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**LANGUAGES FOR INTERCULTURAL
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Series Editors: Michael Byram and Alison Phipps

Language and Culture Pedagogy

From a National to a Transnational Paradigm

Karen Risager

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The present volume, *Language and Culture Pedagogy: From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*, is based on Parts II and IV of that volume, revised by myself, and translated into English by Dr John Irons, to whom I am most grateful.

The rest of the original text (Parts I and III) has already been published by Multilingual Matters Ltd as *Language and Culture: Global Flows and Local Complexity*.

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Karen Risager

Foreword

This is the second book derived from Karen Risager's original *Det nationale dilemma i sprog- og kulturpædagogikken. Et studie i forholdet mellem sprog og kultur* (The National Dilemma in Language and Culture Pedagogy. A Study of the Relationship between Language and Culture) published in Danish in 2003 by Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen. It stands independently of the first book, also published in the series Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, and can be read in its own right as a major analysis of the history and current development of culture pedagogy, to use Risager's phrase. It can also be read in conjunction with the first book, *Language and Culture. Global Flows and Local Complexity* (Multilingual Matters 2006), since together the two show how language teachers can and should reflect on the relationship between language and culture and plan changes in their own practice.

Here, the author presents her principal aim – and it is one that is also part of the first book – as creating a basis for a change from a national to a transnational paradigm in language and culture pedagogy, but there is much else too.

It is important for any discipline, particularly in its early phases, that its historical evolution should be well understood by those involved. Language and culture pedagogy, and foreign language teaching as a specific and major component, is carried out by professionals, by teachers with a professional training. Training involves acquiring the accepted wisdom and current knowledge and understanding of a discipline, and the practical skills to carry it out, whether this is teaching medicine, law or whatever. Those who are entrusted to professionals, and who put their trust in professionals, do so because they know that they are trained. Training for law and medicine has long been located in universities, whereas it is in most countries only in relatively recent times that teacher training has been moved there from institutions that specialised in teacher training and did not have the functions of a university.

Some people like to mark this development by referring to teacher *education* rather than *training*, but the important point is that universities are places where people acquire professional knowledge and skills and also a *critical* understanding of their profession. This is particularly

important when, as is frequently and perhaps increasingly the case in teaching, there is centralised political control of the profession, and an attempt to make teachers follow the 'guidelines' of central authorities.

A critical understanding presupposes awareness of the origins of current knowledge and skills, of the evolution of the discipline and of how what might seem inevitable and taken for granted is in fact the consequence of historical change. Risager provides such an understanding of culture pedagogy and its relationship to language teaching since its beginnings. I hope that all teachers, not least those in pre-service training/education, who recognise the importance of a cultural dimension in language teaching will learn from the first part of this book.

The book is not, however, simply a history, and even the first part deals with Risager's second purpose: to analyse and question the relationship between language teaching in a national paradigm, which sees a specific language as related to a specific national culture, and to propose a transnational perspective, which denies that any such connection is necessary and inevitable, and which places language teaching firmly within a global social context.

It is at this point that I have to declare a personal interest, as Karen, with whom I have worked for many years, takes a critical look at my model of intercultural competence and improves on it by emphasising the global and transnational, rather than the national perspective that I had assumed. Karen has a long-term vision for language teaching and culture pedagogy to contribute to the education and upbringing of world citizens in an age when nations are no longer as significant. Her vision coincides with that of the great historian of nationalism, Eric Hobsbawm. Contemporary history, he says:

will inevitably have to be written as the history of a world which can no longer be contained within the limits of nations and nation states as these used to be defined, either politically, or economically, or culturally, or even *linguistically*. It will be largely supranational and infranational, but even infranationality, whether or not it dresses itself up in the costume of some mini-nationalism, will reflect the decline of the old nation state as an operational entity. (...)

Hobsbawm, E. 1992, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 191–2 (my emphasis)

If he is right, and I suspect and hope he is, then Karen Risager's vision of language teaching and the competence of the world citizen, which language teachers should take as the guideline for their long-term aims, goes further than what I wrote ten years ago.

Karen Risager has thus written a book that is not only a major scholarly analysis of the history of culture pedagogy, but one which points us forward to what language and culture teachers must assess for themselves as the world changes. She provides them with the critical base on which to make their professional judgements, and has thus made a significant contribution to our work into the future.

Michael Byram
April 2006

Chapter 1

Modern Language Studies: Language, Culture, Nation

Introduction

Today, modern language studies take place in a world increasingly influenced by internationalisation and globalisation. Although the main focus of this book is foreign-language studies and foreign-language teaching, it has to be said that all language studies, whether the language in question is a first or second language, a foreign language or a community/heritage language, are social and cultural practices embedded in comprehensive and potentially global processes: transnational communication and migration, transnational cooperation of many types and at many levels, etc.

So language and culture pedagogy must learn to understand their field of reference from a transnational and global perspective. Language teaching can no longer make do with focusing on the target language and target countries – and on cultures as territorially defined phenomena. This applies not only to English as the most widespread international language at present but also to teaching in all languages, no matter how many native speakers there are. Apart from developing the students' communicative (dialogic) competence in the target language, language teaching ought also as far as possible to enable students to develop into multilingually and multiculturally aware world citizens.

This is not synonymous with ceasing to take an interest in national and ethnic identities. Language teaching can deal with many kinds of identities, including national and ethnic ones, but it has to understand them as processes that take place between particular players under particular historical and geographical circumstances in multicultural communities that form and develop across existing national boundaries. Modern language studies therefore have to break with the traditional national paradigm and start to define a transnational paradigm that places language teaching in a transnational and global context.

A prerequisite for making such a change is that language subjects also break with the traditional view that 'language' and 'culture' constitute an

inseparable whole, and that language teaching must therefore work for maximum integration between teaching the target language and teaching in the target language culture (or, in other words, culture and society in the target language countries). Language subjects must work on the theory that the relation between language and culture is complex and multidimensional, and that linguistic practice and other cultural practice are parts of more or less comprehensive processes – also transnational and potentially global processes.

The aim of this book

The aim of this book is to establish a basis for a change from a national to a transnational paradigm in language and culture pedagogy. The most fruitful point of departure for such an analysis is *theoretical culture pedagogy*, i.e. the discipline that deals with the cultural dimension of language teaching, primarily understood as the development of insight into culture and society in the target-language countries. It is precisely in this discipline that many statements can be found concerning the relation between language and culture, and that between language teaching and culture teaching. At the same time, it is a discipline that has dealt to an astonishingly limited extent with the question of the national. When the analysis of culture pedagogy has been completed, I will, however, return to language and culture pedagogy as a whole, in order to retain the inner cohesion of the field.

The book comprises two sections: *firstly*, there is a critical analysis of the international culture pedagogy discourse concerning language, culture and nation since the 1880s, where it had its beginnings in the newly constituted German Reich. In the analysis, I give an account of a number of the most characteristic positions on the relation between language, culture and nation. This is the first time an attempt has been made to present culture pedagogy as a whole – both geographically and historically – and in a discussion of the possible transition from a national to a transnational paradigm it is important to know how strongly the national paradigm has influenced the culture pedagogy discourse in various ways, depending on such features as theoretical academic position and national background.¹

Secondly, I present the theory of the multi dimensional relationship between language and culture in a transnational and global perspective (cf. Risager, 2003 and 2006), and I formulate a number of proposals for a new transnational paradigm that deals with how one can work in language teaching with transnational connections and subnational localisations. Finally, I list 10 competence areas as comprising the intercultural

competence of the world citizen, including languacultural, interpretative and ethnographic competences as well as knowledge of the world.

A transnational language and culture pedagogy must see itself as being interdisciplinary and thereby be interested in language, culture, society and the individual (the subject). This means that, apart from dealing with the complex relation between language and culture, it also deals with the social organisation of language and culture in a broad sense: national and transnational social structures and processes, national and international political relations, etc. It is thus also interested in national and ethnic issues, not only in the sense of national and ethnic communities, identities and discourses but also the societal and political structures that form frameworks and conditions for identity constructions. It places the national and the ethnic in a larger global perspective, and deals with the multilingual and multicultural subject as a world citizen.

This position can be termed postnational and postethnic, i.e. it does not operate with 'the national' and 'the ethnic' as essentialistic entities but as composite historical constructions that are constantly changing their nature by virtue of players' constant strategic use of them. That I in the following prefer nevertheless to use the concept of 'transnational' rather than 'postnational' is because I feel that the concept of 'transnational' points more specifically to processes in the real world, at both micro- and macro-level, including transnational migration flows and transnational flows of information in the media and the Internet. It is important to focus on these flows in order to reach an understanding of the complex relationship between language and culture, or, in other words, between linguistic practice and other forms of cultural practice. Later in this chapter, I will deal in more detail with this conception – and also return to the subject in Chapter 7.

The national paradigm in language studies is not that old

Modern language studies do not have to be nationally shaped. The present national shaping took place in a particular historical period, in connection with the establishment of nations in Europe and the rest of the world, particularly in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Not until the latter half of the 19th century did language subjects acquire the aim of conveying a uniform image of the various national states, of the language, the literature, the country and the people.

The national formation of language subjects becomes clear when compared with how they were conceived in the previous period. Before the national idea had a profound impact on language studies, they were