed, a way that puts behind the legacy of the term ‘culture teaching’, a way I call ‘culture exploration’. I perceive the difference between ‘culture teaching’ and ‘culture exploration’ as follows: while the first seems to impose views of the target culture on the students and is prescriptive, the second simply aims to pose questions and assist learners in approaching, naming, and understanding their own as well as the natives’ experience of the target culture and in searching for possible interpretations of it. What is the role of the teacher in this process will be touched upon later in this chapter.

Ethnography in Culture Exploration

Having presented my reasons for naming the approach to culture in the language classroom ‘culture exploration’ instead of ‘culture teaching’, I would like to elaborate on what I believe culture exploration should involve in adult second language instruction contexts. As already stated, the two aspects of culture exploration are application of ethnographic techniques, or more specifically participant observation, in and outside the language classroom and reflective/interpretive/critical dialogue in the classroom.

Some of the reasons for the need to incorporate ethnographic techniques when addressing culture in language education have been elaborated on by Byram (1989, 1994) and touched upon in the previous chapter of this study. The goals I set for 'culture exploration' which I believe will be served by introducing students to ethnography are: developing an awareness of the relationship between language and culture and awareness of oneself as a cultural being, as well as gaining some understanding of the nature of culture. Why do I suggest that these goals will begin to be met through ethnography? To answer this question I would like to elaborate on the concept of culture developed in Geertz' works (1973, 1983), as well as on what ethnography as a research method in anthropology involves.

Geertz's Conceptualization of Culture

As mentioned in chapter two, I believe that Geertz' conceptualization of culture can be very productive for approaching cultural instruction in second language classrooms. Geertz takes culture to be "the webs of significance man himself [sic] has spun" and argues that its analysis should be "an interpretive one in search of meaning" (1973, p. 5). In that relation he argues that anthropologists need to focus their attention "on what institutions, actions, images, utterances, events, customs...mean to those whose institutions actions, customs and so on they are" (1983, p. 22). The assumption behind this reasoning of the anthropologist is that human beings depend inherently upon symbols for orientation and as Geertz suggests, it is in terms of culture that we "give form, point, order, and direction in our lives" (1973, p. 521). In other words, culture plays a role in one's efforts "to interpret, construe, or make sense of experience, to render one's situation meaningful [and] comprehensible" (Rice, 1980, p. 219). Thus Geertz maintains that we need to approach culture semiotically, i.e. focus on decoding the cultural messages and signs embedded in activities and language in order to be able to gain "access to the conceptual world in which

[the target culture bearers] live so that we can...converse with them.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 24). More specifically, Geertz argues that one is initially unable to grasp the meanings of the acts of people of other cultures because of “lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs” (1973, p. 13).

Ethnography and Participant Observation

Let us now turn to what ethnography involves. Ethnography is “a research process in which the anthropologist closely observes, records, and engages in the daily life of another culture...and then writes accounts of this culture” (Marcus & Fisher, 1986, p. 18). It “bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 2) and “begins with the same general question: ‘What are the cultural meanings people are using to organize their behaviour and interpret their experience?’” (Spradley, 1979, p. 93). It seems obvious that if we adopt a Geertzian understanding of the concept of culture, we need to approach culture through ethnography. The assumption is that through ethnographic description we will attempt to restore the context of production, reception, or, in fact, negotiation of cultural meanings and thereby try “to make the acts of [culture bearers in a particular situation] as intelligible to us as they are to them” (Rice, 1980, p. 235). As “construction, apprehension, and utilization of symbolic forms are social events” (Geertz, 1973, p. 91), the “significance of a symbol can be better ascertained through the investigation of the larger contexts in which we find the symbol than through the reflection upon the symbol in isolation” (Rice, 1980, p. 7). As Geertz puts it: “we gain empirical access to [symbol systems] by inspecting events, not by arranging abstracted entities into unified patterns” (1973, p. 17). The inspecting of events, however, and I would add, of the linguistic representation of these events, can only take place through their conscious observation, and conscious, or ‘participant’ observation constitutes a major part of the ethnographic process. Therefore, I

would like to suggest that we need to assist students to develop, initially in the classroom, and later on in fieldwork outside the language course, the perspectives characteristic of participant observers.

Spradley (1980) describes these perspectives as: duality of purpose - engaging in the activities appropriate for the situation and at the same time observing oneself and the others in the situation; explicit awareness - raising one's level of attention and increasing one's awareness of things others take for granted; a wide-angle lens - approaching a situation by looking beyond the immediate focus of the activity and taking in a broader spectrum of information; a simultaneous insider and outsider perspective - alternating between being a part of and participating in the situation and viewing the situation and one's self in it as objects for investigation; introspection - engaging in an attempt to more fully understand one's experience, feelings, and thoughts occurring in the situation; record-keeping - keeping a detailed record of things observed, experienced, and felt in the situation (p. 54-58).

Goals of Participant Observation in Culture Exploration

How will the practice of participant observation assist students in beginning to gain awareness of the relationship between language and culture as well as insight in the nature of culture? Since "[a]ll the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 60) and "language and culture are inseparable in interaction" (Roberts, 1988, p. 26), it is more likely than not that in situations of participant observation students will have to attend to language use and its meaning. Meaning, however, "resides ultimately in cultural context, and is only expressed transiently and situationally in language" (Kemp & Ellen, 1984, p.234). Thus understanding meaning is "a process of discovery, a permanent act of 'contextualization' in response to the referential function of language" (Kuna, 1991, p. 262). By paying close attention to everyday interaction in observed social

settings and by keeping records of what they have seen and their thoughts and feelings in these situations students will be equipped with material to explore in classroom discussions with a view to voice their experiences, search for the reasons behind those experiences and start to recognize the symbolic and contextual meaning of everyday verbal and nonverbal behaviour.

I suggested earlier in this chapter that the use of ethnographic techniques could assist students in gaining awareness of themselves as inherently cultural beings. How will the practice of participant observation, and more specifically the students' accounts of observed situations in a target culture, aid them in beginning to achieve this goal? As Spradley puts it: "[d]escriptive observation...will include a considerable amount of information about the ethnographer [because d]escription of any kind is always from some point of view" (1980, p. 76). Indeed, ethnographic "truths are...inherently partial - committed and incomplete" (Clifford, 1986, p. 7) and thus always involve selection, summary, and interpretation. Why is this the case? To understand a situation one draws from prior experience and knowledge.

People approach the world not as naive, blank-slate receptacles who take in stimuli as they exist in some independent and objective way, but rather as experienced and sophisticated veterans of perception who have stored their prior experiences as 'an organized mass', and who see events and objects in the world in relation to each other and in relation to their prior experience" (Tannen cited in Kramsch, 1993a, p. 42-43).

Referring back to Kuna's (1991) view of understanding meaning as a process of contextualization, the researcher argues that "acts of contextualization are dependent on ideological dispositions, sociocultural competence and personal experience" (p. 270). At the same time, one's native culture 'functions as a filtering device' (Damen, 1987, p. 88) and as Disman points out immigrants to a country "identify their country of origin and their first language as paramount for making sense of their new surroundings" (1982, p. 72). In fact,

first language concepts play a central role in any perception because they provide the acquired instruments for perceiving reality...In perceiving new reality all of us tend to reduce the initial impression of foreignness by suppressing the deviating elements and emphasizing those that conform to our expectation" (Baumgratz-Gangl, 1991, p. 234).

In other words, foreigners to a culture will try and make sense out of phenomena they do not readily understand according to their cultural assumptions and in analogy and contrast with their own culture (Kramsch, 1983, 1993a). Finally, since there are as many ways to do ethnography as there are ethnographers (Spradley, 1979), by engaging in ethnography in a group, students will start to realize that they are "positioned subjects" (Rosaldo, 1993).

The idea that students' ethnographies say much about their authors has been illustrated by Whalley (1995). In discussing the ethnographic accounts made by his subjects on one and the same event, Whalley concludes: "[e]ach account is different because the observer is different. The truths are partial truths because the observer is a 'positioned subject', positioned in her biography and in the social order in the native and in the target culture" (1995, p. 245). Further Whalley goes on: "[w]hat the students record of the other culture...is the intersection of the partial truths of their own culture with the partial truth allowed by their circumstances in the host culture (ibid., p. 246). Indeed, as Zarate (1986) points out: "[t]he observation of a culture depends less on its characteristics than on the position adopted by the observer vis-à-vis the observed" (p. 37, my translation). For all these reasons, I would like to suggest that familiarizing students with the ethnographic techniques of participant observation and assisting them in practicing those would aid them in gaining an understanding of themselves as cultural beings. Of course, it would be unreasonable to expect that second language students would become fully fledged ethnographers even after numerous attempts in applying these techniques. Damen calls the approach she suggests for language classrooms 'pragmatic ethnography'

In order to clarify the limitations of the method as a scientific procedure and to allay any fears that the highly structured and complex organization of ethnographic research as practised by professional anthropologists has been popularized, watered down, and rendered trivial (1987, p. 53-54).

My understanding of what ethnography for second language students should involve differs from Damen's who focuses on the use of interviewing techniques by language learners. Nevertheless, I would like to borrow her term "pragmatic ethnography". As the procedures of participant observation are to be used in culture exploration to serve students' "personal and practical purposes" (ibid., p. 63) to bring the processes of interacting and confrontation with a new culture to a conscious level, it seems necessary to distinguish pragmatic ethnography from ethnography applied by anthropologists as a sophisticated research tool.

Critical Dialogue in the Classroom

The second aspect of culture exploration is incorporating the ethnographies of students in classroom discussions. The important point is to make the discussions fruitful so as to assist students with bringing to a conscious level the awareness that we are all cultural beings and this affects our perception and understanding of the situations we come across. The discussions should also help learners with finding their own voice in the new culture, with dealing with the ambiguity inherent in cross-cultural encounters, and thus, with coping with cultural shock. I believe that all these goals could be addressed if discussions of a Freirean type are conducted in the classroom.

Problem Posing

The educational philosophy developed by Freire rejects the "banking system of education" where the teacher is a "depositor of knowledge" and students - "passive recipients" as a "practice of domination" (1970, p. 62). Instead, Freire argues for education

based on a dialogue between students and their teachers which he calls “problem posing education” and which leads to “the practice of freedom” because through dialogue

people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves [and] come to see [it] not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (ibid., p. 64).

In the context of second language teaching, the problem posing approach has been promoted by Wallerstein (1983), Auerbach (1985) and others. Here is how Wallerstein views it: “[p]roblem posing is based on the premise that education starts with issues in people’s lives and, through dialogue, encourages students to develop critical view of their lives and the ways to enhance self-esteem, and improve their lives” (1983, p. 3). Problem posing focuses on the experience of the learner. The teacher’s role is through listening to the learners’ experience to bring into the classroom its representation by encapsulating it in a written dialogue or other visual, audio or multi-media form called ‘code’ which is to be ‘cracked’ through a classroom discussion (Wallerstein, 1983; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987). How could this approach be related to issues pertaining to culture? Basing her views on Freire’s idea that “people create and recreate their culture as they earn a living, pass on values, and interact in social groups” (Freire in Wallerstein, 1983, p. 10), Wallerstein argues that a problem posing approach “offers [students] a chance to redefine their culture” (ibid., p. 11).

This line of reasoning led me into thinking that when students are assisted in redefining their culture, in fact they gain awareness of it and through this process could indeed be aided to address their experience in a new culture. This is very important because, as Kramsch suggests,

one of the major handicaps of students learning to conceptualize a foreign culture is the fact that they have not learnt to conceptualize their own. Thus the development of the intercultural voice in the learners is impeded by the fact that they are not given the tools to develop that voice (1988, p. 80).

I will argue a little further that a problem posing approach, coupled with ethnographic techniques, could in fact equip students with the tools to develop an intercultural or third voice. However, I would like to elaborate a bit on the current application of this approach in the language classroom.

Steps in Applying Problem Posing in the Classroom

In the problem posing dialogue on the 'code' prepared by the teacher the process to promote critical thinking is presented as "a five-step questioning strategy which leads from the concrete to the analytic level" (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987, p. 4). The steps are: 1. What do you see? 2. What is happening? 3. How does this relate to your lives? 4. Why is there a problem? 5. What can the people in the situation do about the problem? (ibid., p. 4-6). Through the dialogue the ability to analyze a situation from many points of view is encouraged, a consciousness as to why and how the situation exists is developed, students come up with their own solutions to the situation and thus critical thinking is promoted. As Wallerstein puts it, students are the ones who "name the problem, understand how it applies to them, determine the causes of the problem, generalize to others, and finally, suggest alternatives or solutions to the problem" (1983, p. 17). It is believed that problem posing dialogue allows students to be in a position to choose action and not be acted upon. Although approaching culture in the classroom does not aim to focus on problems in students' lives, I would like to argue that a modification of the problem posing approach could be used within the framework of culture exploration.

Steps and Goals of the Critical Dialogue in Culture Exploration

Language learning is a complex process of reinventing oneself through a new language (Guiora, 1984; Becker, 1984). For a new immigrant it is also a struggle to find a

new voice, a new identity, and a new place through a new language in a new culture (cf. Kanno & Applebaum, 1995). To be able to do that language learners must have the opportunity to *name* their own experience in this new culture. In culture exploration the classroom dialogue following ethnographic fieldwork is the means by which the students' experience could be named and translated into a voice. The dialogue has the characteristics described by Kramsch (1993a) and referred to in the previous chapter and is organized along the lines of problem posing. The aim is for students to develop a critical and analytical approach to the target culture situations in which they participate. Through this reflective dialogue on culture, students develop awareness of themselves as cultural beings, i.e. they develop a critical view of the native cultural meanings they are attributing to target culture situations and the language involved in them. They also face the question to what extent to conform to the meanings negotiated among the native participants in the situation and to what extent to preserve and/or voice their own understanding of the situation and act accordingly.

The first two types of questions in the problem posing approach could be transferred directly to questions to be addressed in the culture exploration dialogue as they would in fact search to elicit the students' work in their pragmatic ethnographies. By offering answers to the questions: "What do/did you see?" and "What is/was happening?" students present their summarizations and interpretations of a target culture situation they have observed. The assumption is that when presenting their hypotheses of what they see and what is going on students will witness the presentation of different points of view.

First of all, "a sense of social identity or self-categorization can affect what one will or will not notice" (Goodnow, 1989, p. 282) and in the course of socialization, which for adult learners has taken place for many years in the native culture environment, "we acquire...interpretive frameworks...allowing us to assign meaning [and] evaluative frameworks, allowing us to categorize performances" (ibid., p. 265). Besides, cultural anthropologists have pointed out that given acts and objects appear vastly different in

different cultures depending on the meanings attached to them (cf. Geertz, 1984). Interpretation itself reposes on the contextual variables of the interpreter (cf. Kuna, 1991) and in the context of cross-cultural interaction the patterns of interpretation that we use are derived from our own cultural experience (Kramersch, 1993a). Therefore, by seeing different 'versions' of what happens/has happened, students will be able to begin to recognize different perspectives on the same event. Perhaps they will also need, especially in the initial exercises in culture exploration, to be prompted and challenged by the teacher who is to adopt different perspectives with plausible hypotheses as to the meaning of the events the students have observed.

I hope that these attempts will make students aware of the ambiguity of intent and meaning inherent in social, and especially cross-cultural interactions. Altogether, I believe that the summarizations and interpretations will differ from student to student (cf. also Whalley, 1995) and thus provide the background for the next step in the culture exploration classroom dialogue.

The next step in problem posing, a discussion of the type: "How does this relate to your lives?" could again be transferred to culture exploration as it refers to the students' feelings, thoughts and personal experiences of the observed situation which are addressed in the students' notes when conducting their pragmatic ethnographies. As to the fourth question within the problem posing strategy, it could be modified in a question of the type: "How do you react to that? Is this a problem for you?" Posed in this way the question will obviate the assumption that situations of cross-cultural contact are necessarily perceived as problems. Instead the discussion will search for the students' assessment of the cultural differences observed and will assist them in beginning to name (i.e. place within a framework) their experiences and in realizing the need to negotiate meanings.

Culture learning has been said to be not only cognitive, but also affective in nature (Kramersch, 1983, 1993a; Stern, 1983; Whalley, 1995). Learners need to come to terms internally with the meanings, values and emotions expressed in the target culture (Stern,

1992, p. 219) and discuss their impact on the students' own day-to-day lives. In quite a different context I came across the statement: "If you could put words to what you felt, it was yours" (in Goleman, 1995, p. 52). This line of reasoning led me to speculate on the empowering effect of the verbalization of one's affective response to an event. Such verbalization can take place in this step of the culture exploration discussion in the classroom.

I would also like to argue, however, that by voicing their own experiences in the observed target culture situations students will gain insight into the socially constructed nature of these experiences and in the fact that "cultures are naturalized orders rather than natural ones" (Whalley, 1995, p. 254). Of course, to be able to reach such a conclusion students need the active aid of teachers in probing through these experiences, but this will be a question briefly touched on later in the study. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that at this stage of the critical dialogue students will be able to begin to perform the leap from voicing their experiences to developing an awareness of their socially constructed nature. In the course of the discussion students elaborate on the nature of their experience and on the sense of culture shock (i.e. the "anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols" (Adler cited in Brown, 1980, p. 36)) which they felt at the time of observation or which they feel now in the classroom in the process of discovering possible meanings of the observed situation. They also discuss their own verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the situations and explore the approaches they have taken to manage or express this sense of culture shock. This process involves a great amount of reflection and according to Whalley (1995), who addresses the processes of culture learning, reflection "is the central dynamic that changes meaning schemes" (p. 223). Therefore, I believe that a classroom discussion triggering answers to the questions: How does this relate to your lives? and Do you consider this a problem? would allow students to begin to gain an understanding that "[m]eanings are relative to some degree to each of us in that we are all unique human beings with singular histories and experiences" (Damen,

1987, p. 75) as well as that behaviour typical for their own cultural, or rather, subcultural group is indeed not natural but simply cultural.

By comparing experiences and becoming aware of differences in perceiving events students may be led to speculate on the reasons for these differences and come up with issues like gender or social class as affecting one's understandings of a situation. The overall conclusion which I believe students, assisted by the teacher, could reach is that each individual is at one and the same time a representative of a given culture and a unique individual who negotiates cultural meanings in a distinctive manner. During this stage of the classroom discussion eliciting students' experience serves to validate that experience and allows the exploration of the contradictions, personal confrontations and conflicts that arise from cultural differences. As "each student is embedded in the cultural discourse of his/her family and social background, ethnic origin and education" (Kramsch, 1988, p. 67), the process will direct the students to fit their individual experiences into a larger cultural perspective.

The last stage of the problem posing approach could be modified into a discussion around the question: "How do you plan to deal with situations like that?". After the discussions in the previous stages it is hoped that this question will not lead students to generalize but rather not to take anything for granted as well as to search for their own 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993a) in cross-cultural encounters. Having contextualized the students' experiences in the social and cultural system, we have provided the background for the students' uncovering and understanding of their own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking as well as those of others. The important thing would be to place the students "in consciously critical confrontation" (Freire, 1981, p. 16) with their native and target cultural experience. This confrontation is the process through which the learner will be able to name, unname and rename her experience and thus start to develop an intercultural or third voice and, in fact, engage in culture creation. The process will also

allow students to face the uncertainty and ambiguity of cross-cultural encounters and, I hope, help them in searching ways to cope with those.

Coping with Ambiguity

Why should students need to cope with ambiguity? I base my insistence on the need to make students aware of the ambiguity of cross-cultural encounters and of the impossibility of providing them with “knowledge” to act on in any situation on the following line of thought:

The paradox of communication is that it presupposes a common medium, but one which works...only by eliciting and reviving singular, and therefore socially marked, experiences. The all-purpose word in the dictionary...has no social existence: in practice it is always immersed in situations, to such an extent that [its] core meaning...may pass *unnoticed* [italics added] (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 39).

Furthermore, ambiguity is central to Rosaldo's (1993) conceptualization of culture. Rosaldo urges social analysts to recognize that “much of life happens in ways that one neither plans nor expects” and people “often live with ambiguity, spontaneity, and improvisation” and reaches the conclusion that in such cases the fixed cultural expectations, static structures and social norms given too much primacy in cultural interpretation “do not suffice as a guide to behaviour” (1993, p. 91-92). In culture education theory the “contradictions and inconsistencies within culture [which] often make culture learning a multiple choice question” (Whalley, 1995, p. 236) and the necessity to “go beyond training for the predictable to preparation for the unpredictable” (Byram, 1991b, p.8) have also been recently recognized (cf. also Kramsch, 1993a, 1993b). For me, to be able to live with ambiguity is similar to being able not to take anything for granted. Therefore, once students have experienced the ambiguity and inconsistency of interpreting events, activities or relationships, they will be more willing to probe and not assume that their perceptions and

understandings of a situation necessarily coincide or are in sharp contrast with those of other participants.

Adult Language Students and Culture Exploration

Finally, I would like to explain briefly why I believe culture exploration as presented here is best suited for classes of adult second language students. Rogers (1989) suggests that the nearer a teacher can make the learning to the 'real' world, the more acceptable it will be for adults. Knowles (1984) points out that adults learn best when instruction is related to life experiences and practical needs. Adult learning theory also stresses the need to see learners as a living resource, as people with lifetime experience and strengths which should be used in the teaching process (Baynham, 1988). Furthermore, Auerbach & McGrail (1990) argue that learning for adult students would be "meaningful to the extent that it relates to their day-to-day reality and helps them act on it" (p. 96). Auerbach and Burgess (1986) also point to the need for "contributions from students about their own experience" (p. 487) in order to be able to make informed decisions about their new culture. Culture exploration seeks to address specifically students' experience of the target culture and is based on the assumption that people are not empty receptacles for new knowledge but active interpreters of everything that surrounds them. It seeks to validate the students' experience and aid them in finding their own place in the new culture. For these reasons I believe that culture exploration has a place, and more specifically, has to be the approach to culture in the adult second language classroom.

Summary of the Approach

I would like to end my discussion on culture exploration with a few concluding thoughts on what this approach to culture in language education involves. The search for

meanings in a culture and their interpretation is a major goal for both the pragmatic ethnographies and the classroom dialogues. The aim, however, is not for students to come up with a chart of a culture's characteristics, but to explore different plausible understandings of cultural events as well as explore themselves in the process of culture learning. Participant observation allows students to discern as many as possible variables in a situation and to learn how to observe and interpret situations. Equipped with ethnographic techniques students develop the ability to process information rather than acquire it and can look for personal themes in the target culture, i.e. themes they come across in the target culture that relate to their personal circumstances and affect their lives. They are enabled to address the culture as it is lived, experienced and talked about by real people. Through culture exploration the 'knowledge' of a target culture is jointly constructed in the classroom and could become a tool not only in finding one's voice but also in using that knowledge to act upon the world. Equipped through the dialogue with her new voice (which, it has to be emphasized, is not a fixed entity) the learner has a motivation for using the new language and new identity to act upon solutions or alternatives related to her acculturation in the new culture. Thus the student is in a position to engage in the creation of her "third" culture. Finally, I would like to recapitulate the goals of culture exploration as I see them. They are: developing awareness of the relationship between language and culture; developing awareness of oneself as a cultural being; assisting students in coping with cultural shock; facilitating learners in finding their voice or "the third place" in the target culture; assisting students in learning to live with ambiguity.

Role of the Teacher

Although the goals of culture exploration, summarized above, may seem very ambitious, the accommodations that need to be made in terms of activities in language classrooms for those goals to be addressed are few. In fact, I believe, that any current

activity in the classroom could be approached in a way that would seek to disclose the participants' perceptions, understandings and meanings of it or any other topic under discussion. Big changes, however, have to take place in the position teachers adopt when addressing culture. Teachers need to become trained participant observers. Therefore second language teacher education should include familiarizing future teachers with discussions in anthropology on conceptualizations of culture as well as the research method of ethnography (cf. Zarate; 1991, Byram, 1994). Teachers also need to become experienced guides in culture exploration discussions. Thus they need to be able to make students aware of the multiple cultures to which they as well as the native speakers of the target language belong (Kramsch, 1993a, 1993b). They also need to invite students to analyze the different facets of their fluid cultural identity (Zarate, 1986; Whalley, 1995). How this could be carried out should be the scope of a thorough investigation in the realms of the theory and practice of teacher training.

Why Incorporate Culture Exploration in Language Education?

In the end I would like to present my viewpoint with regard to the importance of incorporating culture exploration in language education. "[E]ducational practice is an implicit statement of power relations" (Prodromou, 1988, p. 75). To become "the practice of freedom" language teaching needs to involve "a process of developing self-awareness and awareness of the world outside the classroom" (ibid.). Indeed, "[l]anguage teaching is a political activity and the nature and presence of cultural studies at any given moment is the clearest indicator of the kind of political activity involved" (Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 31). Foucault (1980) refuses to separate knowledge from power. Sauvé (1996) insists that: "Culture is not about content. It is about the kind of knowledge that gives us access or leaves us on the outside" (p. 23). However, as some authors put it, "the activity in which knowledge is developed and deployed is an integral part of what is learnt" and "knowledge

is situated, being in part a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used” (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p. 32). In other words, to be in the position to empower our students in their efforts to develop adequate and coherent understandings of their cultural experiences so that they may act more effectively for their own ends (i.e. to provide them with meaningful knowledge) we need to engage them in activities which assist them “to locate themselves, as well as others, in the social system [and] assess the way they and others have been shaped by and in turn shape their social environments...to various degrees and in different directions depending on their social positions” (Hoodfar, 1992, p. 304). We need to assist students in reaching “the most liberating realization” that “culture is a naturalized, that is, a socially constructed order, rather than a natural order” (Whalley, 1995, p. 265). I believe that culture exploration is a step in that direction.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Summary of the Study

This study attempted to add to current inquiries in the possible ways of integrating language and culture in second language education. My own personal experience has provided the impetus for this study. As a fluent speaker of a target language who has had ample opportunities to become familiar with an enormous amount of written information about my new country, Canada, I failed initially (and still sometimes fail) to feel at ease in acting in the new environment in a satisfactory manner with regard to the ends I have and in accommodating the ends of other people with whom I interact. On that basis, I have argued in this study that culture should be approached in a language classroom in a way that facilitates one's gaining awareness of humans as inherently cultural beings and positioned subjects and allows the development of skills to investigate culture, question cultural presuppositions and think critically with respect to cultural norms.

The study started with a discussion on the concept of culture in anthropology. Through the literature reviewed it was found that initially, within a context of a widespread positivistic approach, anthropologists sought generalities to develop a unified theory of culture which would allow them to reach an understanding of a culture through observing human behaviour. Current conceptualizations of culture, however, strongly influenced by developments in postmodern theories, recognize culture's contested reality and conceive it as a negotiation of meanings among particular individuals in particular communities locked in an interplay of power relations. An analysis offered by Sapir almost 50 years ago, although not as sophisticated as contemporary ones, clearly exemplifies an important issue

with which anthropologists have grappled throughout the history of their discipline and which has affected culture teaching theorizing:

It is impossible to think of culture patterns or set of cultural patterns which can, in a literal sense of the word, be referred to society as such....It is not the concept of culture which is subtly misleading but the metaphysical locus to which culture is generally assigned....The true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in these interactions (cited in Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 126).

The next three chapters sought to present how anthropological conceptualizations of culture have translated into inquiries in culture teaching in second language education. It was argued that up to the mid 1980s ambivalences and tensions in language education theorists' notions of culture translated into inconsistent and incoherent directions for teaching culture which in turn could be blamed for the inferior position of culture teaching in language classrooms. The most common method of presenting culture was through expositions and explanations provided by the teacher on topics such as the geographic environment and history of a people, their literary and scientific achievements, the institutions of their society, and their generalized customs and values. This approach demanded that students absorb a vast number of unquestioned and uninterpreted "facts" which threw little light on the meanings of the presented events or phenomena for different groups of target culture bearers. In addition, it paid no attention to the students' perceptions and understandings of these phenomena as well as presented teachers with an awesome and unmanageable task. An excellent critique of this stage of culture teaching is found in Kramsch (1993a):

The direction in culture teaching which has focused on cultural information has favoured facts over meanings and has not enabled learners to understand foreign attitudes, values and mindsets. It has kept learners unaware of the multiple facets of the target group's cultural identity. It has left them blind to their own social and cultural identity implicitly assuming a consensus between their world and the other (Tajfel, 1982). [Another] direction...[associated with intercultural communication theory] ... has been to situate culture within an interpretive framework, taken from crosscultural psychology or cultural anthropology, using universal categories of human behaviour and inferencing procedures for making sense of foreign reality.

Language learners are given a key to interpret phenomena in the target culture. This culture is usually generalized to mean national culture with slight variations. Not only are learners still considered the passive recipients of knowledge, but it is left up to them to integrate that knowledge with the diversity they encounter when they go to the target country. It is also up to them to integrate it with their own social and cultural allegiances in their own society. This model too is a consensual model, for, although it does show differences, it does not address the conflict and the paradoxes that ensue from these differences (p. 23).

It was also argued in the study that the inventory approach to culture could easily lead to stereotyping. In addition, it was pointed out that when “students are offered ready made accounts of the customary attitudes, institutions, or behaviours of a culture they are not given the opportunity to learn how to interpret cultural features or identify features on their own” (Swaffar, 1992, p. 240). Another reason why this approach to culture was considered unproductive is that it takes students away from the fundamental task of language learning and asks teachers to focus exclusively on cultural traits. Teachers, however, not only have little time to do so in the busy environment of language teaching but also hardly find culture important, partly because they have not been trained to become aware of its significance (Byram, 1989; Rivers, 1981).

Thanks to developments in sociolinguistics, which led to advances in communicative language teaching pedagogy, and a deepened understanding of the relationship between language and culture, a call for the integration of language and culture teaching gained ground in the writings of theorists from the mid 1980s onwards. A perception that there is “an interpretive as well as a productive aspect of interaction” (Mehan cited in Krasnick, 1983, p. 213) and that in “engaging in language, speakers are enacting sociocultural phenomena” (Byram, 1991c, p. 18) developed. An awareness that understanding of a culture could begin to be developed only when meaning is assigned to the cultural facts presented in classrooms (Kramsch, 1988) started to make headway. A warning that to “cling to a traditional view of culture composed of reliable and consistent patterns... [could] set learners up for frustrations in dealing with the complex phenomenon of culture” (Whalley, 1995, p. 240) was also voiced. Therefore it began to be argued that

in studying a second language “emphasis should be placed not on language *and* culture but rather on language *in* culture” (Jordan, 1992, p. 157) as well as culture in language (Byram, 1994). The need to incorporate ethnographic techniques in language classes (Byram, 1989, 1994; Damen, 1987) as well as strive to assist students in finding their own space or “a third place” at the crossroads of their native and the target culture (Kramsch, 1993a) was clearly articulated.

Building on these ideas I presented in the next chapter a possible approach to culture in adult second language classrooms which blends ethnographic participant observation with reflective and critical classroom dialogues in an effort to assist learners in their interactions in the new for them culture. A socio-cultural approach to meaning making as a dynamic process of negotiation grounded in the activities an individual is involved in (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and affected by her “biography” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) guided my analysis.

I started with an argument claiming that the way we name the approach to culture in language education is important because it affects the way we perceive our task. On the basis of current developments in the conceptualization of culture in cultural anthropology and other areas and with a view to the legacy of the term culture teaching I proposed that we name our approach to culture “culture exploration”. Following that I tried to demonstrate how the process of culture exploration would assist students in gaining awareness of the relationship between language and culture, of themselves as cultural beings and of cultures as naturalized and not natural orders (Whalley, 1995). I also tried to demonstrate how equipped with that understanding students will be in a better position to cope with the ambiguity inherent in cross-cultural interactions as well as develop their own “third” voice in the new for them cultural environment. From that perspective, they could feel empowered “to apply the understanding arrived at to action in accord with [their] own interests” (Mishler, 1986, p. 119).

Recommendations for Further Research

There are a number of questions, however, which should be addressed if one adopts culture exploration as a productive approach to culture in language education. They could represent topics for further inquiries into the place of culture in language teaching. The most important among them is probably teacher preparation for culture exploration. Many have pointed to the lack of adequate preparation of teachers for culture teaching (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993a; Stern, 1992). Along with the arguments that teacher training should familiarize teachers with developments in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, semiology, and social and cross-cultural psychology, actual studies are needed that address how in practice this could be done. First steps in the preparation of teachers to use ethnographic techniques are offered by Zarate (1991) and Byram (1994). Another important area in teacher training, however, should be in assisting future teachers in dealing with the ambiguity inherent in culture exploration as well as in familiarizing them with critical theory that would allow them “to locate themselves in the structure of the society and the classroom [to be able to] initiate a discussion of difference[and] help students recognize that...interactions...are structured by the inequality of power between [interlocutors]” (Hoodfar, 1992, p. 304).

Another significant field for further research is related to textbooks and study materials which aim to present culture. Implicitly or explicitly textbooks are meant to serve as a guide to a target culture (Kramsch, 1993a). They are also constructs which represent the way authors and publishers conceive of language, culture, and learning and the way they construe, for instructional purposes, an integrated world of the new for the students reality (Kramsch, 1988). In that relation textbooks legitimate selective forms of knowledge and culture (Apple, 1990). What is considered cultural knowledge and whose culture dominates study materials could form the core of a future study on textbooks for second language learners. A question I find especially interesting and significant is: What efforts

are being made by textbook writers to empower students by allowing them to explore and negotiate their own cultural experiences in the target culture with a view to use the knowledge acquired to act more effectively for their own ends in the new environment?

Other questions, like whether culture exploration is suitable for students at any level of their second language skills, as well as what is the possibility to apply culture exploration in any context where a second language is taught also need to be investigated.

The Author's Assumptions Revisited

Finally, it is imperative to note that in our inquiries we always select, transform and interpret 'reality' (Lather, 1991). Therefore the knowledge generated in this study could only be viewed in the context of its production (Whittaker, 1986) which has been influenced by the personal experiences and the assumptions of its producer. A brief overview of personal experiences which position me as a researcher to select this particular topic for investigation was presented in the introduction of the study. At this final stage of the analysis on culture and its treatment in language classrooms, presented in previous chapters, I believe that an elaboration of my assumptions is necessary to clarify the positions I have taken with respect to culture in second language education.

My assumptions about knowledge and schooling can be briefly demonstrated with some quotations from the works of authors interested in these areas: "[k]nowledge is socially constructed, represents particular ways of understanding and explaining the world, and since it therefore always reflects the interests of certain individuals or groups is inevitably inscribed in relations of power" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 612). In addition, "[a]ll forms of education are political because they can enable or inhibit the questioning habits of students, thus developing or disabling their critical relation to knowledge, schooling, and society" (Shor in Benesch, 1993, p. 707). In this relation my assumption of what

education should involve is along the lines of Sauv e's definition and understanding of "participatory education", namely

a learning/teaching process wherein all participants are involved and committed to defining their own learning needs and wants, working out an approach of addressing them, and evaluating that process as they live out of and into it, all within a context of making life better for themselves and those around them (1987, p. 7).

This view has led me to argue that what is important in addressing culture in the language classroom is to start with the issues and objectives in our students' lives and place their target culture experiences in the context of relationships which could make their nature understandable. That is why I have also insisted on the need to provide opportunities for students to confront the differences they perceive between themselves and the target community around them.

My conceptualization of language use from a socio-cultural perspective has also been significant in shaping my argument so far, i.e. my view of language as a means of acting in the world and a way of creating effects in the world (Lave & Wenger, 1991) has shaped my insistence on the need to integrate culture and language in the language classroom. Likewise, my belief that the fundamental form of learning is participation in social practice (ibid.) has influenced me in conceptualizing culture learning and teaching as a process of culture exploration.

Other assumptions that have shaped my thinking in producing this study are: self-directed 'learning by doing' is the most effective way of acquiring knowledge and skills; students are in a position to recognize that they have needs, they are willing and able to assess those needs, and share the responsibility with the teacher for meeting those needs. Finally, there is no absolute truth; learning how to learn is the answer, and open self-disclosure of one's private thoughts and feelings in a public forum is beneficial for learning and personal growth (cf. Damen, 1987, p. 241-242).

Another belief that has guided me is that language teachers should take the responsibility to address culture explicitly because, especially in the case of adult second language learners, there is no one else to assume that responsibility whereas as Sauv  points out: “[t]here is a conceptual problem to be found in defining the work we do as ESL rather than settlement education” (1996, p. 20). “Without being equipped to deal with the cultural and ideological pressures from the outside world, most students will have wasted much of their time in the [language] classroom on a linguistic code” (Hyde, 1994, p. 303) which is hardly to be found in human interactions.

The final notes I want to make on culture and culture exploration are inspired by yet another argument. As Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet (1992) point out: “[v]ariability in context precludes the notion of a unitary foreign national culture of which every individual would be a reflection” (p. 11) and maintain that “[c]ontext cannot be taught directly; it can be only experienced, observed, and reflected upon” (ibid., p. 10). For these same reasons I would like to transfer their argument to culture and contend that culture cannot be taught but can only be experienced, observed and reflected upon. Like culture, however, culture exploration is clearly not something easily defined in concrete terms despite the fact that one could name some concrete strategies for approaching it; like culture, it can only be conceptualized as ongoing, forever evolving, and grounded in the locales where it is practiced by particular actors.

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