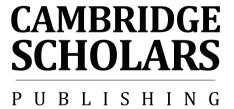# Policies, Principles, Practices

Policies, Principles, Practices:
New Directions in Foreign Language Education in the Era of Educational Globalization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:
UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE TEACHING
IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

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The idea of inviting foreign and second language teaching and learning scholars to reflect on their own teaching and research at this specific moment in time was conceived in a Danish university context. Addressing the specific challenges of university language teaching at the crossroads of the forces of internationalization and globalization on the one hand, and national political agendas on the other in the form of an anthology, will, hopefully, provide a space in which multiple voices are heard and various issues discussed. Most of us will probably find that our professional lives have undergone considerable changes within recent years, changes which, when considered in a larger perspective, are not accidental, but rather reflections of significant developments in the educational landscape of foreign and second language teaching and learning today. Many changes arise from the fact that the country in which we currently teach, learn, and conduct research becomes more and more integrated in the global knowledge economy in significant ways. Among the profound effects, which this integration has on national institutions, are the changes within the university disciplines which are normally subsumed under the concept of internationalization, implying that both content and structure should adapt to educational trends outside the national context. No doubt, 'our' academic discipline is one of the most important cogs in the machinery of globalization, as national innovativeness and industriousness are of little value if their merits cannot be communicated to the outside world. Therefore, research dissemination, which is instrumental in mapping the current foreign and second language education landscape and its interrelatedness with contemporary globalization challenges, is called for.

In short, the aim of this anthology is to present foreign and second language teaching and learning as key research domains in an era of globalization, including transnational education.

Today, university language teachers engage in a broad variety of rather different activities. They teach languages to young students who aspire to jobs as language teachers and seek a combination of advanced level language skills, cultural knowledge, and didactic competencies, and to other students pursuing careers as language professionals in corporations and institutions. University language teachers may also find themselves teaching languages to future engineers or lawyers, or students of other professions in which good language capabilities are pivotal in order to gain access to international top-level positions. Outside official working hours, some language teachers may also be busy teaching languages in various open university classes to, for example, nurses, schoolteachers, and mid-level managers who have realized the necessity of improved language skills. Moreover, university language teachers have recently taken upon themselves the task of teaching foreign languages to their own colleagues, who – for the most part – are not advanced level foreign language speakers, but who, nevertheless, need to be able to communicate their disciplinary knowledge in a language which is not their first language. Simultaneously, a pressing concern for university teachers is the need to publish research results in international journals; an activity demanding either a fairly good command of English language or highly skilled translation assistance with some disciplinary insight; a resource which of course is both scarce and, in the long run, relatively expensive.

In all these cases, university language teachers could be perceived as gatekeepers, as holding the keys to participation in a variety of globalized knowledge-based teaching and learning communities, to which one is denied access without a somewhat advanced mastery of a foreign or secondary language. The picture outlined above of the everyday life of university language teachers makes us aware that few disciplines have been more directly influenced by the globalizing forces, now transforming both university (Delanty 2002) and society in general, than the language disciplines. Furthermore, language teaching and learning is crucial to the realization of a broad set of institutional and national policies aiming at internationalization, global competitiveness, and the fulfilment of visions of a simultaneously knowledge-driven and inclusive democratic society.

Thus, the stakeholders in university language teaching and learning are numerous, and some of them also politically powerful. However, this is not necessarily reflected in the economic means available for language teaching activities or in the social prestige ascribed to the language teacher

profession. Probably, much can still be done in order to clarify and articulate the social, cultural, political, and economic potential embedded in a deliberate and sustained effort to raise the level of foreign and second language competence in the population in general. Perhaps even more can be done to draw attention to the unique capacity of university language teaching to push such an initiative forward qua its contact with all levels of the educational system as well as a broad variety of different professions in their quest for continuing education. Like other teaching institutions, universities are nodes in knowledge networks encompassing (among other things) secondary education, teacher education at university colleges, corporate training and, of course, international university partners. It is, however, difficult to think of other institutions with the same capacity for outreach to all relevant target groups and, at the same time, access to the most advanced knowledge resources.

In summary, university language teachers play a key role both in advancing an elite-oriented agenda of promoting academic mobility and international research impact, and of ensuring a broad platform for democratic participation in globalized political forums; a participation which inevitably demands the command of a foreign language.

Language teaching and socio-political environments

The recognition of the fact that language teaching serves a wider set of social and political purposes than merely improving the language skills of specific learners is commonplace. In her account of the role which foreign language teaching has played in the USA, Kramsch (Kramsch 2005) analyzes national political discourse on the role and status of foreign language learning, and points to the precarious political situation in which this discourse puts American foreign language teachers. She shows how government agencies, such as Department of Defence and Department of Homeland Security, seek influence on the curricula and methods applied in foreign language classrooms, and how curricula, syllabuses, and preferred teaching methods are coupled with national security interests. In a similar way, foreign language teaching is required to serve the needs of business to ensure national competitiveness in a globalized world economy. In Europe, emphasis in foreign language politics has been less on security and defence purposes, which does not mean that foreign language teaching is left in a vacuum, devoid of political interests. On the contrary, foreign language teaching has been one of the top priorities of European politicians in the effort to strengthen a shared European identity – interestingly not by advocating the acquisition of one shared language,

but by promoting an agenda of multilingualism (Kramsch, 2005) or 'plurilingual competence' (Byram 2006). Byram sees the plurilingualism project of powerful European authorities as being somewhat at odds with the notion of native speaker competence as epitomizing the "identification with a [national] polity" (Alred, Byram and Fleming 2006, 111). He recognizes, however, the continued existence of a close connection between language policy and a political agenda, but now sees this agenda elevated to a transnational level:

> The success of a European imagined community of communication presupposes plurilingual competence so that discourses at a formal level and in civil society can be extended beyond the national frontiers to European level (Byram 2006, 111)

To Kramsch, the insight that foreign language teaching is deeply embedded in political interests and larger social and historical developments, and that this embeddedness is too little recognized by foreign language teachers and applied linguists in general, must not lead to some sort of escapist denial to engage in real world problems; an engagement which traditionally has been one of the hallmarks of applied linguistics. It is, however, important that applied linguistics researchers reflect critically on the framings, the politically designed problem definitions under which applied linguistic research and foreign language teaching is supposed to function.

The fact that critical reflection on the framing of foreign and second language needs and foreign and second language teaching policies is crucial is further supported by Scollon (Scollon 2004), who takes his point of departure in a critique of the prevalent one language-one nation–one culture assumption. According to him, there is no doubt that this assumption has served ruling powers well during the entire history of nation states, and language teachers continue to do so whenever they communicate this simplified view to language learners (Scollon 2004). In agreement with Kramsch, he articulates the close connection between national political interests and foreign language teaching. Both scholars point to the fact that foreign language teaching and research depend heavily on funding from government and other external sources (for example corporate research grants). Based on Kramsch and Scollon, it must be recognized that the state of the art of foreign language teaching and research in the USA differs in many ways from the situation in Denmark. In the USA, there seems to be a strong political awareness of the enormous political, strategic, and economic potential inherent in having access to advanced foreign language competencies. The problem

appears to be that the area of foreign language research and teaching is too heavily charged with direct political interests and subject to politically motivated interventions; a fact which creates much uneasiness among both researchers and practitioners. It must, however, not be forgotten that attempts to take political control of the language teaching agenda do not only come from government level. Language learning can also serve a process of political empowerment when combined with critical social awareness and increased learner control of the acquisition process. As Norton concludes, based on Canadian data on immigrant language learners:

> Learners are encouraged to reflect critically on their engagement with target language speakers. That is learners are encouraged to investigate the conditions under which they interact with target language speakers, how and why such interactions take place and what results follow from such interactions. In this way, learners will develop insight into the way in which opportunities to speak are socially structured, and how social relations of power are implicated in the process of social interaction. As learners develop an understanding of how power acts on and through social interaction, they might learn to challenge social practices of marginalization. (Norton 2000, 155)

In Denmark, language teachers in general would probably not describe themselves as suffering from too much interest from national politicians. Although certain disciplines (such as Danish as a second language and the teaching of heritage languages) are heavily debated political topics, Danish politicians do not see a political/strategic advantage in supporting the growth of multilingualism on Danish ground.

The task facing Danish researchers and practitioners is rather one of raising national, political interest in foreign language teaching and research.

University language teaching reaching out, inside and outside the university

Language teaching in the service of a broad, comprehensive increase in foreign language competence through public schooling places new challenges before the university language teacher. There is no doubt that Danish universities are moving towards higher levels of commitment regarding the education of future language teachers. From being university subjects, showing little interest in the mundane concerns of teaching practice and leaving all considerations of application of language and

culture knowledge to the student, university foreign language programs now include courses on language didactics and invite students to experience teaching in practice in the form of visits or internships in secondary schools. However, the strongest focus should perhaps be on university language teaching itself. As stated by Schrier:

> Foreign language departments have a great influence on and obligation toward the teachers they prepare. The course work taken in the major influences how the future teacher constructs what it means to know the target language, culture, and literature and, most important, how it is taught (Schrier 2001, 74)

The student's own learning experience will have a lasting impact on the methods that he or she, as a teacher, will choose in the foreign language classroom. Thus, what is called for is presumably a combination of more alignment[1] of language teaching and learning methods used in secondary and tertiary education, combined with increased awareness and discussion of pedagogical methods both within and across secondary and tertiary education institutions[2]. Undoubtedly, seeing university language teaching as *part of* a more comprehensive knowledge and competence building chain requires that more effort be put in pedagogical development and research (an effort which is not to be expected of the individual university language teacher without strong – moral and economic - support from leadership and institutional policy). Outreach capability is not only dependent on goodwill and an open mind, but also on the actual ability to communicate knowledge to diverse target groups and engage such target groups in demanding learning processes.

   Considering the diversity (and importance) of the responsibilities and activities of university language teachers, several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the picture reveals the heterogeneity of language teaching needs to which the university has to respond. Viewed in a historical perspective, the sole concern of university language disciplines was, for a long period of time, the advanced level teaching of highly specialized knowledge on foreign languages and cultures to elite students. This form of teaching now takes place at the margins of language departments' core business (e.g. in PhD seminars and in the supervision of a few dedicated master thesis students). In the mass university (Delanty 2002), the obligation of university language teaching is primarily to cater for the learning needs of the professions (for example language teaching in primary and secondary school and professional communication in the corporate world). Secondly, the novelty of these learning needs is also striking. The fact that university teachers in other disciplines must deliver

their teaching and publish their research in another language than their first language is closely connected to processes of internationalization and globalization, i.e. the emergence of a global market of university education. Thirdly, and closely connected to the heterogeneity of foreign and second language teaching today, the importance of collaboration and outreach must be emphasized. University language teaching will not be able to cover this broad set of responsibilities without a continued and dedicated exchange of ideas, knowledge and resources with its academic, educational and social environments; or put in less abstract terms: with university partners, secondary and primary education institutions, professional organizations and the corporate world.

In summary, the description above attempts to depict university language teaching as deeply embedded in not only one, but several social, cultural and political change processes. The rapidity and strength of globalization processes and their impact on university education in general and on language disciplines in particular have often forced language teachers to seek inventive and innovative ad hoc solutions, as time for careful analysis, development, and planning is seldom available. The constant pressure to innovate and expand the scope of language teaching can easily lead to a fragmentation of disciplinary discussion and reflection among and within language and culture departments. In the effort to increase accessibility, relevance and effect of foreign language teaching, and to reach out to a broad variety of target groups, it is important to keep a constant focus on the shared concerns of university language teachers, even if it turns out to be an increasingly more laborious process to identify and articulate these concerns. Therefore, the aim of this book is to create a shared forum for cross-fertilization, involving scholars concerned with different language teaching practices, yet all affected by change processes such as globalization of education, teaching, learning and knowledge dissemination; the advent of the mass university, emphasizing high quality professional education, and, of course, the vagaries of shifting national and institutional policies.

Universalism or Diversity?

An issue which has not been addressed above is the status of specific languages. However, one of the most heated debates in university language teaching has been on the dominant status of the English language. Involved in this debate are not only teachers of other languages than English, but also English teachers conscious of the threat which English seems to pose to the less influential European languages (e.g.

German and French). In fact, the debate on the dominance of English is not a discussion concerning one single question, but rather a discussion concerning a set of interlinked issues. Unquestionable, however, is the fact that English is introduced in more and more universities as medium of teaching and research. As accounted for by Coleman (Coleman 2006), many factors contribute to this development, the perhaps most influential one being that international student mobility creates a demand for English-based instruction in a wide range of academic disciplines. The attraction of the highest possible numbers of international students is generally seen as an advantage as it contributes to "growth in mutual understanding; the migration of skilled labour; revenue generation" and "capacity building" (Hughes 2008, 2). In other words, a nation capable of attracting large numbers of international students gains the advantage of promoting increased intercultural understanding in its own population. It also benefits from attracting skilled, well-educated workers, creating profits in the higher education business, and expanding the quantity and increasing the quality of its educational offers. Thus, a virtuous circle in international higher education could be envisaged: the attraction of international students entails an influx of economic means, which can be invested in national higher education, which then – due to improved quality and strengthened reputation – will be able to attract even more students from abroad (Hughes 2008; Altbach and Knight 2007[3)]. Thus, the economies of national and international education are tightly interconnected, a fact which presents a strong national political incentive to enter the global education market. This, however, should not, as convincingly argued by Hughes, be done hastily, and not without a profound transformation of the national higher education systems in order to accommodate the educational needs of international students. The often 'idiosyncratic' or 'ethnocentric' arrangement of national higher education still represents a severe barrier to the internationalization of education. However, while system change and reputation building are very slow processes, offering courses in an international language, i.e. English, seems to be a kind of shortcut to increase international student intake. This, according to Hughes, can be part of the explanation of the rapid expansion of international student intake in some countries:

> while capacity building and reputation establishment are long term processes, changing the medium of instruction can take place relatively rapidly and can have rapid effects. It has been suggested, for instance, that the large increased between 1998 and 2003 of international students in Iceland, Norway and Sweden may, in part, be ascribed to their adoption of a policy of greater English-medium instruction (Hughes 2008, 4)

There is no doubt that the dynamics of international English-medium higher education will have profound effects on the global higher education landscape. Unsurprisingly, it is warranted to speak of an 'Anglophone asymmetry' (Hughes 2008) and to be aware of the impact of internationalization, including English-medium instruction, on national education systems. According to Hughes, higher education institutions in Anglophone countries had a head start in the internationalization process and have taken advantage of this by expanding their educational offers with unprecedented rapidity and innovativeness. Not only are large numbers of foreign students attracted to British, American, Australian, and Canadian universities; off-shore delivery in subsidiary institutions, often remote from the Western 'mother institutions', and delivery through net-based instruction are increasingly entering the national higher education markets in Non-English speaking countries and taking up the competition with the national higher education institutions. However, little is known about the effects on educational quality of these emergent educational forms. Can very (culturally and linguistically) diverse target groups be accommodated by highly standardized instruction? To which degree is academic quality lowered due to the fact that teaching in these novel forms of education often takes place detached from active research environments? And, highly relevant in this context, is academic quality endangered by the fact that presentation and discussion of content is conducted in a language which may not be the first language of neither teachers nor students? In the context of university teacher training, de Graff, Andernach, and Klaassen simply – and pessimistically – state:

> No matter how much effort you spend in improving your language skills, your command will always be less than perfect, and this will hamper your ability to interact with the students. (de Graaff, Andernach, and Klaassen 2006, 2)[4]

In Sweden, one of the first countries to adopt English-medium instruction as an internationalization strategy (Hughes 2008; Airey 2004), university teachers are increasingly concerned that the level of disciplinary competence achieved in English-medium courses will be endangered by the fact that the courses are taught by non-English speakers, i.e. Swedish teachers to Swedish students. Admittedly, there seems to be very few studies of the phenomenon, but according to Airey, results are, at best, 'inconclusive' as to the advantages of English-medium instruction in subjects such as chemistry or physics. In fact, Airey refers to one study which seems to show evidence of a directly detrimental effect of English language instruction on learning outcomes in chemistry. However, the results are

based on the investigation of one (!) English-taught chemistry class and a Swedish-taught control group. Airey commends universities, such as Uppsala, which have decided on a deliberately chosen language strategy. Notably, in the Swedish case, this strategy implies that the increase in English-medium teaching has been reversed with the effect that *fewer* courses are now offered in English.

As mentioned above, the discussion of English-medium instruction in Non-Anglophone countries represents a set of interrelated, but distinct questions. The conflation of these questions is seldom instrumental in addressing the different challenges inherent in English-medium instruction as part of higher education institutions' attempt to promote educational internationalization. Such a conflation often leads to a resistance towards internationalization of education, based on the argument that accepting English-medium instruction and admittance of students with insufficient English skills will necessarily lower academic standards and impede domestic students' in-depth acquisition of disciplinary knowledge. Certain aspects crucial to foreign and second language teaching should be emphasized in this context. First of all, the inclusion of national higher education in the international educational market is as crucial to 'national survival' as is the integration of business into the global economy (however, the urgent need to internationalize education is much less recognized politically than the need to globalize business). At the moment, there are practically no other routes to such an inclusion than capacity building in higher education qua English-medium instruction. Awareness of global linguistic and social asymmetries emanating from globalization of education should be strengthened and should influence educational policies in local, national, and transnational political settings. Furthermore, it should be noted that English language competence building, strengthening of first language skills, and in-depth acquisition of disciplinary knowledge are not necessarily each others' adversaries. As shown by Airey, well thought out language policies combined with adequate funding can lead to solutions in which the different learning needs are balanced.

University Foreign Language Education and Changing Higher Education Landscapes – the Case of Denmark

Even though the entire scope of the anthology and the problems that it addresses were conceived in a Danish university context, its relevance extends beyond the borders of Denmark. In relation to the discussions raised in the anthology, Denmark should be seen as no more than an example of a Western, non-Anglophone country striving to find its

position in an increasingly globalized higher education landscape. The key problems underlying the anthology contributions apply to educational systems in every country in which the main language is spoken exclusively by the 'indigenous' population (and by immigrant groups), and which relies on English-medium instruction to become a full member of the global educational market.

The multitude of specific issues discussed in the articles can be subsumed under three – interconnected – problem areas in which university language education in non-Anglophone countries must navigate successfully if languages educations are to play an active part in forming and qualifying educational globalization. *The development of comprehensive and efficacious language policies* based on a recognition of today's (and tomorrow's) complex and dynamic linguistic and educational landscape; *capacity building regarding English-medium instruction* (the maintenance of disciplinary and pedagogical quality in teaching and learning environments where English is used by non-native speakers as a medium of communication and understanding); and finally, *the development of inclusive, motivating, and efficient foreign language teaching and learning methods* matching the fact that more people need to learn more language(s). As a consequence of the transition from elite to mass education, universities face more heterogeneous learner groups which for cultural, social and psychological reasons demand a variety of presentation forms, including forms involving present-day information and communication technologies. Particularly regarding young learners, argues Caviglia in his article "New media literacies for advanced foreign language learning and teaching", foreign language educators must consider how foreign language learning may contribute to the development of active, critical, and creative participants of the multitude of media scenes which such learners face today. Simultaneously, these technologies and the environments created by them challenge existing understandings of both goals and practices of language teaching. Thus, as Caviglia's comprehensive and systematic presentation of FLL-relevant ICTs illustrates, existing and emerging digital media represent a 'double-edged sword' to foreign language teaching in the sense that the wealth of educational possibilities inherent in these media cannot be uncoupled from a profound questioning of foreign language teaching's goals and objectives. For example, as mentioned by Caviglia, the emphasis that is put in university teaching on learning 'depth'; a notion closely connected to the mastery of traditional knowledge acquisition forms such as reading and writing. One discipline normally subjected to in-depth learning and requiring higher order cognitive skills of the student, namely the area of *foreign language grammar*, may find

itself in a particularly precarious situation if students' learning habits change dramatically due to extensive involvement with digital media as suggested by Caviglia. Unsurprisingly, no less than three contributions address grammar teaching in university language education. Ebensgaard traces the antipathy of students towards the grammar discipline back to historical grammar teaching practices with a strong focus on the acquisition of correct structural analysis and mastery of correct terminology, engendering strong negative emotions such as outright 'fear of grammar'. Despite a thorough revision of grammar teaching methods, grammar students still fail to recognize the relevance of the subject. As indicated by Ebensgaard, this may also be related to present-day students' increased expectation of immediate relevance of taught content. Whatever the reason, there is a serious discrepancy between students' willingness to engage in grammar learning and the need for candidates with high-level grammar skills, e.g. as foreign language teachers. Therefore, existing grammar teaching methods must be critically examined in order to appeal to young university students. In the article "A comparison of two pedagogical models of sentence analysis", Ebensgaard examines two commonly taught methods of grammatical analysis and argues that the introduction of grammatical analysis methods should consider both the grammar knowledge that students bring with them from previous education and the level of complexity which will be required of them in grammar learning beyond basic level foreign language education. A method combining the strengths of the presented methods may afford just that possibility. However, carefully planning and presenting grammatical theory and methods in the most accessible manner is not sufficient if students' motivation for grammar learning is to be changed thoroughly. In the article "Contextualizing linguistic knowledge: language and humor", Ebensgaard describes how genuine student involvement may be triggered if the point of departure is taken, not in grammatical structures themselves, but in advanced, creative, perhaps even artistic language use as it is found in humor based on language and linguistically shared cultural conventions. Faced with the challenge of understanding the finer linguistic mechanisms through which humorous language use works, students were willing to devote themselves to advanced forms of grammatical analysis – and were able to establish an immediate sense of the relevance of grammatical knowledge. The contested status of grammar teaching in foreign language education is not only caused by unmotivated students but also the fact that FLT scholars have questioned the value of explicit grammar instruction for efficient foreign language acquisition. In her article "Teaching and Acquiring Second Language Grammar at the University", Dam draws a

line from Krashen's devaluation of explicit grammar instruction to recent contributions, emphasizing that in foreign language learning, grammar learning may indeed enhance language acquisition, and, consequently, suggesting instruction methods combining form and content orientation. The notion that a cognitive grasp of the structural functioning of a language is a prerequisite for attaining more advanced learning goals increasingly inspires language teachers and scholars to recommend the comprehension based approach and let the students observe, analyze, and interpret concrete instances of language use before demanding actual speech and text production in the foreign language. Dam furthermore argues that the philosophical approach to the phenomenon of language and to grammar's role in the language may influence the efficiency of instruction. Following the approach 'Instructional Semantics' which views grammar – the structural functioning of a language – as a set of instructions guiding the speaker/listener's interpretation of language output is, so Dam argues, highly conducive to efficient foreign language teaching and learning in university classrooms.

As illustrated by these contributions, one of the main challenges facing foreign language teachers is the renewal of foreign language teaching itself and of the conditions that such teaching establishes for students' language acquisition in the classroom. There is of course ample evidence that classroom practices are deeply influenced by their social and political circumstances, both on institutional and societal level. Language policies at institutional, national and transnational levels set the political and legal framework for language teaching and learning activities in universities. In Danish higher education, curriculum goals are designed at a fairly decentralized level, i.e. by so-called study boards, which are relatively autonomous, democratically elected local steering groups exercising control of the academic content of an education within the framework set by the faculty management and the national guidelines. The academic quality of university curricula is controlled by the national Accreditation Institution (ACE). The Danish way of arranging curriculum design and quality control relies on the local study boards and, consequently, local traditions of curriculum design emerge, even within the same institution. However, the focus of Leth Andersen's and Fernandez' article is a nation-wide, cross-institutional comparison of foreign language curricula, and particularly curricular descriptions of progression. Undoubtedly, curriculum documents play a central role in the constitution of teaching and learning practices in the involved institutions, and, consequently, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of what actually counts as best

practice in curriculum design and to have such knowledge disseminated to all foreign language education milieus.

Cancino's article "Language policy, language planning, and language teaching at Danish universities" focuses on recent Danish university history in its analysis of the spread of English-medium instruction at Danish universities and these universities' responses to the challenges posed by the dramatic changes in the current educational and linguistic landscape in which they find themselves. English-medium instruction is beyond doubt the most conspicuous indication of such changes; however, Cancino does remind us of the importance of other foreign languages and of integrating these languages into the crafting of university language policies. Hauge's article "Teaching in English vs. teaching English" directly addresses one of the main problems of English-medium instruction in a Danish context: the inability of Danish university teachers to speak a native-like English (if they are not English teachers or native speakers of English). International students may expect not only to acquire disciplinary knowledge but to improve their English skills as well during their stay abroad. This expectation has not been addressed in current university language policies, in which the possibility of making academic content accessible qua English-medium instruction is the main focus.

The very fact that English taught programs are offered at Danish universities represents a severe challenge to university staff members. As such, the various staff development units affiliated to the Danish universities have included English competence development in their portfolio of services. Two articles illustrate the approach taken by University of Copenhagen. University staff teaching courses in English are required to pass an English language test. In order to equip teachers to pass the test, language instruction tailored precisely to the needs of the individual teacher is offered. In Westbrook and Henriksen's article, it becomes evident that teachers may struggle with psychological barriers against performing in English in the classroom and be inhibited by negative perceptions of their actual English performance. Thus, the instruments suggested by Westbrook and Henriksen: guided noticing and awareness raising may help the teachers build more realistic self-images and more self-confidence in their English language teaching practice. Kling and Stæhr describe how the application of an English-language test specifically targeting the communicative practices of an academic lecture forms a constructive point of departure for efficient English language improvement for the participant. The strength of the TOEPAS (Test of Oral English Proficiency for Academic Staff) test is the quality of the feedback it provides to the test participant. In the test, the fluency, vocabulary,

pronunciation, grammar and interaction skills are evaluated, enabling the test leader to provide the participant with feedback in such detail that the feedback forms the point of departure for follow-up learning activities.

Finally, it must be taken into account that much university language learning takes place outside the classroom. Not least young learners strengthen their foreign language communication abilities through their presence in global social online forums and other forms of social online platforms. The challenge facing language teachers is to involve such platforms in furthering individual and collaborative learning processes. Mondahl's and Pals Svendsen's article presents a theoretical foundation for understanding social learning processes in online forums and discusses the affordances provided by specific platforms.

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Notes

[1] Thanks primarily to the work of John Biggs (Biggs and Tang, 2007, Biggs 2001), the concept 'alignment' is widely used in discussions on efficiency and quality of university teaching. According to Biggs, 'alignment' should be understood as coherence between key elements of the teaching/learning environment, i.e. that there is a logical and meaningful correlation between goals, assessment practices, and teaching methods – and, when possible, future professional practice. For example, PBL (Problem-Based Learning) is seen as more 'aligned' with professional working methods than traditional lecture-based teaching (Biggs 2001). However, it seems to be the case that, to Biggs, alignment primarily concerns factors within the university teaching and learning context itself, and, to some degree, to future professional practice. When considering the secondary-tertiary transition problem, however, another type of alignment is addressed: the individual student's experience of his/her learning experiences in various institutional settings as 'aligned', i.e. as meaningfully and purposefully connected, and as fitting into his/her personal educational narrative, aiming, in the end, at a fully fledged professional identity.

[2] The interrelatedness of curriculum, pedagogy and didactics of secondary and tertiary education is seldom addressed within the language disciplines. In contrast, the same phenomenon is extensively investigated in the area of mathematics (Gueudet 2008) where the abrupt change of approach to both content and teaching and learning methods happening in the transition from secondary to tertiary education is seen as a severe problem which should be remedied by conscious efforts to level out the profound differences between high school and college/university teaching and learning. Notably, this is not done by lowering expectations in the university context, but by introducing university-like forms of instruction in the final year of high school (Gueudet 2008). The secondary-tertiary transition has also been explored as a general educational problem. Australian research, for example, suggests that first year students often suffer a serious identity loss when immersed in the university culture, as they experience little resemblance between the often impersonal and anonymous university culture and the more personalized and caring culture of secondary school ((Scanlon, Rowling and Weber 2007). Whereas international research literature addressing secondary-tertiary transition within the language disciplines is scarce, research at national and local level (Søndergaard et al. 2009) supports the tentative conclusion that abrupt changes in content, teaching methods, and fundamental pedagogical principles between secondary and tertiary level education have detrimental effects on student learning. A case study on first year students of the English program at Aarhus University is particularly revealing as to the lack of consistency in student experience of high school and university learning (Ågård 2009). The students seem to see their English proficiency skills as their key competencies, however, they experience proficiency skills to have a low priority in university teaching, and, thus, that former learning is not sufficiently recognized in the university context. This is in agreement with Leth Andersen's and Blach's research on the national documents regulating French and German teaching in secondary school and in the

university (Andersen and Blach 2009). An analysis of these documents shows that the firm focus on communicative skills in primary and secondary school is replaced by a more 'dispersed' focus in university level French and German teaching, spanning both proficiency and academic content learning goals.

[3] The terms 'globalization' and 'internationalization' are used in agreement with the definition given by Knight and Altbach: "Globalization and internationalization are related but not the same thing. Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century. 'Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even individuals – to cope with the global academic environment. The motivations for internationalization include commercial advantage, knowledge and language acquisition, enhancing the curriculum with international content, and many others." (Altbach 2007, 290)

[4] Fortunately, this does not prevent de Graff, Andernach and Klaassen from seeing that English-medium instruction is an indispensable part of university teaching in a globalized world and, thus, integrating this aspect in their outline of a teacher training program.

CHAPTER TWO

NEW MEDIA LITERACIES FOR ADVANCED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Introduction: Why this Article?

Some developments in the technologies and social practices of communication are modifying, and possibly redefining, the very notions of learning and literacy in the new millennium, which challenges long-established traditions in education. This is the underlying assumption of a growing body of research aimed at defining and promoting the practices of literacy required for full participation in the current social, political and economic landscape (e.g., Kress 2003; Gee 2004 and 2010; Lankshear and Knobel 2003 and 2006; Coiro et al. 2008; Jenkins 2009; James 2009).

At least since the 1980s (the first CALICO conference was held in 1983), the field of (foreign) language learning has been at the forefront of research on using computer-based technologies for learning and teaching. Recent examples of the keen interest in technology among researchers and practitioners in language studies include the high impact of the Language Learning & Technology[1] journal, the persistent success of the ICT for Language Teachers website[2], or the breadth and depth of the 2007 Annual Review of Applied Linguistics issue on Language and Technology (individual articles are quoted below). In spite of all this, a language student at a European university can still go through her or his studies with minimal or no exposure to practices and hands-on activities such as participating in peer-reviewing, sharing annotations on a text or video, writing subtitles, or interrogating a text corpus. Indeed, university degrees in most areas, today, offer no indication of the student's competences in

applying the tools and practices of what Henry Jenkins calls *participatory culture* (Jenkins 2009).

There are indeed several good reasons to be cautious about introducing new technologies in education:

- Introducing changes in large institutions is typically a slow and difficult process (Newton, 2003).
- Technocentric, 'product-oriented' discourse easily leads to frustration and to more or less open resistance to changes in the technology of education (Witte 2007).
- New technologies are per definition under development, which may induce policy makers and teachers to wait until tools and educational practices are firmly established before committing to their use.
- 'Digital wisdom' (Prensky 2009) is spread unequally among generations, with the result that many teachers may not have internalized some practices that are fairly common among younger students; moreover, even young students are by no means homogeneous in their appreciation and use of new technologies (Jones et al. 2010).

On the other hand, current foreign language students will soon become professionals in areas such as teaching and communication, and we would do them a disservice by keeping them on the losing side of the digital divide, which today is first and foremost a literacy divide (Warschauer 2003). The goal of this article is therefore to highlight some possible strategies for including some new tools and practices of communication in the language studies curriculum at university level.

After this short introduction, this paper devotes a section to some ongoing changes in forms and practices of literacy that are relevant to language education in general, and to second/foreign language learning in particular. Some proposals for educational intervention are then the focus of the second section. The conclusions briefly address one open question about the alleged negative impact of the new media on deep learning.

New Digital Media and Learning Socio-cultural Turn in Understanding Literacy

In a white paper aimed at maximal diffusion and impact, linguist and educationalist James Gee has suggested New Digital Media and Learning as an emerging field of research and intervention that draws on contributions

from research on 'traditional' literacy (e.g., Ong 1982), 'new literacy studies' (in the social dimension of literacy, as in Gee, 1996), 'situated cognition' (on the social dimension of learning, as in Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989; Lave and Wenger 1991) and 'new literacies studies' (in the multiple forms and practices of literacy in a digital age, e.g., Lankshear and Knobel 2003 and 2006).

Gee's view of the unifying element of this emergent field is quite bold in its scope and impact:

> The emerging area of digital media and learning is not just the study of how digital tools can enhance learning. It is, rather, the study of how digital tools and new forms of convergent media, production, and participation, as well as powerful forms of social organization and complexity in popular culture, can teach us how to enhance learning in and out of school and how to transform society and the global world as well. (Gee 2010, 14)

This perspective pervades a state-of-the-art collection of reports on digital media and learning sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation over the last few years (see e.g., Ito et al. 2009 and 2010; Jenkins 2009; James 2009; Gee 2010).[3] The first section of this paper builds to a large extent on this body of research and presents some of the challenges for educational institutions that arise from the currently ongoing redefinition of the notion of literacy.

A common trait within this research activity is a view of learning as participation in social practices and appropriation of cultural tools (Wertsch 1998). This entails keen attention to the context (community, habits, rules, technical tools) in which learning takes place and the assumption that learning occurs through apprenticeship in a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991). Educators who subscribe to this approach typically strive to create conditions for learning, with direct instruction taking the back seat. Critics of this approach (e.g., Kirschner, Sweller and Clark 2006 and the ensuing debate) accuse the whole tradition of socio-cultural research in education of underestimating the learner's need for adequate scaffolding in the form of direct instruction. Literacy scholars in the socio-cultural tradition (e.g., Gee 2004 and 2010) respond with the contention that such scaffolding (possibly in form of direct instruction) may in fact be embedded in social practices, as in the case of the support offered to apprentice contributors in online communities, or in the tools themselves, as in the case of the progression mechanisms in video games or in the help provided by search engines in solving information problems.

This paper builds on this socio-cultural tradition and examines some dimensions of literacy as they are shaped by current practices and technologies for understanding and producing communication (Warschauer and Ware 2008; Jenkins 2006 and 2009). Much current research on the new digital media – e.g., the already mentioned series sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation – is not overly concerned with language issues, which may lead the reader to assume a focus on the mother tongue. And indeed, relevant contents in the language of the community are a crucial requirement for social inclusion via the new technologies (Warschauer 2003, 93-108). At the same time, these technologies, and the social practices fuelled by them, represent an unprecedented opportunity for advanced language learners to practice the target language and culture in new, context-rich settings. For clarity's sake, the following paragraphs will maintain a broader focus on literacy and learning, after which the discussion will narrow focus to a set of practical proposals for second and foreign language education.

Collective Intelligence and the Participatory Dimension

The notion that cognition may be distributed within a community —for example a classroom (Brown et al. 1993; Pea 1993) — has gained a stronger resonance since the Internet has become a catalyst for gathering communities around 'affinity spaces' (Gee 2004) that are indifferent to geographic boundaries. From large scale projects for the development of reference works (e.g., Wikipedia) or open source software, to leisure activities inspired by artefacts of popular culture (e.g., Harry Potter fanfiction or videogame play and discussion) the Web has become a crossroads for the coordination, consumption and distribution of intellectual and artistic work.

Henry Jenkins has identified the trademark of a contemporary youth's way of being part of public discourse as a Web-mediated participatory element (Jenkins 2009). Figures from recent US-American surveys (Lenhart et al. 2010) show that over 90% of the population between the ages of 12 and 29 is regularly online. Among this population, three quarters are affiliated with social networks (e.g., Facebook), over one third share self-created contents (e.g., photo or video) and about 20% remix contents into new artistic creations (Lenhart et al. 2010). On average, Europeans figures are lower; nonetheless, they show a clear trend towards a more pervasive and participative use of the Internet among teenagers and young adults (Eurostat 2009 and 2010). A significant proportion of young people are thus growing up as participants in virtual communities devoted