Literature Review

Culture and language teaching: Where is the research?

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In the field of language learning and teaching today, there seems to be a fairly widespread consensus that language and culture are tightly intertwined, if not completely inseparable. Authors often invoke the concept of *languaculture* (Agar, 1994) to emphasize this unity or use phrasings such as *language-in-culture* or *culture-in-language*. However, in actual practice lexical and grammatical features are often taught in ways that do not raise students' awareness of the cultural contexts in which these features may be used and do not prepare learners to negotiate meaning in their interactions with users of the language outside the classroom (Byrnes, 2010). While the "traditional" view of culture and language learning suggests that learners require greater knowledge about the cultures associated with the target language, the *intercultural* view (Byram, 1997) proposes competencies that learners can acquire that will enable them to recognize and negotiate cultural differences as they engage with interlocutors in their target language. As Scarino (2009) summarizes it,

> The goal of intercultural language learning is to develop, extend and elaborate upon students' interpretive frames of reference through experiencing and reflecting upon communication in increasingly complex intercultural contexts. This means extending students' repertoires of communication and their meta-awareness of the relationship between language, culture, meaning and learning. (p. 69)

The challenges of achieving this goal through instructed language learning are vast and remain largely unexplored.

Conceptualizing *Cultural* and *Intercultural* in Language Learning and Teaching

Though perspectives on the concept of culture and its role in language learning have continued to change dramatically along with changes in the world context, discussions of the relationships between teaching culture and teaching languages are far from new in the language

teaching field and beyond. In 1920 the *Modern Language Journal* published a two-part article that lamented the inability of American soldiers stationed in Europe during WWI to communicate in German or French, despite having taken and even taught courses in these languages in the U.S. (Stroebe, 1920a, 1920b). Stroebe advocated for a specific course that would provide the language learner with "real knowledge of a foreign country" in a systematic way. Although these articles imply a relatively monolithic view of nation, language, and culture, a view that persists today but has been much criticized (e.g., Scollon, 2004), other themes of this discussion are still echoing in recent work. Stroebe (1920b) contends that a course on language and culture "is by no means only informational, but … offers an opportunity for the training of the mind" in gathering knowledge about other societies and considering the institutions of one's own country (p. 101). The same arguments appear in Byram's (2008, 2010; Byram & Feng, 2005) proposals on teaching language and culture for international citizenship.

Like Stroebe (1920b), though he does not use the same terminology, a number of authors suggest that encouraging learners to draw comparisons between their own culture and the cultures associated with the target language can lead to greater intercultural competence (Arens, 2010; Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006; Furstenberg, 2010). Furthermore, scholars suggest that the language teacher who teaches culture should have a high level of familiarity and understanding of cultures that are familiar and foreign to the learners. Stroebe (1920a) calls for "an American instructor who has had several years of residence abroad and who knows the foreign country and its people, their history, institutions, ideals, culture, aspirations and national characteristics intimately, sympathetically and from first-hand observation" or a "native of the foreign country" who has "the same knowledge of, and the same attitude toward American conditions" (p. 294). Although recent theoretical and empirical articles on culture in language teaching are often silent

on the issue of teacher preparation and development, some researchers have noted the reluctance of teachers to delve deeply into cultural discussions, perhaps due to a lack of confidence and preparation (Lazaraton, 2003; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Others have suggested that teachers and students alike need to be equipped with intellectual skills of inquiry, analysis, and evaluation that can lead to rich understandings of culture and language use (Byram & Feng, 2005; Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005, 2006).

As this brief comparison of historical and recent perspectives has shown, the role of culture in language teaching remains an open question that is closely related to issues of ideology, values, politics, and wider educational goals. Despite the apparent similarities between this post-WWI publication and these post-millennium writings, the questions pertaining to this issue have changed significantly and grown more complex in the past decade. Processes of globalization and the exponential growth in the influence of internet-based communication mean that "language use must be seen embedded in diverse social activities in the lives of people and peoples around the globe as they interact with each other in increasingly varied and often surprisingly intimate ways, even across formidable distances" (Byrnes, 2010).   In the face of this diversity in the ways that people interact and the impact of global movement on their life and language learning trajectories as well as their language learning motivations, the scarcity of guidance for language teachers that is based in rigorous, well-structured research is surprising and perhaps discouraging (Young, Sachdev, & Seedhouse, 2009). However, in recent years researchers have looked closely at the interactions of teachers and learners engaging in intercultural communication (Baker, 2009) and in discussions of cross-cultural comparisons (Menard-Warwick, 2009) in ways that can inform teacher preparation and pedagogical practices in the future.

This literature review aims to describe and assess the discourse around culture in major peer-reviewed journals in the field of language teaching over the past decade, to identify research agendas proposed by these authors, and to consider the reasons why more extensive research that would satisfy these agendas has not been heretofore undertaken. The first section will compare three literature reviews on culture and language teaching published since 1999. The second section will provide an overview of literature published in seven journals over the last ten years, identifying which articles present research and which provide only theory, and offer a closer look at a few key examples of relevant research. The review will conclude with a brief discussion of research agendas that have been proposed by various scholars and point to the need for further research that can inform teacher preparation and practices.

Recent Literature Reviews: Findings and Limitations

The original impetus for this review was a desire to update Atkinson's (1999) much-cited review of theoretical and empirical literature on *culture* published in *TESOL Quarterly* in the previous fifteen years.   He found only ten full-length articles in that period with the word *culture* or a variant of it in their title, six of which operated with a more or less received view of culture (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Hansen, 1984; Hinkel, 1995; Schumann, 1990; Short, 1994), two which complicated the term more extensively (Edge, 1996; Parry, 1996), and two which did not go into depth regarding the concept of culture but exemplified a trend toward examining similar issues through a different concept, *identity* (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Schecter & Bayley, 1997). Atkinson (1999) goes on to mention three other pieces, two Forum articles responding to cultural stereotyping in L2 writing research (Spack, 1997; Zamel, 1997), and one full-length article published while his article was in preparation that challenged Orientalism and essentialism in discursive construction of U.S. and Japanese cultural

differences (Kubota, 1999).   After summarizing this limited set of articles, Atkinson delves into

a more extensive review of the concept of culture in a wider intellectual field, discussing

critiques of the concept in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. While the single source

of Atkinson's selected articles and their limited number suggests a narrow representation of the

discourse around culture in the field of language teaching, these few articles nevertheless set the

stage for his larger attempt to engage with this complex, contentious, but inescapable construct.

 In his conclusion, Atkinson (1999) does not precisely offer a research agenda, but he

does offer "six principles of a revised view of culture that, though still somewhat abstract, can

inform TESOL research and teaching" (p. 642):

Principle 1: All humans are individuals.

Principle 2: Individuality is also cultural.

Principle 3: Social group membership and identity are multiple, contradictory, and

dynamic.

Principle 4: Social group membership is consequential.

Principle 5: Methods of studying cultural knowledge and behavior are unlikely to

fit a positivist paradigm.

Principle 6: Language (learning and teaching) and culture are mutually implicated, but

culture is multiple and complex.

These principles are intended to guide researchers away from a received, monolithic view

of culture and toward a collection of more complex factors that can impact traits and behaviors

that might be considered culturally-driven or culture-bound. In addition, he makes the important

point that the paradigms that can be used to engage with the complexity inherent in his multi-

faceted, contingent view of culture are different from the then-prevailing positivist view.

Analyses of culture and its impact on language learners and their interactions with their teachers may not be subject to principles such as validity, reliability, and generalizability, but rather are suited to principles such as "particularizability, understanding, and thick description" (Atkinson, 1999, p. 646-647) which characterize strong ethnographic research. Thus when Kumaravadivelu (2003) claims that studies intended to capture the effects of culture on language learners "are marked by a lack of robust research design that can separate culture as a variable in order to investigate its causal connection to classroom behavior" (p. 714), he may be asking for impossible and inappropriate approaches to studying culture. Just as culture is one of many factors, along with social, economic, educational, institutional, and individual factors (to cite his own list), that can impact student behavior, culture is itself a complex and influential force that overlaps with others on this list. If scholars continue to call for studies presenting findings that can be "empirically validated," then they may be excluding or devaluing methodologies, such as ethnography, that can capture the complexity of this construct.

In a response to Atkinson (1999) that appeared in the following volume, Siegal (2000) points out that Peirce (1995) and Angelil-Carter (1997) have already undertaken research following Atkinson's principles. Each of these studies employed poststructural approaches to language learning and learners that incorporating ideas of power, identity, discourse, and subjectivity, but they avoid (intentionally or not) the concept of culture rather than interrogating it as Atkinson (1999) and Kubota (1999) do. While these omissions form the main thrust of Siegal's (2000) critique, she also suggests that Atkinson overlooked relevant literature in journals such as *Applied Linguistics*, *Modern Language Journal*, and *ELT Journal*.

One much more recent review of literature on culture and English language teaching draws from a wider range of sources, but likewise focuses on articles published in peer-reviewed

journals (Young, et al., 2009). These authors locate 16 "reports of empirical studies" that included "*English language learner/learners*" or "*teacher/teachers*" and "*culture/cultures/ cultural*" in their titles or keywords (p. 154). Of these, 6 appear in *TESOL Quarterly*, 5 in *System*, 2 in the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, and one each in *Modern Language Journal*, *Linguistics and Education*, and *English for Specific Purposes*, but they offer no further definition for this category of articles. Their focus on the teaching and learning of culture in language courses is more explicit and direct than that of Atkinson (1999), who is more concerned with the treatment of the concept of culture. Even so, Young, et al. (2009) state that it is often difficult to discern from these studies whether culture is taught explicitly or not in the programs in question. This ambiguity has implications for the practical applicability of these studies for teacher preparation and development.

The explicit effort in this article to limit the parameters by which articles were selected seems reasonable, but in fact by selecting only straightforward research reports and only articles that included variations of *culture* in combination with *learner* or *teacher* the authors may have generated an unnecessarily narrow representation of existing empirical research. Only one of the sixteen articles presents a study of teacher practices published since Atkinson's (1999) review (Lazaraton, 2003). Not to mention the fact that they have excluded research that may appear in books dealing with culture and language pedagogy (as does this review), the authors have overlooked two patterns in recent literature on cultural issues. One pattern is the increasing focus on *intercultural communication* and *intercultural competence*. These concepts allow researchers and educators to take the influence of culture into account without risking the assertion of a monolithic or essentialized view of a given culture associated with a given ethnic group or nation, which was the traditional understanding of culture. Another pattern, which may

also relate to the contentiousness of culture as a construct, is the appearance of a number of articles that seem to be a hybrid of theoretical essay and research report (e.g., Singh & Doherty, 2004). Such articles rely more or less extensively on the findings of empirical research conducted by the authors in the course of making their argument, but they apparently were not included in Young, et al.'s (2009) "reports of empirical studies."

Perhaps the most thorough review of recent published literature on culture and language teaching and learning is that of Byram and Feng (2005), which focuses on two different streams in the published material designated as *research* and *scholarship*: "the former seeking for explanation or understanding, two different perspectives on 'what is', the latter attempting to establish 'what ought to be', and sometimes attempting to implement and evaluate 'what ought to be'" (p. 150). Research, in their terms, corresponds with the work that Young, et al. (2009) consider empirical studies, which gather and analyze data from individuals engaged in language learning or teaching in more or less extensive and rigorous ways. Scholarship, on the other hand, may propose changes to practices, curricula, or policy or describe and evaluate such changes. According to Byram and Feng (2005), "scholarly work is often judged by the power of the argument and the rhetoric which sustains it, by the relevance of the argument to a given time and place, and by the support cited from research" (p.152). Of these two types of work, scholarship makes up a far greater proportion of the published literature, with many of the scholars lamenting the lack of research to support their theoretical contentions and describing research agendas at length. The following section presents and overview of recent literature on culture in language learning and teaching that is intended to address the limitations of the major literature reviews discussed above, considering the available research, the imbalance of research and scholarship, and the remaining gaps in the literature.

Literature in General and Cultural Journals: Research and Scholarship

Beginning chronologically after the appearance of Atkinson (1999), this review also considers whether articles operate with a received, traditional view of culture or a more complex understanding. Like Young, et al. (2009), however, this review extends the search for relevant articles to a number of major journals, whose selection will be discussed below. While these authors limited their search to empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals, this review likewise only includes published articles but follows Byram and Feng (2005) in its inclusion and categorization of research and scholarship.

Because this review is intended to focus on contemporary work and to serve as an update to and extension of Atkinson's review, the time period covered here is the beginning of 2000 to early 2010. The collection process for these articles involved careful, iterative searches of eight major journals that focus on language learning and teaching: *TESOL Quarterly; Modern Language Journal; Applied Linguistics; ELT Journal; Language Teaching; Language, Culture, and Curriculum; Language and Intercultural Communication;* and the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. The first four journals were selected for their prominence and because Siegal (2000) specifically notes in her response to Atkinson (1999) that these journals publish material on culture. *Language Teaching* was selected because Byram and Feng's (2005) review appears in it, and because this review is particularly concerned with work that focuses on teacher practices, education, and development. The final three journals were selected for the (somewhat obvious) reasons that they focus on language learning and teaching and include variations of the word *cultural* in their titles. These three are perhaps not among the most

prominent journals in applied linguistics and TESOL, but their selection is based on the

hypothesis that, if research on culture and language teaching is rare in journals that have more

general aims and scope, perhaps it is far more frequent in journals such as these.[1]

Once these journals were selected, they were searched based on the following

parameters:

- For all journals: *Culture, cultural, intercultural, multicultural,* or *sociocultural* in the
  title;

- For all journals: *Teacher, teachers,* or *teaching* in the title or abstract;

- For journals with variations of "culture" in their titles: *Culture, cultural,*
  intercultural, or *multicultural* may appear in the abstract if not the title.

As much as possible, articles were selected that related directly to language teaching and

learning. Articles that described particular cultural contexts or issues without relating them

directly and explicitly to learning and teaching were excluded. The vast majority of the articles

considered here were full-length articles. The few exceptions include one piece from TESOL

Quarterly's "Brief Summaries and Reports" (Bashir-Ali, 2006) and several short articles

included in *MLJ*'s Perspectives column. These include Scollon (2004) and the entire column

from Summer 2010, which was focused on the role of culture in the foreign language curriculum:

Byrnes (2010), Byram (2010), Arens (2010), Scarino (2010), Furstenberg (2010), and Kearney

(2010). In total, 80 articles were identified by this search.

Once the articles had been selected, they were categorized base on two features. One

feature was Byram and Feng's (2005) research/scholarship distinction. A third category was

added to these two, however, based on the features of existing articles. A number of studies,

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[1] This list of course excludes a number of other journals that contain work on cultural and intercultural factors in language teaching, including *System* and the *Journal of Second Language Writing*.

notably Singh and Doherty (2004), Ware and Kramsch (2005), and Holliday (2009), are not presented as typical research reports, but they nevertheless draw on data from the authors' own research projects, including observation field notes and interview data (Singh & Doherty, 2004), excerpts from online communication (Ware & Kramsch, 2005), and references to survey results (Holliday, 2009). Another article focuses on the design and impact of a specific program in South Africa and includes data from this project. Articles like these that were intermediate between research and scholarship were categorized as "scholarship with support data." Table 1 shows the articles from these three categories in the eight journals, both as a raw number and as a percentage of articles selected from that journal.

Table 1. *Research and Scholarship in 8 Peer-Reviewed Journals.*

	Research Reports		**Scholarship with support data**		**Scholarship (no data)**		**Total**
Journal	*Articles*	*Percent*	*Articles*	*Percent*	*Articles*	*Percent*	*Articles*
TESOL Quarterly	4	66.7%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	6
Modern Language Journal	3	23.1%	1	7.7%	9	69.2%	13
Applied Linguistics	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	2
Language Teaching	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	3	60.0%	5
ELT Journal	2	11.1%	4	22.2%	12	66.7%	18
Language, Culture, & Curriculum	3	25.0%	1	8.3%	8	66.7%	12
Language & Intercultural Communication	4	28.6%	3	21.4%	7	50.0%	14
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development	8	80.0%	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	10
TOTAL	26	32.5%	11	13.8%	43	53.8%	80

As this table shows, a full two-thirds of the published articles on culture and language teaching in these journals over the last ten years have been scholarship, not research. They may contribute arguments to the general discourse and decision-making processes that influence teacher practices, teacher preparation, curriculum design, and policy, but they are not seeking to

convey systematic explorations of what is actually happening in these areas. The imbalance is greatest in *Modern Language Journal*, which is partly attributable to the separate counting of the six contributions to the highly-relevant 2010 Perspectives column. The imbalance in *ELT Journal* reflects the general focus of this publication, which leans toward describing practices and approaches rather than publishing research reports. It was hoped that more research would appear in *Language, Culture, and Curriculum* and *Language and Intercultural Communication*, but these have also published more examples of scholarship than research. *The Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* provides a strong exception to this pattern, however. Of these 8 research articles, three were based on interviews, three used only surveys, one used a survey and interviews, and one was based on critical discourse analysis of a series of assignments produced in a teacher education program.

What factors might explain this imbalance in the literature, with theoretical work dominating the field while well-structured research is far scarcer? Kumaravadivelu (2003) attributes the lack of research on the connections between culture and classroom practices to the difficulty of designing a well-controlled study: "It is almost impossible to control a multitude of variables in order to isolate culture as the sole variable that can be empirically studied to determine its impact on classroom behavior" (p. 714). This view implies, however, that researchers should attempt to isolate culture from other possible influences on beliefs, attitudes, or practices. Byram and Feng (2005), along with a few other scholars (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006; Tudor, 2003) advocate the use of ethnographic research methods in order to capture the complex relationships between culture, language use, and language learning and suggest that teachers and learners should be equipped with these methods during their intercultural explorations. Few

studies published recently in major journals, however, have attempted ethnography involving language learners or teachers.

This issue of complexity and the challenges of defining, much less operationalizing, culture for research purposes underlies the other categorization of the 80 articles. Atkinson (1999) points out that six of the articles he found in TQ used a traditional or "received" view of culture, which essentially equates culture with the nation or nations where the target language is spoken. The remainder of the articles accepted and even elaborated on the complexity of culture, focusing on the transient and contingent relationships between context, identity, and culture and on intercultural interactions that may not involve native speakers of the target language. Although it was often unclear to some extent whether authors were operating with a *received* view or a *complex* view of culture, these two categories were used to differentiate between articles that essentially used the term culture to define various groups, usually identifying each group with a specific nation or region, and articles that address the complexities of culture directly in their arguments or their data analysis and discussion. Two of the most straightforward examples of the received view are Takanashi (2004) and Psaltou-Joycey (2008). In an article categorized as scholarship, Takanashi describes common practices in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Japan and offers descriptions of Japanese culture (in monolithic sense) and conflicts between this culture and the practices of native English-speaking teachers as reasons why Japanese students are not achieving the test scores and levels of proficiency that might be desired. Psaltou-Joycey offers a research report in which she describes the results of a study that compared the strategy use of second-language learners of Greek in Greece across several regional groups. She claims that culture was the single most important determiner of student responses, but by culture she means the students' region of origin: Northern Europe, Eastern

Europe, Southern Europe, the Balkans, or the Middle East. Culture could almost be replaced with region here, except that Psaltou-Joycey makes the further contention that teachers should be able to create and refer to a "cultural map" of Europe that will tell them which strategies to expect from their students based on their region of origin. This suggestion reveals a traditional view of culture, in which it is implicitly assumed that all students from a given country or region will have similar traits and that knowledge of these traits will increase teachers' effectiveness.

The majority of recent scholarship and research, however, operates with a complex view of culture. Many articles argue explicitly for this complex view and strongly propose intercultural approaches for language learners and teacher trainees. Some of these articles will be described below. Table 2 shows the distribution of articles using received and complex views of culture by year.

Table 2. *Received and Complex views of culture in articles appearing over the last decade.*

	Received		Complex		Total
Year	*Articles*	*Percent*	*Articles*	*Percent*	*Articles*
2010	1	11.1%	8	88.9%	9
2009	1	11.1%	8	88.9%	9
2008	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	7
2007	2	20.0%	8	80.0%	10
2006	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	4
2005	3	33.3%	6	66.7%	9
2004	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	4
2003	2	22.2%	7	77.8%	9
2002	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	7
2001	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4
2000	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	7
1999	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1
TOTAL	24	30.0%	56	70.0%	80

As of 2002, complex views of culture have consistently predominated over received views of culture in research and in scholarship. Most of the received-view articles appear in *ELT*

Journal, Language, Culture, and Curriculum, and *Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Not all of the complex-view articles explain their definitions of culture explicitly or attempt to engage directly with culture as a concept, but they discuss intercultural communicative competence, demonstrate heterogeneity and hybridity within cultural groups and individuals, and emphasize the influence of context on cultural phenomena.

Recent research on culture and language teaching has increasingly incorporated a complex view of culture in participant profiling, data collection, data analysis, and discussion of findings. Nevertheless, it remains unusual for researchers to use a variety of data collection methods and to incorporate data from actual interactive events that illustrate and illuminate the influence of culture and negotiation of cultural difference. Certainly part of the reason for this tendency is the difficulty of conveying the true complexity of such events within the constraints of a journal article, not to mention collecting the data in relevant contexts. Though qualitative research methods have been increasing in use and acceptance in recent years as well, a further reason may be lack of familiarity with and acceptance of qualitative research design and even more so of mixed methods design. Of the 26 research reports included in this body of literature, only one uses a mixed-methods approach combining survey and interview data (Rao, 2010); the same author wrote the only mixed-methods study included in Young, et al. (2009), and the view of culture in this study is essentially received as Rao draws comparisons between native English speaking teachers' familiarity with "local culture" in China and their awareness of the cultures of their home countries.

Nevertheless, there are a few exemplary studies from recent years that offer a way forward for research on the role of culture in language teaching. One of the first studies, and still one of the only studies, that analyzed classroom interactions closely in order to identify the ways

that teachers (in this case, non-native English speaking teachers) actually deal with cultural topics and negotiation of cultural meanings in the classroom is Lazaraton (2003). Lazaraton uses a conversation analysis approach to data that were recorded during normal class sessions in a U.S. intensive English program, and finds that when cultural topics (including copyright law, a famous film director, or local small talk) arise, the NNESTs sometimes lack cultural knowledge but also may be reluctant to admit ignorance and use the gaps in knowledge as an opportunity for negotiation of meaning among teachers and students. Though Lazaraton took considerable criticism for the way in which she analyzed these communicative events and related them to non-native speaker status, her study remains exemplary in its effort to analyze actual teacher practices.

The vast majority of existing studies on the relationships between culture and language teaching rely on teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices, elicited either through survey methods (Atay, 2005; García, Prieto, & Sercu, 2003; Gray, 2000; Holliday, 2009; Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Nakagawa, 2007; Psaltou-Joycey, 2008), through interviews (Diaz-Greenberg & Nevin, 2003; Nelson, Lutenbacher, & López, 2001; Phan, 2007; Starkey, 2007), or occasionally both (Rao, 2010), with no reference to classroom observations. In order to capture the relationships between teachers' beliefs about the role of culture teaching within language teaching and the actual practices that result from these beliefs, researchers need to compare classroom observations with interview data. If possible, researchers should include stimulated recall procedures in the interview process in order to document teachers' cognitions in relation to activities and decisions in the classroom. The only study in this survey that used such a procedure is Singh and Doherty (2004)[2], who found that the Australian teachers of English for

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[2] This study was ignored by Young, et al. (2009), perhaps because the empirical findings are embedded in theory about "global cultural flows" in a way that does not fit typical research report structure.

academic purposes in their sample often behaved in ways that did not align with their professed beliefs about their roles as cultural mediators, either due to perceived institutional constraints or conflicts with other priorities.

Two of the strongest research reports of recent years emerged out of one extensive project in which data was collected from classroom observations and teacher interviews in Chile and California (Menard-Warwick, 2008, 2009). In one article, Menard-Warwick (2008) focuses on data from interviews and observations to construct thematic narratives that reveal the construction of bicultural identities and intercultural competence in two teachers who the researcher considers to be "truly transnational English teachers" (p. 623). She emphasizes the importance of experience living and teaching in multiple countries as well as the importance of intensive personal reflection as contributors to the development of this intercultural competence. In the other article, Menard-Warwick (2009) focuses on classroom data from various teachers and students in Chile and California, identifying events when teachers and students complicated and negotiated notions of culture and cultural phenomena in their discussions. She identifies discussions of cultural change, cultural adaptation, and cultural values within each country as well as cultural comparisons, describing instances of Chilean students debating changes in gender roles and immigrant students in the U.S. comparing media images of U.S. phenomena such as homelessness with their own observations. Menard-Warwick demonstrates the complexity of these interactions and the complexity of the cultural concepts that arose, but she also points out that these discussions were peripheral to the teachers' intentions for their lessons; they were generally tolerated as opportunities to develop speaking skills rather than considered as integral components of the language course.

The role of culture extends beyond practices in one classroom or the beliefs of one teacher to program design and national policy. One study conducted in New Zealand that claims to be action research conducted by teacher-researchers includes data from teacher-student and student-student interactions as well as a description of two linked kindergarten programs (Cullen et al., 2009). One kindergarten allows children of Samoan descent to learn their heritage language and cultural practices, while the other, English-medium kindergarten allows these children along with New Zealander children of European and Maori descent to bring their language and cultural backgrounds into their oral interactions and literacy practices. The definition of culture here is relatively received, in that it is primarily used to distinguish between these three groups, but the attempts to increase the children's awareness of their own and others' cultures and the program design and teacher interactions that make this possible are complex. This work is presented as research, but it stands on the border between Byram and Feng's (2005) research/scholarship distinction in that it demonstrates the possibilities of program design while thoroughly describing current practices.

As Byram and Feng (2005) point out in their review, the internet and the various types of communication it affords including email, discussion board postings, and chat functions offer many new possibilities for interacting with native speakers of target foreign languages and even conducting virtual ethnography. Scholars have speculated about or advocated for the possibilities of using these forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to teach languages and increase intercultural competence (Furstenberg, 2010; O'Dowd, 2007; Ware & Kramsch, 2005), but a number of studies have now appeared that consider the impact of these attempts in a rigorous and detailed way (Belz, 2005; Belz & Muller-Hartman, 2003; Helm, 2009; Tudini, 2007). These methods of teaching and learning accommodate themselves well to

teacher-research because they are largely student-centered, meaning that learners have many opportunities to negotiate their own intercultural encounters, and they generate textual data that can be easily analyzed for awareness of cultural difference, negotiation of meaning, and instances of miscommunication (O'Dowd, 2007). Unlike the other studies of intercultural competence in CMC included in this review, Belz and Muller-Hartmann (2003) focus specifically on the process of designing and conducting a language course centered around CMC interaction and the challenges that they faced as teachers working in the U.S. and Germany respectively as they managed this exchange. The intercultural communication in question here is their own, and the cultures implicated are not only those of the U.S. and Germany but also institutional cultures of higher education in these two countries and these teachers' universities. As teacher-researchers, the authors not only reflect on their experiences but also examine their interactions as documented by emails sent over the course of a year.

Studies of culture and language teaching that focus on teachers-in-training are even more rare in the literature than studies of beliefs and practices among in-service teachers. Though researchers have used various methods including focus group interviews with cooperating teachers and teacher-learners during the practicum at a multicultural school (Rowsell, Sztainbok, & Blaney, 2007), discourse analysis of reading reflections produced during a graduate program (de Courcy, 2007), and a survey of Turkish English majors who intended to teach EFL (Atay, 2005), none of these studies have captured any kind of performance that would demonstrate the emergence and development of intercultural competence.

These summaries have focused on research involving in-service teachers and prospective teachers, but of course other types of research are highly relevant in that they contribute to the knowledge base about culture and language learning in ways that can inform teacher practices

and teacher education. Studies such as Talmy (2008), for example, which focuses on the language socialization of ESL students at a high school in Hawaii, elucidate the connections between language and cultural background and students' construction of identity, identifying powerful sources and practices of resistance that in this case led to the construction of a counter-culture among "Local" Hawaiian students labeled as ESL.

Baker (2009) also serves as an example of a study conducted with language learners that contributes the knowledge base. In addition, it also elaborates on the implications of emerging theory about English as a lingua franca (ELF) or as an international language (EIL) for the context of his study, Thailand, and other countries where English is a prominent and influential foreign language. Though in this study Baker relies on interviews with seven university students and ELF interactions with native and non-native speakers of English that he orchestrated for them and recorded, he knew these students through teaching at their university. His analysis is exemplary in that he demonstrates the heterogeneity and hybridity of students' cultural orientations in their interviews and interactions, showing how they describe Thai culture and then distance themselves from it but also avoid or resist the implication that they are attempting to imitate the cultures of the U.S., UK, Australia, or other English-dominant nations.

These studies offer possibilities for research on the connections between language and culture, but the gaps that remain are wide and badly need to be bridged by further studies that incorporate complex views of culture, describe a range of contexts, and use a combination of methods that encompass teachers' and students' reflections as well as their performance. The final section of this paper briefly summarizes research agendas that have been proposed and describes three types of studies that would contribute to the existing literature.

Proposed Research Agendas

In order for teachers and teacher educators to operate with a well-informed, well-considered understanding of culture and intercultural competence and to impart this understanding to their students, much progress still needs to be made in both research and scholarship in the area of culture and language teaching. Scholarship needs to develop in two directions. One would be to draw on existing research in areas that are relevant to culture and relate them to current concepts of intercultural competence. These areas can include a wide range of research on language socialization including work on communities of practice, which are often equated with "small cultures" (Holliday, 1999). Recent work on identity construction and local contexts may also have important implications for the teaching and learning of culture with language. As Atkinson (1999) suggested, the construct of identity may have already replaced the concept of culture as a focus of inquiry in many cases. Also, much work that claims to use ethnographic methods can offer insight into the nature and role of culture in various settings.

Existing work on the implications of native and non-native speaker status often have implications for the teaching of culture, though this distinction needs to be interrogated in and of itself (Lazaraton, 2003; Young, et al., 2009). Also, work on English as a lingua franca draws attention to the fallacy of assuming that learning language and culture necessarily means learning about the culture or cultures associated with native speakers of the language and emphasizes the specific skills involved in intercultural communication as a unique context, different from the speakers' native language communities or the communities where the lingua franca is a dominant language (Baker, 2009; Young, et al., 2009). As Holliday (2009) explains in regard to English, "The new thinking is that regardless of where these Englishes are located, English now belongs to everyone who uses it" (p.151). These perspectives need to be incorporated into scholarship and research.

The other direction in which scholarship can advance is in the description of "what ought to be" and attempts to implement and evaluate "what ought to be" in teacher education. This type of inquiry will overlap with research, but the emphasis here is on program design, outcomes, and justification for those outcomes in regard to intercultural competence among prospective teachers and their ability to teach it to language learners. In this process, evaluation of program effectiveness and learner outcomes needs to include assessment of both *reflective analysis* that demonstrates cultural and intercultural awareness as well as *performance* that shows evidence of this understanding (Scarino, 2009). Dogancay-Aktuna (2006) proposes "three main areas of inquiry to be integrated into language teacher education programmes in order to prepare teachers better for working in diverse contexts… the goal is to facilitate teachers' recognition of the complex and situated nature of English language teaching that will help them in making socioculturally appropriate pedagogical decisions" (p. 291), though further research is needed to identify the content and approaches that will allow teacher-educators to incorporate these concerns:

(1) Awareness of crosscultural variation in teaching and learning and tools for investigating this variation,

(2) Knowledge of management of innovation in language teaching,

(3) Awareness of sociopolitical factors surrounding teaching of English as an international language.

As for research, there are three major directions. One path leads to the expansion of the knowledge base of culture and language teaching. While the first direction in scholarship above calls for work that draws on existing research, much of this research does not deal with culture directly (even when that is part of its stated intention). Thus, new research needs to consider the practices of language users, teachers or otherwise, at various levels of proficiency including advanced bilinguals, who utilize cultural awareness and intercultural communication in various communicative events. This type of work would move the field toward a greater understanding of what to teach, though the question of what can be taught is more complicated.

In conducting this research, studies need to encompass all of the contexts in which culture may be implicated, and the differences between them. Depending on the contexts of learning and teaching, the opportunities for learners to encounter and engage in an "interchange of meaning" (Scarino, 2009) with users of the target language, and the learners' and teachers' language and cultural backgrounds, culture may play a different role in beliefs, experiences, and practices. Each of these unique contexts need to be considered in depth:

- In countries where the target language is dominant:
  - Language learners bring cultural experiences and associations with them to the classroom when they seek to acquire the dominant language; these can be accessed and incorporated into the learning process as they gain proficiency in the dominant language.
  - Heritage language learners may already have strong cultural associations that are linked to the target language but divorced from it because they are learners; they may learn language in order to have greater access to their heritage, but they may also benefit from developing intercultural awareness and competence that they can apply to other contexts and encounters.

- In countries where the target language is not dominant:
  - Foreign language learners will encounter unfamiliar cultural contexts when they use the target language, and need to be prepared for such encounters through instruction.
  - Language learning is complicated to the extent that future contexts of use are diverse and complicated. For example, teachers and learners may choose to focus on English as a lingua franca without the implication that it will be used with people from English-speaking countries. This does not imply that culture should be ignored, but rather that intercultural competence may be more important than specific cultural awareness.

The second path for research would involve describing and analyzing the beliefs, experiences, and practices of teachers, including prospective teachers and, as Young, et al.

(2009) contend, particularly experienced teachers. According to Byram and Feng's (2005) ideal, through instruction that incorporates an intercultural perspective:

> learners become members of a community whose discourse marks them out as able to reflect, analyze, and compare. The process of researching this would therefore be focused on how teachers and learners interact, how their discourse reveals their shared position as mediators, how their language reveals the acquisition of new concepts and rules whilst simultaneously revealing their ability to decentre from their own and others' concepts to better understand both. (p.164)

Studies that seek to develop this understanding need to use a variety of data collection methods, including self-report as well as observations and methods such as stimulated recall that ask participants to reflect on their actions and decisions. Incorporating this range of methods and also including data over a sufficient period of time to show development will require significant resources, but the richness of the results will be far greater than research that focuses on surveys or interviews alone, as much of the work so far has done.

The third path for research may not fit smoothly into the requirements of most major journals who publish research findings in this field, but it may have the greatest import for teacher education and translate most smoothly into teacher development. This direction involves teacher-research, which should occur at different stages. Prospective teachers should be trained to conduct research during their studies that develops their ability to gather and analyze data about the implications of culture and the nature of intercultural communication, broadening their understanding from their prior cultural contexts (as diverse as they may be) to a larger range of perspectives. In-service teachers should be allowed time and offered opportunities and incentives to analyze their own practices and their implications for their learners, and to disseminate what they learn to other teachers and to teacher educators. Like Belz and Muller-

Hartman (2003), these reflective teachers may be able to offer insights into the actual process of implementing intercultural methods that outside researchers may not be able to access.

Dogancay-Aktuna (2006) proposes the ecological perspective (Tudor, 2003), both as a means of training teachers and evaluating learning. This approach "involves exploring language teaching and learning within the totality of the lives of the various participants involved, instead of as a sub-part which can be examined in isolation" (p.291-292). As Tudor (2003) explains, the ecological perspective entails:

> an investigative methodology which makes it possible to gain insight into different participants' perceptions of a situation in their own terms and not simply with respect to a template of values developed by any one group of participants. This is true of the formal type of research which is reported in specialist journals, and also with respect to the applied, situation-specific type of research which is involved in preparing a teaching programme for a given class, institution or region. (p. 7)

Although Tudor (2003) never mentions culture explicitly in relation to the ecological perspective, this description emphasizes ideals that can serve to guide all of the research directions mentioned. In summary, the following types of research are needed: work that attempts to identify the skills of intercultural awareness and communication that will serve teachers and learners in their interactions with users of the target language as a first language or as an international language; work that observes, describes, and evaluates efforts to incorporate the findings of the first type of research into language teaching, incorporating the reflections and responses of teachers and students as well as the actual practices of teachers and the performance outcomes of students; and work that observes, describes, and evaluates efforts to incorporate intercultural training into teacher education programs that includes data collection both during the program (surveys, interviews, written reflections, classroom discussion, etc.) and after they

exit the program, when researchers can focus the actual implementation of the skills, strategies, and approaches they have learned.

Conclusion

Although scholars and researchers have been working with the concepts of culture in language learning for many years and although the nature of intercultural competence has been discussed at length, research that manages to capture the complexity of the relationships between language and culture and their implications for teaching and training teachers in diverse contexts remains very rare. As awareness and acceptance of work using ethnographic methods and mixed methods that can capture this complexity grows in the field in general, more researchers may apply these methods to questions of culture and intercultural communication. Considerable research remains to be done to understand these connections, and considerable scholarship will be needed to translate this research into effective practices for teachers and teacher educators. The challenges are great, but the desire and incentives to investigate, understand, and build competency in closely connected understandings of language and culture are strong now (Byrnes, 2010), and in all likelihood this desire for intercultural understanding and competence will only grow as processes of globalization, opportunities for intercultural contact, and the high stakes of effective intercultural communication increase around the world.

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