

Towards Closing the Language & Culture Gap: A Pedagogical Approach

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This paper advances an approach to culture and language instruction through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives), combined with an inquiry-based approach utilizing the theory on stages of second language acquisition. Culture elements, when embodied in a properly developed and organized curriculum can be systematically implemented all along the different phases of language growth. Mastery of a language is not simply mastery of vocabulary as well as grammar and spelling rules. The most successful language learners learn both culture and language together. The conceptualizations provided by research, although at times conflicting, form a useful foundation for language teaching that provides a deeper and a more enriching human experience. Making culture the core in a language class is akin to asserting the obvious (Furstenberg, 2010); they are two flip sides of the same coin. With its focus on revisiting the role of culture in the FL Classroom, the paper seems to fall into the same category - affirming the tried and true, but like Furstenberg, the author believes there is good reason to re-consider the possibility of closing the language and culture gap.

Keywords: culture studies, second language acquisition, second culture, language competence, culture competence

Introduction

Culture studies are not in the realm only of research and scholars. It deserves a crucial place in schools, particularly in higher education, because it helps students understand the complexity of everyday life and the way habits, objects, and beliefs are socially patterned and laden with values and meaning in relation to their lives and others'. Culture studies are not treated in this paper as it is in the research field. Rather, it refers to the need for a strong commitment to bring cultural understanding within the classroom context in light of recent developments both nationally and internationally. Hadley (1993) asserts that cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are sensitive to other cultures prepared to live more harmoniously in the target language community.

Making culture the core in a language class is akin to asserting the obvious (Furstenberg, 2010); they are two flip sides of the same coin. Despite substantial evidence in the field arguing for the interrelatedness of the two, the debate on the place of culture in language instruction has remained an issue. Scholars have been in disagreement as to which gets priority and in what sequence culture and language should be taught. Tomalin (2008) adds culture as a fifth skill to the other four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As the fifth skill, culture skill has been referred to as an attitudinal change has to be taught simultaneous

to the other skills. Kramsch (1993) however argues that real learning is not possible unless language as a cultural tool is first learned. Kramsch emphasizes the fact that language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. This paper posits the centrality of learning culture content in each of the stages of language development. With its focus on revisiting the role of culture in the FL classroom, the paper seems to fall into the same category—affirming the tried and true, but like Furstenberg, the author believes there is good reason to re-examine the necessity of closing the language and culture gap in the classroom.

The Background

Substantial evidence illustrates the fact that the advent of the National Standards for Foreign Language Education in the 21st Century (NSFLE, 1999) re-defined culture as fundamental to language learning and drew attention to its vital role in language instructions. By providing a new definition of culture, the NSFLE (1999) became the most fundamental document in the teaching of foreign language in the United States and had heavily influenced language teaching (Brown, 2007) since then. Whereas in the past, language programs focused on the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, culture skills has been added. Since then, scholars in both fields have discussed directions and perspectives on integrating the two (Lange & Paige, 2003).

Furthermore, culture and culture perspective in the classroom were even more reinforced when ACTFL revised the National Standards in 2006. The document was used, as a national standard, in conjunction with state and local frameworks and served as a guideline to determine the best approaches and most reasonable expectations for students in individual districts, schools, and colleges. The Revised Standards defined “culture” as generally comprehended from the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products (tangible and intangible) of a society (p. 47). The new revision included the 5Cs: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities in learning a foreign language. Culture was included with its closely interrelated components: the tangible and intangible elements of a society. Although communication in all of its forms (face-to-face conversations, listening to media, writing with pen and paper or electronically, and reading texts, literary and nonliterary) is “at the heart of second language study”, the document emphasizes that “students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs” (p. 31).

Research Goals and Outline

Despite the extensive evidence on the relation between culture and language teaching in the FL classroom, educators are still looking for effective techniques and approaches to teach the latter in ways to achieve effective communication. This paper aims to provide a roadmap on teaching competence that will effectively develop student capacity to communicate in the target language with cultural competence.

Although the position of culture in language learning was highlighted with the advent of the National Standards of 1996, literature indicates that its role in the language classroom was widely discussed in the field in the years preceding it. So, what are the complexities of teaching culture; and why is operationalizing the teaching of culture an ongoing challenge to teachers? These are some of the questions this paper aims to throw light on.

First the paper will review some of the studies reflecting the important focus on culture awareness in modern language education, a shift that reflects increased awareness of the inseparability of the two even before the National Standards, as well as those after it. Then the author will introduce research articles that discuss numerous

challenges (Ikeguchi, 2021) of teaching culture, as well as several attempts outlining solutions to the problem. One running theme remains obvious throughout the extensive discussions: The teaching of culture has not been effective, and scholars have been searching for ways culture could be effectively taught to achieve its goals in the classroom. The vast literatures seem to indicate that the teaching of culture skills has not been approached in a principled, systematic, manner that actively engages learners in the language classroom.

This paper then advances an approach to culture and language instruction through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives), combined with an inquiry-based approach utilizing the Theory on Stages of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Why are these theories important? It is proposed that SLA theories, which lay out in detail student learning readiness in every step of instruction, ought to be the standard for learning culture through language. SLA theories can, and should, be the framework that drives the development of culture courses that aim for language competencies.

To reiterate an earlier assertion, the centrality of culture in foreign language instruction, highlighted in the Standards for Foreign Language Education in the 21st Century (Lear & Abbott, 2008), and comprehensively outlined in the *MLA Committee Report* of 2007. The report emphasized “culture” as a comparable concept with “language” in today’s modern language education. It pointed out the interrelatedness of culture and language: “Language is a complex multifunctional phenomenon that links an individual to other individuals, to communities, and to national cultures”, and “Culture is represented not only in events, texts, buildings, artwork, cuisines, and many other artifacts but also in language itself” (p. 236). The summary text “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” sets forth and explains a multitude of standards for foreign language education focusing on the “five Cs”: communication in languages other than English; gaining knowledge and understanding of other cultures; connecting with other disciplines and acquiring information; learning to compare and develop insights into the nature of language and culture; and learning to participate in multilingual communities in the United States and around the world. Since then, researchers have extensively argued on the side of culture inextricably linked to language. Unfortunately, despite the substantial research pointing to the interrelatedness of the two, the place of culture learning in the language classroom has remained a longstanding debate in ELT up until today.

Coupling Language and Culture: Prior to the National Standards

This section will review some research conducted on culture and language in the classroom prior to the National Standards, studies that assert the importance of culture in language instruction criticizing the ways the former has been taught in language classes.

In an in-depth discussion of the complex relationship between language and culture, Kramsch (1993) identified three ways in which the two are bound together. First language expresses cultural reality; language embodies cultural reality; and language symbolizes cultural reality. In lieu of this, teaching language is inseparable from teaching culture. The article defines culture as semantically encoded in the language, while culture is expressed through the actual use of the language. Likewise, Brown (1996) describes the inseparable relationship between language and culture as very important and delicate. “A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 26).

Recognizing the inseparability of the two, other scholars advocate the inclusion of culture in language study due to their reciprocal value. For instance, Brooks (1968) argued that culture sheds light on the real meanings of

the target language. The article is an attempt to define and describe culture for foreign language teachers, particularly those involved in the earlier phases of instruction. Stern (1992) put forward the idea that “One of the most important aims of culture teaching is to help the learner gain an understanding of the native speaker’s perspective” (p. 216). It is a matter of the L2 learner “becoming sensitive to the state of mind of individuals and groups within the target language community” (p. 217). In addition, Stern developed a model for teaching culture and outlined a proposal for a cultural syllabus.

Earlier researchers who are of the same view and promote the goals of culture study in language instructions are not few. La Fayette (1997) posited the view that language is to be used to sharpen skills to detect cultural diversity, and suggests ways in which language teachers can contribute toward the acceptance of cultural pluralism through their teaching.

While sharing the same view, other scholars criticized the way culture is being taught in the classroom in those days. La Fayette (1988) criticized the perfunctory manner in which language was taught without due recognition of cultural pluralism in the US and elsewhere. Strasheim (1981) acknowledged that culture awareness has become an important focus of modern language education, indicated the inseparability of language and culture, and argued for the benefits of culture study in the classroom.

There is no question that the successful integration of culture and language teaching can contribute significantly to general human knowledge, that language ability and cultural sensitivity can play a vital role in the security, defense and economic well-being of the country. (p. 67)

The research however concluded with a critique that unfortunately teachers spend only 10 percent of language classes on culture. Similarly, Lafayette (1997) noted that teachers spent a great deal of time and effort on teaching grammar and lexical components of the language, leaving culture as the weakest component of the curriculum. In his examination of the interrelatedness of culture and language skills, Damen argued that cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communicative skills are generated from culture-general and culture-specific perspectives. The text further insists that there is a need for language teachers to take this into consideration in the classroom (1987).

Attempts at Integration

Kramsch (1993, p. 3) identified three ways how language and culture are bound together. First, language expresses cultural reality (with words people express facts and ideas but also reflect their attitudes). Second, language embodies cultural reality (people give meanings to their experience through the means of communication). Third, language symbolizes cultural reality (people view their language as a symbol of their social identity). In the same manner, Hardy (2004) examined the necessity of teaching culture in relation to the materials and methods used on the foreign language taught arguing that since both materials and methods have differing and important impacts on language acquisition, the same has to be considered in the teaching of culture (McKay, 2003).

Necessity of Integration: Studies After the National Standards

The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1999) set the guidelines for foreign language learning in the 21st century. At the same time, it provided a new definition of culture which had heavily influenced language teaching thereafter. Scholarly discussions on the intricate relationship between culture and language pursued long after the enactment of the National Standards had been implemented. On one hand are

those who further argue in favor of the integration of both, and on the other are those who highlight the challenges in its implementation. Some of these will be mentioned here.

In the *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Brown (2007) analyzed language learning in terms of the physical and psychological factors affecting it; at the same time alluded to the important role culture learning plays in language learning. “The acquisition of a second language is also the acquisition of a second culture” (Brown, 2007, pp. 189-190). Pursuing a similar line of thought, Zhao (2011) asserted that language is closely related to culture; and second language learning is often second culture learning. Based on the premise that culture competence is an integral part of linguistic competence, Zhao recommended a list of practical teaching strategies on culture teaching in English Language Teaching (ELT), insisting that culture knowledge and competence, such as intercultural communication, are heavily influenced by language competence. In his review of the literature relating to goals and objectives for teaching culture, Zhao advocated one of the five fundamental objectives of language instruction is to serve as a foundation for the development of cross-cultural understanding and intercultural competence. The author emphasizes that foreign language learning should focus on the importance of cultural understanding and the development of intercultural competence.

In addition, the investigation of Abbaspour, Nia, and Zare (2012) gives an account of the important place that culture holds in foreign language education. Since the culture component is an indispensable part of any language curriculum, like Brown and other authors (Erickson, 2019), the authors advocate the integration of both and suggest different approaches to teaching it. Setting realistic goals and devising appropriate methodology in teaching culture were considered to be the most important component.

Given the public recognition on the vital role of culture competence in learning language, latter studies shifted focus towards examining further the state of culture teaching in language classes. The following articles seem to address one key issue that the teaching of culture is not optimally fulfilled. For instance, Ho (2009) identified constraints that affect the development of the cultural awareness in English language classes, namely the teacher’s cultural knowledge, the availability of native English speakers, lesson time given to culture teaching in the classroom or even the system of education itself.

Survey studies thereafter indicated challenges relating to integration of language and culture instruction focusing on the classroom. Erickson’s report (2019) reveals the difficulties confronting teachers, the most challenging of which is the multiple and evolving conceptualizations of what culture is, and what the goals for culture learning should be. Although most teachers were comfortable teaching culture and were familiar with cultures as one of the “five Cs” according to the Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (Lear & Abbott, 2008), they devoted much less time and energy to culture than to language skills, struggling to emphasize cultural perspectives. Several studies support Erickson’s claim on the absence of agreement on how culture should be defined operationally in the foreign language curriculum. Schultz (2007) addressed the issue on a different perspective, focusing on the absence of consensus regarding how culture should be formally assessed.

Theoretical discussions on the role of culture in language classrooms other than English have been reported as well. Moore (2006) gathered data on the use of existing technologies by Spanish teachers in public schools. The findings revealed that there was very little use of more interactive technologies such as the Internet. Data also show that teaching language was confined to teaching grammar and vocabulary, and on reading and writing skills because department tests focus on these aspects. The teachers admit they were competent to teach culture but were constrained by time and a lack of resources.

Complexities of Teaching Culture Effectively in the Language Classroom

Despite extensive discussions in the field, operationalizing the teaching of culture has been an ongoing challenge for instructors. Most of the data available indicate that challenges fall mainly in either of the following categories: issues related to teacher-attitude and beliefs towards culture, problems with teaching methodology and approaches, lack of appropriate teaching materials, resources, and curriculum, and the complexities of teaching culture. Each of these will be discussed below.

At the core of the problem is a lack of common understanding of what culture is. Despite multiple attempts and continuous efforts to define “culture”, researchers have not yet come up with a single agreed-upon definition (Tang, 2006) because culture is a “very broad concept embracing several aspects of human life (Seelye, 1993, p. 15). The lack of an overarching definition presents foreign language teachers with the challenge of determining which aspects of components of the target culture should be taught. As a result, culture is interpreted as consisting of several parts, some of which are emphasized in the classroom, while others are not. Besides, simply understanding the concept of culture can be difficult. This is illustrated by the trouble an instructor may face trying to answer the student who asks, “What is Canadian culture?” (James, 2000).

Problems with teaching materials, poor curriculum, and scarcity of resources have been found to be major stumbling blocks, as well. In addition to lack of authentic materials and poor textbooks, lack of cultural knowledge of the target language and teachers’ limited exposure to authentic culture environment, alongside native culture interference, are considered to have compounded the problems. Cortazzi and Jinn (1999) suggested three basic types of culture materials are necessary to be included in language textbooks. These are source culture materials, target culture materials, and international materials. Similarly, Hardy (2004) stressed that “materials must be married to methods; another area of language teaching that reflects perspective of each culture” (p. 193); however, the predicament continued for years.

Researchers were in agreement that the issue on effective teaching approach has persisted through the years. Recent investigations still echo what earlier scholars have asserted: that teachers’ lessons tend to lack emphasis on cultural perspectives (Jernigan & Moore, 1997) and that teachers usually emphasize more on linguistic knowledge and pay little attention to cultural background knowledge (Klein, 2004). La Fayette (1988) shared a similar idea and reports that teachers spent a great deal of time teaching grammar and lexical components. Strasheim (1981) showed teachers spend 10% of class time teaching culture. More positive results are indicated in Moore (2006) which concluded 80% of teachers surveyed indicated they spend more than half of classroom time teaching culture.

The problem of finding effective ways of balance to prepare students for culture and language competency is reflected in research works in the 21st century. One such document is the robust investigation conducted by Yang and Chen (2014) which shed vital insights into factors such as teacher-related attitude and beliefs that are strongly influenced by circumstances. Teacher participants in the study report that although culture is a broad and important context of language study, teaching of culture is an add-on component to language teaching. The work describes the culture classroom as “cultural knowledge as an appetizer and language knowledge as the main dish of a meal”. An appetizer is usually served to stimulate people’s appetite rather than to be the main purpose of a meal. The use of culture is only a way to add interest to a language rather than integral to the learning of the language. Some instructors believed that talking about cultural knowledge in class such as food and singing other people’s song attract students to the target language, but they rarely considered teaching culture as one of the

major objectives in class. Teacher responses indicate another fascinating reality; using culture elements makes language classes more popular and interesting than teaching grammar rules. However, what aspects of culture need to be injected in the different stages of language study has remained a perpetual dilemma. The study implies that teaching of culture is like providing students an appetizer and that grammar is the main dish. Since culture is just an appetizer and not intrinsically as important as grammar, it follows that there is no compelling reason for these instructors to spend much time on the teaching of culture, or making cultural perspectives a focus of the class.

Classroom techniques based on teacher's attitude and belief towards culture are bound to lead to havoc. Scholars in foreign language education (Barnes-Karol & Broner, 2010; Kearney, 2010) pointed out that language instructors who only teach about famous figures as general cultural knowledge or even stereotypes of a culture are actually teaching culture as static fact existing in textbooks. Requiring students to remember cultural knowledge taught in class rather than encouraging them to build their own cultural knowledge fails to realize that culture is dynamic (Banks & Banks, 1997; Damen, 1987). In contrast, teachers who view culture as the context for language often encourage students to pursue cultural knowledge on their own by urging students to communicate with native speakers or by assigning them to conduct research on cultural topics. Language instructors with different attitudes toward culture in language classes actually teach in different ways, and their varying types of attitudes towards the role of culture are a major reason behind different kinds of instruction.

Tried Solutions

Based on the premise that "The true content of FL course is not the grammar and vocabulary of the language but the culture expressed in the language" (National Standards, 1999, p. 43) and the ACTF Proficiency Guidelines that delineates how well students should perform on the linguistic and culture domain as a result of foreign language instruction education and research scampered to find solutions to the problem, scholars were unanimously in agreement that culture learning in the classroom must actively engage learner participation. Simple techniques were suggested like incorporating songs and music, celebration of festivals (Hendon, 1980), and culture comparison, drama, TPR, newspaper, and media (Hughes, 1986) to more cognitively challenging tasks like culture clusters (Mead & Morain, 1973) and culture assimilators (Fiedler, Mitchel & Triandis, 1971). While Krasner (1999) promoted observations through movies, use of authentic materials, visit to local restaurants, role-plays on traditions in Culture 2, Coltrane and Peterson (2003) advanced promoting opportunities to speak with native speakers. Stern (1992) described eight approaches and techniques to teaching culture starting from simple things like creating an authentic classroom environment, to strengthening behavioral and affective aspects through drama, using cognitive approaches through student research and culture problem solving through culture assimilators, and real-life exposure to the target culture (for example, visits to the class by native speakers, pen-pals and visits to other countries). The arrival of the digital age supported the learning of a second culture. An article by Barnes and Broner (2010) describes an approach to teaching cultural and linguistic competence through the analysis of images linked to other texts. Moeller's more recent investigation (2012) summarized the vast literature related to teaching culture using digital media that help engage learners actively in acquisition of language and culture. From the abundant research evidence, we see a paradigm shift from (teachers lecturing) passive receivers to active constructors (students discover) of information in the acquisition of skills for second culture acquisition.

The section above, showing the numerous attempts to improve culture instruction techniques, serves as a proof and reminder that there has been no shortage on methods and approaches of teaching culture. Wherein lies the problem then? From the vast number of investigations, one thing can be deduced that the teaching of culture skills has not been approached in a principled and systematic manner that actively engages learners in the classroom. The mismatch of teaching strategy to learning ability and style decreases effectiveness of learning outcome (Brown, 1994; Beresford, 1999). This paper advances an approach to culture and language instruction through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives), combined with an inquiry-based approach utilizing the theories of Stages of Second Language Acquisition.

The 3Ps Model: An Overview

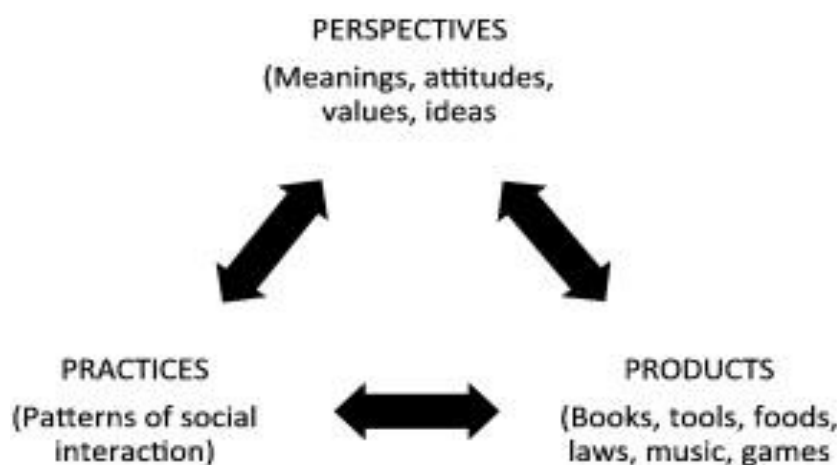


Figure 1. The 3P's of Culture: Products, Practices, Perspectives.

Source: National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project. (1999).

Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press, Inc.

The relationship among the three components, being products, practices, and perspectives—the world view of a cultural group—is represented in a triangle diagram. Cultural products consist of the tangible aspects of culture (sculpture, paintings, forms of literature). Cultural practices consist of “patterns of behavior accepted by a society, in other words, “what people do where and when” as well as other forms of procedural aspects of culture, such as language, rites of passage (La Fayette, 1988, p. 213). Cultural perspectives consist of the popular beliefs, values, and assumptions held by members of a culture group. This relationship, represented in a triangular model, indicates how the elements: products, practices, and perspectives are inextricably interrelated (according to the National Standards for Foreign Language Education in the 21st Century (1999) and is shown in Figure 1 above. This approach to culture gives teachers a clear understanding of culture elements, and allows them to help tie together the disparate knowledge of 2Ps at a basic level, and thereby helps students relate these to the higher level of perspectives. The 3Ps model is indispensable in planning, constructing, and presenting culture lessons. This paper assumes that the sub-categories of each “C” guide the creation of language curricula and assessing language acquisition at each level of development.

Cutshall’s 3Ps model of culture is adopted based on two main grounds. The first reason is that the author believes that using the 3P cultural framework allows systematic development of teaching content and its chronological presentation in various teaching contexts. This ensures that culture is explored in a systematic and contextual way, as well as allowing some flexibility (Lange & Paige, 2003) in the classroom. The second reason

is to pursue the centrality of culture in the context of postsecondary language learning advocated by the *MLA Report "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World"* and to revive the basic principles the Standards emphasizes that "students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs" (p. 31). The document enumerates outcomes of culture study by understanding relationships between products, practices, and perspectives, but does not specify the scope and sequential approach according to student readiness for learning. This paper will establish the missing link using the theory of stages of language acquisition.

Like any other theoretical propositions, criticisms have been leveled against the categorical approach. Moran (2001) students have little difficulty understanding products and practices. They have trouble identifying and understanding cultural perspectives. The problem with Ps is that they are intangible and cannot be easily introduced. Textbooks rarely contain information on Ps, making the teacher's task even more challenging. One of the challenges in delivering products and practices is that delivered information such as bits of trivia can appear disconnected and possible lead to stereotypes. Another assertion says to bring culture into the language learning context will mean to reduce it and break the context in several unrelated segment.

Those against the categorical approach argue that culture is viewed as having several segments, and are perplexed as to "what components of culture" should be taught in the foreign language classroom. In this paper, the author argues that the categorical approach to the 3Ps is neither inclusive or definitive. When culture is "dissected" into parts for instructional purposes, we are not simply compartmentalizing it into different components. Rather the systematic structure through a systematic scope and sequence curriculum will caution teachers and learners that the different components are inexplicably intertwined, signifying a unified body, and they embody each other. Each of these segments is taught in a continuum alongside the language component using appropriate teaching approach at the right time and at the right stage of learning.

This leads us to the next important point to consider: student readiness. It is proposed that student readiness be set as a standard for teaching the culture elements in the same way that readiness is a criterion in learning language elements in the different stages of language acquisition. These premise are based on two previous assumptions mentioned earlier. For one, "language and culture are inextricably linked; and that the acquisition of a second language is the acquisition of a second culture" (Brown, 2007, pp. 189-190). More importantly, "since culture and language are closely related, they are best acquired together" (Schultz, 2007, p. 23).

The Theories of Second Language Acquisition: An overview

This section reviews the theories related to the different stages of Second Language Acquisition and examines their application in relation to culture learning. The literature review discussed above points to the fact that culture has not been approached in the classroom in a principled, active, and engaged manner. For this reason, the paper proposes that the SLA Principles be used as a framework for the development of culture courses in the same way it has been used in language courses. Why are these theories important? Student readiness and language ability considered: How can the elements of culture be introduced appropriately in each of these developmental stages?

The influence of Stephen Krashen on language education research and practice is unquestionable. To recap, Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition consists of five main hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis; the Monitor hypothesis; the Input hypothesis; the Affective Filter hypothesis; and the Natural Order hypothesis. Learning a second language is very similar to the process children use when acquiring their first

language. It requires meaning interaction, called comprehensible input. According to Krashen, there are two independent systems of foreign language performance: “the acquired system” and “the learned system”. The “acquired system” or “acquisition” is very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, called natural communication. The “learned system” or “learning” is the product of formal instruction and it is a result of knowledge “about” the language, such as knowledge of grammar rules. The emotions while learning the language can interfere or assist learning; therefore, it is important for classrooms to be fully engaging, non-threatening, and affirming the child’s native language and culture.

A concept endorsed by theorists, Second Language Acquisition theory, proposes that students learning a second language move through five predictable stages: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. In this continuum, learners progress from no knowledge of the new language to a level of competency closely resembling that of a native speaker (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Understanding these theories is essential for teachers and program developers to organize appropriate instructional strategies and assessments that guide students along a continuum of language development, from cognitively undemanding, context-embedded curricula, to cognitively demanding, context-reduced curricula (Robinson, 1995).

Insights from the theories of L2 acquisition have been recognized as essential to determine the appropriate and effective instruction for ELL students. Professional educators acknowledge the fact that finding and stating the connections between theories and practices effectively make a difference in their students’ understanding of content while acquiring a second language simultaneously. Understanding how Second Language Acquisition occurs and using specific teaching strategies may assist educators in helping students achieve success in Second Language Acquisition while being engulfed in content. This paper maintains that the same principle can be applied in tandem to culture teaching and learning.

What can learners do at each stage of development? How can instruction facilitate development in each of these stages? How can lessons and activities be developed to achieve the goals of instruction. The specific language skills in each stage of development and suggested language teaching strategies appropriate for each stage are summarized below.

Stages of language acquisition	What students can do	Suggested culture instructional techniques
Receptive: Preproduction stage	• Has minimal comprehension of language • Has minimal vocabulary • Spends most time learning grammar • Does not verbalize but listens a lot and imitates • Answers Qs by nodding “Yes” and “No” • Uses gestures, draws, and points to respond	
Suggested language instructional techniques	• Use picture, visuals, and gestures to explain concepts • Slow speech emphasizing key words • Write words to remember better • Use lots of listen & repeat exercises • Encourage choral readings • Total physical response approach • Ask Qs with “Yes”, “No” response	• Teacher directly presents culture materials to be learned • Explicit instruction on C2 is necessary • Use charts, photos, and visuals to introduce food, clothing, festivals of target culture • Use songs and music of L2 to increase interest and stimulate curiosity in C2 • Use folklore & fairy tales to introduce P1 aspects of C2 • Use the Tip of the Iceberg focusing on P1 of C2, food, clothing, climate, festivals, etc. • Ask Qs that require pointing OR gestures to express ideas of C2

Early emergence stage	• Has limited comprehension • Possesses limited vocabulary • Begins to produce some words • Can give one- or two-word responses to Qs • Uses key words and familiar phrases	
Suggested language instructional techniques	• Use charades & role-play activities • Give open-ended sentences • Conduct open dialogues • Encourage partner & trio readings • Conduct simple interaction games • Encourage interactive dialogue & journals • Ask Qs requiring short phrase response	• Continue to use photos & visuals to elicit short responses • Apply audio-motor units requiring physical actions • Direct individual students using L2 to carry out actions appropriate to C2 • Conduct mini-dramas and mini-plays in L2 depicting C2 elements • Check simple comprehension of C2 topic by asking Qs requiring short phrases in L2 • Use simple songs in L2 for practice of grammar/lexical points • Use the Tip of the Iceberg gradually introducing differences in non-verbal behavior
Speech emergence stage	Has good comprehension of language Can produce simple sentences & ask Qs Makes grammar and pronunciation errors Can engage in guided simple dialogues Capable of interactions using language Can complete language tasks collaboratively	
Suggested language instructional techniques	• Encourage pair and group discussions • Use guided questions for oral output • Provide skits for dramatic interaction • Give written materials requiring oral output • Use music, radio, and multi-media to enhance language development • Ask Qs requiring short statement response	• Ask Ss to act out parts of a mini-dramas about C2 for culture awareness and L2 practice • Conduct guessing games, quizzes, & contests in L2 to check comprehension of L2 elements • Continue to use songs to heighten interest or highlight lesson points both C2 and L2 aspects • Use Tip of the Iceberg to understand reasons for people's behavior in C2 • Encourage teacher directed collaborative tasks • Use folklore and fairy tales to focus on people's ways of thinking in C2 • Ask Qs about C2 that encourage use of L2 at their level
Intermediate fluency stage	Has excellent comprehension Has wider & more active vocabulary Can discuss and debate at their level Can perform language tasks independently Capable of research and data gathering	
Suggested language instructional techniques	• Analysis & discussions on themes • Agreeing, disagreeing on certain issues • Critical interpretations of stories • Design own questions and activities • Comments on other's works • Challenging activities on more advanced syntax, pragmatics, pronunciation • Ask Qs needing Why's and How's explanations	• Continue to use the Culture Iceberg to understand and appreciate meaning in different traditions and values • Emphasize discovery learning and comparison-contrast between native culture and C2 • Provide activities for independent and collaborative research & internet used • Followed by presentations • Encourage discussions on issues that are of interest to both native and C2 • Use a lot of culture capsules to help discover contrasts in cultures • Expand the use of culture capsules to culture clusters • Ask inquiry Qs to provoke interest and lead to important discoveries on L2 culture
Advanced fluency stage	• Has achieved mastery of language complexity and nuance • Near-native level of speech • Has complete command of the language	

	• Can engage in all kinds of verbal interaction • Capable of thematic discussions and debate • Able to do projects requiring maximum verbal output
Suggested language instructional techniques	• Panel discussions on themes & social problems • Identify social issues and defend own proposition • Critical interpretation of movies according to guidelines • Essay writing based on critical discussions • Challenging discovery projects • Design original interactive activities • Ask Qs requiring re-telling and justifications • Encourage extended reading and research on aspects of P3 in the target culture • Give opportunities and exercises for comparisons of culture practices and values • Provide a lot of challenge through explorations and discovery projects, whether individual or with a group • Continue using culture capsules and culture clusters in addition to culture assimilators • Encourage discussions and debate on issues that confront inter-culture relationships • Provide exercises that call for analysis of beliefs and philosophy to train for empathy • Engage Ss in higher order thinking to explore hidden meanings in L2 culture

Figure 2. Teaching and learning culture at the different stages of language development.

Based on S. Krashen's Theories of Second Language Acquisition

At this point, allow me to backtrack to an earlier proposition made that “there has been no shortage in culture teaching approaches throughout its history”. Nonetheless the stockpile of research provides evidence to convince that both culture and language instruction are not bringing in the desired results. One reason could be the mismatch of technique and student readiness. This paper rests on the premise that teaching techniques should match the context of their application. Even the best strategy is likely to fail if it is used indiscriminately with the wrong group. In the same vein, we cannot ask beginning L2 learners to make a research project on a culture theme, and discuss, present, and expect to yield the same results as when we ask advanced L2 learners to do the same.

The following section describes the characteristics of students at each stage of instruction, and suggests the kind of appropriate culture approach needed in each of the developmental stages outline above. Teaching techniques discussed in the literature will be referred to simply in relation to the learning needs of each stage; these approaches have been discussed extensively in the literature and will not be reviewed here. The goal is to probe into the following issues. Where does culture fit in L2 learning? Do students need to understand basic English before they begin looking at culture? (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993) When should culture be introduced in ELT instruction? What kind of activities lend themselves to learn about and appreciate other cultures? What kind of culture approaches supports language development as students' progress through the different levels of L2 learning?

The Initial Stages of Instruction: Receptive to Speech Emergence

Since students are not yet capable of verbalizing, explicit instruction is necessary in the initial stages of instruction. Consequently, it is alright to assume that direct teacher talks about the products (P1) of C2 are necessary, and the concern for possibly forming stereotypes is groundless. Students at the early-stage can best complete a task in collaboration with teacher or group; therefore, student attention towards appropriate focus of the lessons is highest when teacher-directed. Pictures and manipulatives to help illustrate concepts are essential; real-life examples are best used to the maximum. Especially helpful is the use of folklore and fairytales that help illuminate some important cultural themes that underlie a country's thoughts and actions. Fairytales provide students opportunities to explore not only the historical background but also learn about values and morals in the

latter stage of learning (Davidheiser, 2007). Technology, media, visuals, and films can also be tapped fully to bring the products component of L2 to the classroom.

The “Tip of the Iceberg” and ESL beginners. Closely equivalent to the Products and Practices approach is the “Tip of the Iceberg” technique best suited in the early years. For instance, discoveries about “What are some practices and traditions in ____?” “What food do the ____ people eat for (what occasion) in (country)?” “What time is dinner in ____? What’s winter/summer like in ____? What sports do ____ love?” Although several scholars are skeptical that these can create stereotypes, the author believes these are indispensable lessons to create awareness of basic elements of other cultures and familiarize students with differences in Products and Practices in the native and target culture. Knowledge of these cultural variations does provide a rich source of materials for presentation and discussion as students’ progress on to the latter stages of learning. Raising curiosity and culture awareness in each stage is a prerequisite to advance to the next level of instruction. Needless to say, creating a positive attitude towards learning a new culture through the second language is imperative. To arouse interest, teachers provide culture information in naturally occurring context like stories, tales, and fables of the target culture.

Also important in the initial phase of learning the products (P1) of the target culture are carefully chosen role plays to accelerate internalization of both culture and language. To say the obvious, the teaching of culture is most effective when students discover the culture of the second language, rather than having information delivered. In the succeeding stage of speech emergence, students gradually start to be capable of interactions that provide practice of language practice and production. Teachers can utilize mini dramas to understand and re-enact the products and simple practice components of L2. When carefully selected as part of the language component, the actions and words of the characters in mini plays help foster sympathy and increase students’ understanding of why people in the target culture behave in ways different from them.

Activities in the early stages of acquisition pave the way to increase awareness and develop curiosity towards the target culture, which are preparatory skills for culture comparisons in the latter stages. Fairytales that have been helpful in the previous stage of language study continue to provide opportunities to explore not only the historical background but also to appreciate values and priorities of the target culture. Audio–motor units, consisting of verbal instructions for actions by students to carry out, provide knowledge and practice with correct behavior in the culture of the second language. They have been found to be effective language and culture learning tools in the emergent stage of acquisition (Edgerton, 1971). The early stages of language study need not only focus on culture knowledge and awareness. Whenever possible, culture skills of empathy and open-mindedness which are the focus of succeeding instructions can be introduced. The “Tip-of-the-Iceberg” can be a useful teaching and learning tool in this stage if culture instruction aims towards language learner should be open-minded about the cultural elements of others (Morain, 1970).

Students may not yet verbalize during the early stages of learning culture but instruction must be focused on culture awareness of his own and others through direct teacher talk, a necessary skill for the development of latter skills. Tolinson and Masuhara (2004) suggested that growth in terms of cultural awareness starts by encouraging students to recognize their cultural identity in relation to others. For instance, students may not yet recognize the complex components of culture related to conversational style of other societies like speakers’ tone of voice, etc., but they can be guided to recognize differences in gestures, facial expressions, and other aspects of non-verbal communication components of the products (P1) and practices (P2) of the culture of the second language.

Intermediate and Advanced Stages of Fluency

In the ensuing stages of study such as the intermediate stage, students are capable of performing language tasks independently. This is the prime time for group work and presentations of discovery. Culture capsules, described and discussed extensively in the literature, can be useful instruments for richer experiences. Culture capsules, defined by Taylor and Sorensen (1961), are short (5-10 minutes) presentations that focus on one minimal difference between the target culture and the native culture of the students. Beside culture capsules, culture assimilators are popular methods for giving students understanding about cultural information and have been described to boost emotional empathy or affect (Knopf, 1976). Mini-dramas are likewise known to promote knowledge and understanding, and also to have great emotional impact. Although they are widely applicable in the early stages, mini-dramas work best too in the later stages if they deal with highly charged emotional issues (Stern, 1993) and followed by classroom discussion and or debate. Interestingly, students in all levels of language study have a strong desire to understand movies in the target language. Most movies, whether short or full, are rich in linguistic contents and cultural backgrounds and provide unrivalled variety of authentic speech and language in context. If scrupulously chosen in terms of difficulty level, length, and simplicity, movies are stimulating materials that can be used across all levels of language development for C2.

Where students possess adequate vocabulary and greater ability to control language, discussions are effective ways for student to acquire cultural knowledge in the intermediate and advanced levels. Carefully coordinated with the intensive and extensive reading programs and given sufficient time, materials for organized discussions provide rich opportunities for learning the higher elements (P2) and (P3) including customs, ideas, ethics, traditions, and values of the target culture as well. Activities on culture comparisons and contrasts further enhance internalization of both culture and language.

In the advanced stages of learning, students are ready for more discovery and much more challenging exercises. At this stage, teacher should, by all means, give challenging research and report projects. Research projects provide multiple opportunities to explore various aspects of the target culture and make meaning of their discoveries (Grittner, 1996). Advanced students are now ready to work on culture clusters, which are a combination of culture capsules on related themes to discover more knowledge on the cultures in focus. Teachers can use techniques that challenge students to make culture comparisons of their own and the second culture. In his work, Brown (2007) provided a series of principles for teaching language-culture connections highlighting the fact that language teaching involves not only the language but cultural customs, values, ways of thinking, and behavior. Towards the latter half of language development, students are led to understand more complex culture items like conversational styles of other societies and to compare with their own. With both language and cognitive readiness, students can verbalize both the verbal and non-verbal aspects, as well as the higher components of perspectives (P3) of the target culture and of the group they belong to, with an understanding that language embodies cultural reality.

Other Key Elements: Interaction and the Three Components of Learning Culture in the Target Language

Necessary components of C2 study. Stern (1992) suggests that culture teaching should include the cognitive, affective, and behavioral component; this paper asserts that these components can only be treated separately and highlighted in each stage as students proceed from the non-verbal to highly verbal capability in the learning process. The cognitive component relates to various forms of knowledge covering basic elements

of P1: geographical knowledge, about differences in the way of life, food, habits, and behavior in the L2 community. It starts in the early stage of language learning. This should gradually move on to more complex knowledge of P2, such as reasons for unique behavior of people in various societies in the intermediate stage, until adequate understanding of values and attitudes (P3) in the target culture, learned in the advanced stage. The affective component relates to L2 learners' curiosity about visible elements of C2, developing empathy for the various elements of the target culture and the ability to verbalize in the initial, intermediate, and advanced stages, respectively. The behavioral component translates into skills that range from learners' ability to act and re-enact different cultural behavior (P2) in the early stages, ability to interpret and compare of culturally relevant behavior (P3), and the capacity to conduct themselves in culturally appropriate ways in the advanced stages.

The role of interaction in C2 classroom. Interaction has been widely discussed in L2 research. Krashen (1988) defines interaction as consisting of "comprehensible input" necessary to proceed to the next stage of learning, while Pica (1996) contends that the term is critical in learning a second language and can be equally relevant in culture learning. Similarly in an investigation of the use of media in L2, Moore (1989) distinguishes different types of interaction in the classroom as essential in order to overcome misunderstandings among teachers.

This paper maintains that interaction is crucial in implementing instruction and gauging student learning in the different stages of culture learning. In the process of C2 learning, students move in the order of learner-teacher interaction, learner-learner interaction, and learner-content interaction. First, the frequency and intensity of learner-teacher interaction is much greater in the Receptive and Pre-emergence stage. At the initial level, interaction will take the form of gestures and physical actions between learner and teacher. The teacher is especially valuable in responding to students' immediate needs by providing feedback and guidance on culture content. Thereafter, students move to inter-learner interaction. Learner-learner interactions are extremely valuable when students are starting to produce language for practice. In the early stage of language production stage, inter-learner interaction provides strong stimuli for practice of culture elements learned and for greater discovery of culture elements.

Eventually, students move to learner-content interaction when students are capable of self-directed learning and verbalization. Interaction between learner and content is greater in the latter stages of second language development when students are capable of working with materials that call for research or presentations to facilitate application. When students have mastered the target language, interaction activities will revolve around complex tasks that explore the Why's and How's of culture products, practices, and perspectives in the culture of the target language. Needless to say, interactions in all its forms are indispensable tool in all stages of L2 and C2 study. The techniques and approaches discussed in this section are summarized in the Table above.

Summary and Conclusion

To reiterate an earlier proposition, finding and stating the connections between the theories and practices help determine the appropriate and effective instruction for L2 students. Understanding how Second Language Acquisition occurs and using specific teaching strategies are a useful tool for educators in helping students achieve success not only in Second Language Acquisition. The same principle applies in tandem in teaching culture content in a way that students acquire second language skills simultaneously while being engulfed in culture content.

Throughout its history, culture scholars and researchers have suggested numerous techniques and approaches. This paper proposes the more important considerations to be made. These consist of: students' language competency level—and readiness, language environment—ESL or EFL, and the teacher—ability to integrate. This paper has looked into the basic component which makes up the appropriateness component of language competence—culture. The basic components which go into the linguistic competence portion of language competence—pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar—are acquired while learning the components of culture. Having achieved this, it is possible to teach culture through language or teach language through culture throughout the stages of language development. The arguments presented in this article are contrary to the mind-boggling statements by some scholars; it is not impossible to teach culture systematically in English language classes. Likewise, some research miscarriage by both linguists and culturalists advocates teaching culture components whenever the opportunity arises. This paper maintains an essential argument: Culture elements, when embodied in a properly developed and organized curriculum can be systematically implemented all along the different phases of language growth.

Knop's report (1976) contends that learning about culture is a short-range goal in the language program. Then it argues that it takes years to become linguistically proficient in a language whereas a cultural fact can be learned in an instant in the classroom. At the same time, students may forget the rules of S-V agreement, but retain knowledge and interest learned in a culture class. This paper agrees with the report that culture learning is valuable in learning a new language, but refutes the idea that culture is a short-term goal in the language classroom. Culture elements are fundamental both in carefully designing a language program and in the implementation of such program. In the different stages of learning language, any single culture experience learned in one class is duplicated and reinforced in subsequent activities in other stages such that, for example, a simple knowledge of another region's food habits in the initial stage leads to an understanding of the people's health customs and values in the latter part of the curriculum. With the framework guiding the goals of second culture instruction within a second language instruction, learning culture nor language learning is no longer a short-range goal.

In closing, this paper returns to its original proposition. Mastery of a language is not simply mastery of vocabulary as well as grammar and spelling rules. The most successful language learner learns is both culture and language together. The conceptualizations provided by research, although at times conflicting, form a useful foundation for language teaching that provides a deeper and a more enriching human experience.

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