



Culture

in Language Learning

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CULTURE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Contents

Introduction <i>Hanne Leth Andersen, Karen Lund and Karen Risager</i>	7
Culture in Language Teaching <i>Claire Kramsch</i>	11
Culture in Language: A Transnational View <i>Karen Risager</i>	27
Cultural and Historical Narrative in Native and Non-native Speaker Language <i>Eva Westin</i>	45
The Awareness of Context in Second Language Acquisition Theories <i>Karen Lund</i>	57
Authenticity and Textbook Dialogues <i>Hanne Leth Andersen</i>	87
Film Dialogue as a Resource for Promoting Language Awareness <i>Francesco Caviglia</i>	105
Contributors	127

Introduction

Hanne Leth Andersen, Karen Lund and Karen Risager

This publication is the result of a conference held in Copenhagen on 18th May 2004 entitled ‘Culture in Language Learning’. It was organized within the framework of the Danish Language and Culture Network, which was founded in September 2002 with the aim of establishing and encouraging a discussion of the goals, visions and objects of foreign language studies in Denmark, and covers a whole range of interrelated disciplines and subdisciplines such as language, literature, culture, society, history and learning. The network has given rise to a series of conferences and conference publications including Hansen 2002 and Hansen 2004. A focal point in the discussions has been to develop a more integrated view of foreign language studies than has traditionally been the case.

This volume seeks to explore these disciplines and subdisciplines from a language perspective by asking questions such as: In what ways is culture a part of language and of language learning and teaching? What does it mean to learn and teach a foreign (or second) language in the world of today?

Classical and modern language studies have always focused on language and culture in a wider historical perspective. In the national philologies, literature and other texts written in the national language were considered to be the clear and well-defined object of study, and the national-historical framework was generally not questioned.

With the increased focus on internationalization, globalization and post-colonial studies, languages and cultures can no longer only be associated with nations and national identities. They should also be associated with transnational processes, networks and communities. Languages and cultures are variably related to specific subjectivities and historicities, in particular due to exchanges between countries for various purposes such as studying, international careers, or personal relations across borders. Consequently, new approaches to foreign language studies are being developed and must be developed, taking their theoretical and methodological points of departure in new research