Bridging a Gap between Traditional Instruction and Communicative Language Teaching in a Foreign Language Classroom

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Communicative language teaching with its stress on meaning rather than form, employment of task-based instruction and "real-life" situations in the language classroom is often viewed in sharp contrast to traditional approaches to language teaching that employ the "presentation – practice – production" format and stress formal accuracy. Despite criticisms, traditional pedagogical practices in teaching foreign languages exhibit remarkable tenacity which is partially due to the learners' preferences for the traditional methods of language instruction. This paper suggests that socio-linguistic surroundings in which language learning takes place is an important factor to consider when determining the choice for the classroom procedure. An empirical analysis of learners' preferences for classroom activities was carried out in this research in an attempt to find a way to reduce a gap between the two pedagogical paradigms. Though the present study was conducted among the learners of the Russian language there are no obstacles to viewing discussion and findings presented in this article in a wider context of language learning and teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Form-focused instruction with its stress on teaching grammar is a

dominant pedagogical paradigm in foreign language teaching at present. With advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) where the stress is on engaging learners in "real-life" situations in the classroom, task-based approach to organizing classroom activities attracts increasing attention from both researchers and language teachers.

In the task-based approach, learners are given a task to complete in the classroom. According to Candlin (1987), Nunan (1989) and Long (1989), task could be described as an activity where (1) meaning is of utmost importance, (2) learners are focused on solving some communication problem, (3) the real-world language needs are addressed, and (4) completion of task is given priority (Skehan, 2003). By contrast, as Willis (1996) proposes, classroom activities that are conformity oriented, do not require the learners to produce their own language, are practice oriented, and are not concerned with language display cannot be defined as tasks.

Task-based approach is a departure from a traditional grammar-translation method of organizing language classes that is also sometimes described as the 3Ps method, i.e., Presentation, Practice, and Production. In the 3Ps method, grammar material is presented first. In this stage, grammar rules are understood and internalized by the learner. After that, some practice activities follow. In the third stage, learners are required to independently produce their own language (Skehan, 2003).

The 3Ps approach to language teaching has been criticised by the proponents of the CLT. The main points for the criticism have been syllabi that do not consider the learner factor, choose units' sequence without a clear rationale and rely on meaning-impoverished methodology (White, 1988). However, the 3Ps approach remains the most common choice for organizing the foreign language classroom procedure. Among the reasons for tenacity and popularity of this method the following have been stated: (1) it allows teachers to remain firmly in charge of classroom activities (Wright, 1987), (2) it allows a better accountability and a more straightforward evaluation, and (3) the lack of a clear practical alternative from the pedagogical aspect.

Perhaps, the question of significance is not why the 3Ps method is still

widely employed but rather when it may be quite indispensable. This paper takes into consideration social settings in which language learning takes place and argues that in a foreign language classroom the traditional approach to language instruction is indispensable. An empirical analysis was carried out among learners of a foreign language (Russian) with the aim to investigate whether the learners preferred activities that adopted the traditional presentation – practice – production format or employed communicative methods of language instruction. This study also looks at the ways to narrow the gap between the two pedagogical paradigms.

Second Language Acquisition vs. Foreign Language Learning: Sociolinguistic Settings for Language Learning

Sharp distinctions between the 3Ps method and CLT are usually presented in the context of second language acquisition (SLA), which often includes foreign language learning (FLL). For example, it has been proposed that the term 'second language acquisition' can refer "to any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue. Thus, it can refer to the learning of a third or fourth language. Also, 'second' is not intended to contrast with 'foreign'" (Ellis, 2003, p. 3).

Overlooking differences between the SLA and FLL leads to assumptions that language learning process is always one and the same experience where one and the same pedagogical approach could be comfortably employed. Moreover, placing learning of a language subsequent to one's mother tongue within a broader category of second language acquisition some researchers propose that it is insubstantial whether the learning takes place in a classroom or in an informal environment (Ellis, 2003, p. 3).

Such an approach to language learning may provide a valid platform for discussion when the process is viewed within the psycholinguistic perspective which focuses on cognitive mechanism and neurological factors of the processing new linguistic input. However, considering the sociolinguistic settings in which language learning occurs lends support to a viewpoint that

SLA and FLL are not the same kind of phenomenon.

A number of research studies recognize that social context in which language learning takes place is very important. As Watson-Gegeo and Nielsen (2003, p. 155) observe, "There is no context-free language learning, and all communicative contexts involve social, cultural, and political dimensions affecting which linguistic forms are available or taught and how they are represented."

Five sociolinguistic settings for SLA are distinguished (Siegel, 2003, p. 179), i.e.,

(1) Dominant setting, where learners are speakers of minority languages learning the native language of the majority of the country's population (eg., immigrants, such as Turks in Germany);

(2) External setting, where learners are learning a language that is not used for interaction in the daily life and is a foreign or distant language (eg., Russians learning English in Russia);

(3) Coexisting setting, where learners are learning a language that is spoken in the immediate or nearby surroundings, usually in a countries with two or more official languages (eg., learning German in Switzerland);

(4) Institutional setting, where learners learn a language that is widely used for daily communication or in other domains, but remains an additional language for the most of population (eg., English in Singapore);

(5) Minority setting, where speakers of a dominant language learn a minority language (eg., non-speakers of Punjabi learning Punjabi in England).

In all but the external and minority settings language learning takes place in a surrounding where the target language is widely, or even predominantly, spoken. Dominant, coexisting and institutional settings give learners a wider exposure to the target language and its culture (eg., through listening to the radio, watching the TV, hearing conversations in the street) as well as an opportunity for contacts with the native speakers. In external setting, learners

do not have such opportunities.[1] Besides, a foreign language can also be a "distant" language for a learner in the cultural, geographical and psychological senses. Therefore, when planning classroom activities, language instructor needs to consider a fact that learning a foreign language in the external setting evokes entirely different experience and entails a different set of needs on the part of learners.

Dörnei and Csizér (2002, p. 432) distinguish between "direct contact" with target language native speakers, which is actually meeting those speakers or visiting their country, and "indirect contact" (or "cultural interest") which "reflects the appreciation of cultural products" associated with the language being learned and conveyed by the media (e.g. films, TV programs, magazines, and pop music)". In a foreign language classroom these "indirect contacts" should be promoted. One manner to do that is to introduce authentic materials (i.e., materials that are not designed for the classroom use, such as newspaper and journal articles, videos, etc.) and devise classroom activities and tasks around those materials.

Employing authentic materials could be especially beneficial in the foreign language classroom in the external setting because it can address each of the "exposure – engagement – intake – proficiency" stages, which Van Lier (1994, p. 41) deems an important route in the language learning process. In this chain, the "exposure" element is especially significant since it provides contact with culture of the language learned. The next stage in this chain – "engagement" – offers a language instructor a milieu where a gap between two language teaching methods could be bridged.

Are Traditional Instruction and Communicative Language Teaching Incompatible?

Traditional method of language instruction focused mainly on the knowledge of grammar rules and their correct utilization. Classroom activities and the

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[1] The minority setting is not included in the discussion since language learning takes place outside the classroom and no formal pedagogical procedure is involved.

choice of methodology favored primarily repetitive practice, mechanical drilling, questions and answers exercises, memorization of grammar rules and texts.

The concept of Communicative Language Teaching was first introduced in the 1970s. The ultimate goal of CLT is that language learners attain *communicative competence*. Canale (1983, p. 5) describes communicative competence as "the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication". In the classroom context, communicative competence is viewed as learners' ability to communicate with other speakers and being able to successfully negotiate meaning (Savignon, 1971).

CLT encourages both teachers and learners to adopt a wider perspective on the process of language acquisition. Four components in communicative competence are recognized, i.e., grammatical competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). As Richards (2005, p. 9) put it, communicative competence "included what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, their role and intentions".

Although some educators could be tempted to view CLT as incompatible with traditional methods of instruction and believe that CLT prioritizes meaning rather than form, a number of researchers have been stressing a fact that attaining communicative competence would be impossible without according due attention to formal accuracy and grammatical content. Savignon (2002) emphasizes that each element of communicative competence is equally important and "cannot be developed or measured in isolation" (p. 8). As she stressed, "Communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works…" (Savignon, 2002, p. 7).

If viewed from the point of syllabus design, choice of methodology and projected goals, CLT has been constantly evolving since its inception in the 1970s. Richards (2005, p. 6) distinguishes two phases in CLT development, i.e., Classic Communicative Language Teaching (from the 1970s till the 1990s) and Current Communicative Language Teaching (from the late 1990s

to the present). In the 1970s, the main focus was on the development of syllabus and methodology suitable for attaining communicative competence. Also, in the Classic CLT phase a great consideration was given to the purpose for which the language is learnt. Grammatical and lexical context were then introduced according to the needs and purposes of a specific communication act. It is important to notice that a range of activities typically employed in the 3Ps method was used in this stage to allow achieving mastery of the language. As Richards (2005, p. 16) observed, activities associated with the traditional instruction (mechanical drills, grammar exercises, etc.) had been employed "as part of a sequence of activities that moved back and forth between accuracy activities and fluency activities."

The Current CLT phase embraces various theories on language teaching and pedagogical approaches. This includes techniques developed during the Classic CLT phase (from the 1970s to the 1990s) as well as traditional methods of language instruction. As Richards (2005, p. 23) put it, "There is no single or agreed upon set of practices that characterize current communicative language teaching." In this sense, the Current CLT phase is quite eclectic in the choice of pedagogical procedure and classroom activities. Recognizing a fact that language learning takes place in "multiple worldwide contexts" (Brown, 1994, p. 74) there has been a call to adopt wider guiding principles, or what Brown (1994) describes as "enlightened eclecticism," in the choice of pedagogical procedure in the language classroom. Another prominent trait of the Current CLT is that considerable attention is paid to the language learners, their needs and goals.

Based on the above discussion, adopting CLT in the foreign language classroom involves developing learners' communicative competence through "linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate" (Richards, 2005, p. 24) as well as engaging learners in the decision-making process on the classroom proceeding.

Types of Classroom Activities in a Foreign Language Classroom: Bridging a Gap between the 3Ps Method and Communicative Language Teaching

Activities in a foreign language classroom in the external setting, where possibilities to practice language outside the classroom are limited or non-existent, should be organized in a way that would provide learners an opportunity to practice newly-acquired lexical and grammatical items before shifting to the type of activities where meaning is given priority and realistic situations are presented.

Learners need linguistic confidence before they can be successfully engaged in communicative tasks. Several research studies provide evidence that, quite often, learners themselves find the traditional form-focused method of instruction preferable (Garrett & Shortall, 2002; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1998); it is especially true of the beginner learners of foreign languages. Oral drills, mechanical grammar- and translation exercises, i.e., the protocol associated with the 3Ps method is unavoidable in a foreign language classroom. This does not, however, mean that foreign language learners should be subjected to mechanical drills and/or classroom activities that are devoid of meaning, removed from "real-life" situations and do not give the learners an opportunity to produce their own meaningful language.

Instructors can prepare or devise activities that could help bridging a gap between the two pedagogical methods. Semi-structured conversations can be a type of activity where the 3Ps (presentation, practice, production) method with its concentration on from can be combined with CLT that puts priority on real-life situations. "Acting as an interpreter" game, for example, in one such example. This activity can be performed even at the beginners' level. The procedure is as follows. One student assumes a part of an "interpreter" between the language instructor who acts as a native speaker of the target language and a "foreigner" (one of the students) who does not speak that language. Lines for the "foreigner" are normally provided in order to retain some structure and keep focus on the new lexis or grammar rules; the "native

speaker" has to produce his own speech in the target language. The "foreigner's" part could, for example, be:

> *- Good afternoon. Let me introduce myself. Johnson.*
> *- Did you say Nastasia?*
> *- Oh, I see, it's Natasha. Such a beautiful name! Nice to meet you, Natasha.*

This type of a semi-structured conversation – which is also a meaningful communicative activity – can be created by the language instructor on a wide variety of topics presented in the classroom. More importantly, these semi-structured dialogues can give the language instructor an opportunity to implant elements of culture (e.g., introduce appropriate linguistic behavior, suggest acceptable responses in certain situations, include elements of humour, etc.) into a form-oriented activity.

Another important issue in a foreign language classroom is that in the external setting there is a need to compensate the lack of "direct contacts" with native speakers. Authentic materials can help to address this need. For example, lexical items on some topics (eg., weather) could be learned or practiced through listening to and singing songs, including pop-songs. Songs and poems could also be introduced in the classroom to draw learners' attention to some elements of grammar (eg., past tense, subjunctive mood, etc.).

Alternatively, language instructor might want to select a movie that students are likely to enjoy and watch it as an extra-curriculum activity and then devise some classroom activities based on the movie. Among these activities the following range could be considered for the beginner learners: describing people, describing most or least liked characters in the movie, describing the weather, offering opinions, acting out dialogues from the movie, etc. Episodes from movies can be used by the language instructor to devise communicative tasks evolving around "real-life" situations (e.g., taking a taxi, eating out, shopping, socializing, etc.). For more advanced learners, a wider range of topics for discussion could be prepared, for example culture differences between their native country and the target

language country could be discussed in the classroom.

Giving learners exposure to authentic materials is an important part of organizing foreign language classroom procedure in the external setting. However, in Van Lier's (1994) sequence "exposure – engagement – intake – proficiency" it is but a first step. The second step – engagement – which requires active participation of learners in classroom activities is equally crucial. Learners are likely to be more actively engaged in a task that they enjoy or find especially useful. Feedback from students regarding classroom organization and selection of classroom activities and materials could help generate greater enthusiasm on the part of learners and ensure their active engagement in class activities.

Voices from the Classroom

As Van Lier notes (1996, p. 27), "Theories in relevant fields, such as cognitive science, linguistics, and second language acquisition (SLA), do not generally address language-pedagogical issues … Indeed, some SLA researchers explicitly distance themselves from pedagogy, perhaps in order to bolster their theoretical stature." To narrow a gap between pure theoretical reasoning and classroom practice, language instructors need to be aware of both the theoretical developments in the field of language learning/teaching and the needs of their learners.

Nunan (1999) recommends that learners' opinions as to what and how should be taught in the language classroom should be sought while Van Lier (1996, p. 35) stresses that "the teachers' main task is to understand the students, particularly insofar as their learning activities in the classroom are concerned".

This research recognizes the validity of this argument. Pedagogical practice is an outlet where theoretical reasoning could be tested and put into practice. In this study, an enquiry on learners' preferences for the types of classroom activities was conducted.

METHOD

Participants

Seventy-four students who completed their second semester of the Russian language course at University Malaysia Sabah were the participants in this research. Regarding the demographic profile of the respondents, there were considerably more female (n=48, or 64.9%) than male (n=26, or 35.1%) students. The age of respondents ranged from 19 to 42 years old with the majority (94.6%) in the 19 to 21 years old age bracket. Ethnic breakdown of the respondents was the following: Malays (n=15, or 20.3%), Chinese (n=26, or 33.8%), Indian (n=8, or 10.4%), Kadazan (n=4, or 7.8%), others, eg., Dusun, Iban, Bajau, Sino-Kadazan (n=19, or 24.7%). Regarding the mother tongue, 25 respondents (33.8%) listed Malay, 28 persons (36.4%) indicated Chinese, 8 students (10.4%) listed Indian, 4 respondents (5.2%) listed Kadazan as their native language; 9 persons (11.7%) replied that their mother tongue was Iban or English. The majority of participants were science students (n=53, or 71.6%).

Instrument and Procedure

Students were administered questionnaires in the beginning of their Russian language class in the final week of the second semester of the academic year 2004/2005. They were asked to work on the questionnaire individually without consulting their classmates.

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the demographic make-up of the respondents. The second part examined relationship between students' preferences for classroom activities using the Pearson correlation analysis. In this part, the students were asked to rate their preferences for classroom activities using a 5-point Likert-type scale and indicate their agreement/disagreement with the statements by choosing "strongly agree," "agree," "uncertain," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" as variants for their

answers. The students were asked whether they enjoyed doing the following five tasks, 1) practicing vocabulary, 2) practicing grammar, 3) doing oral drills, 4) playing the "interpreter" game, and 5) working with audio materials. Although a wider range of activities had been offered to the students during the language program, the list was narrowed down to the above five activities. The first three of the selected activities (i.e., vocabulary and grammar practice, doing oral drills) represent the 3Ps method as they followed the "presentation – practice – production" schemata when performed in the classroom; these activities stimulated mechanical habit formation that helped to develop formal accuracy. The last two of the selected activities (i.e., the "interpreter" game and working with audio-materials) departed from the 3Ps method; they were predominantly task oriented and aimed at developing communicative competence as an ability to communicate with other speakers.

The third part of the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions asking the students to name one classroom activity that they enjoyed most and one activity they liked least and give reasons for their choice.

Data Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis (one-tailed) was used to interpret the data obtained from the second part of the questionnaire where the students rated their preferences for classroom activities. Pearson correlation analysis allows measuring associations between variables. One-tailed Pearson correlation test is especially useful for testing directional hypotheses. [2] In other words, association between two variables is positive if Pearson co-efficient is positive, and vice versa, negative co-efficient indicates negative relationship. Pearson co-efficient "one" indicates a perfect positive relationship, while Pearson co-efficient "minus one" indicates a perfect negative relationship. [3]

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[2] Two-tailed Pearson correlation test is used for testing non-directional hypotheses. In other words, two-tailed Pearson test cannot determine direction of a hypothesis, whether positive or otherwise.

[3] Pearson co-efficient becomes "zero" when there is no association between the

Context analysis was carried out for the open-ended part of the questionnaire.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis

The empirical findings of the Pearson correlation analysis (one-tailed) are reported in Table 1. As the findings reveal, there are five significant positive relationships between classroom activities. They involve (1) practicing new vocabulary and practicing grammar, (2) practicing new vocabulary and doing oral drills, (3) practicing grammar and doing oral drills, (4) practicing new vocabulary and working with audio materials, and (5) doing oral drills and playing the "interpreter" game. No significant negative relationship was detected. Although doing oral drills and working with audio materials have a negative relationship, it is a non-significant relationship.

TABLE 1
Relationship between Students' Preferences

|	Vocabulary	Grammar	Oral Drills	Game	Audio
Vocabulary	1				
Grammar	0.427**	1			
Oral Drills	0.369**	0.231*	1		
"Interpreter" game	0.111	0.087	0.376**	1	
Audio materials	0.203*	0.100	-0.089	0.054	1

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
*   correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

As the results show, all three activities that represent the 3Ps method have mutually significant relationship (see Figure 1). This means that students who liked practicing new vocabulary also liked practicing grammar and doing oral

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variables.

drills. By contrast, those who disliked the vocabulary practice did not find the other two similar types of activities enjoyable. Also, those students who stated that they liked practicing grammar were positive about engaging in the other two 3Ps format activities.

FIGURE 1
Relationships between the 3Ps Method Activities
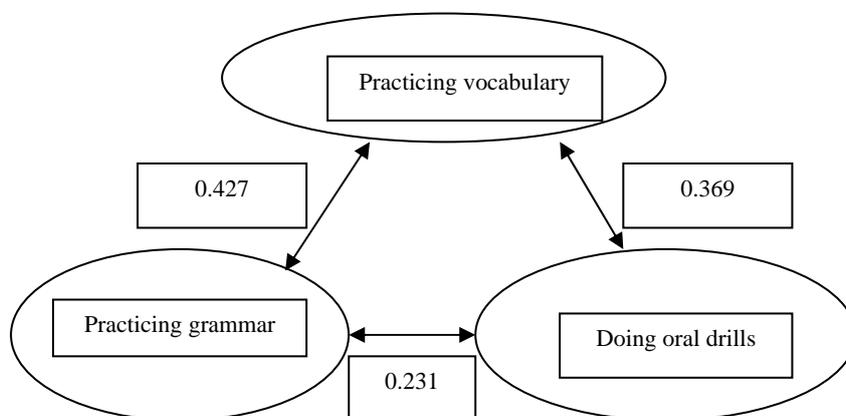
On the other hand, significant relationship between the 3Ps format activities and communicative tasks was detected in two instances, i.e., (1) between practicing new vocabulary and working with audio materials, and (2) between doing oral drills and playing the "interpreter" game (see Table 1). This means that the students who liked practicing new vocabulary also liked working with audio materials and those who liked doing oral drills also liked playing the "interpreter" game.

These statistically significant relationships point to an area where a gap between the 3Ps method and CLT could be bridged in the language classroom even at the beginners' level. Working with audio materials is widely employed in a traditional approach to language instruction with the aim to promote grammatical competence and with a focus on mechanical habit formation. In this particular case study, however, instead of mechanical

drills the learners were asked to listen to "real-life" conversations (i.e., conversations taking place at a party, in the library, at the university canteen, etc.) and answer a set of questions regarding as to what was going on in the conversations. To perform well, the students needed to be able to detect familiar words and phrases in the native speakers' rapid flow of speech. Thus, a good knowledge of new vocabulary was imperative. This activity departed from the traditional 3Ps method as it involved a pre-task phase (i.e., before listening to the recordings students first familiarized themselves with the questions related to the conversation); it also gave the students some exposure to "real-life" situations and socio-cultural element, which is usually absent in the 3Ps method of instruction.

In the case of the "acting as an interpreter" game, the students needed to produce their own language in accordance with the "foreigner's" lines, which were provided. It was also important that the students were able to accommodate in their part of the conversation the utterances made by the "foreigner." In this activity, a similarity with some of the oral drills done in the classroom can be detected. Thus, in some oral drills the students needed to restructure given sentences in order to answer the instructor's questions. Departing from oral drills, the "interpreter" game is built on a semi-structured conversation, which gives students some freedom in the production of their own language. Also, in the "interpreter" game the students' utterances had to confine to the socio-cultural norms (i.e., choosing between formal and informal form of addressing the interlocutor, offering formal or informal greetings, etc.).

Results of the Context Analysis

In their answers to the open-ended questions, the students listed the following three activities as the most preferred: 1) watching video, 2) preparing group assignment on Russian culture, and 3) listening to classmates' presentations on Russian culture. Twenty five students (34 percent) stated that watching video was the activity they liked most; none of

the students identified this activity as the least liked. The most often cited reasons for enjoying watching the video were "(it gives) real scenario," "makes me feel like I am in Russia," "can see things in Russia," "can see Russian people talking," "I can know more about lifestyle and the environment in Russia." Secondly, eight students (11 percent) stated that preparing group assignment on Russian culture was the activity they liked most. The most often cited reason is that they can "learn more about Russia" through collecting information and writing their reports. The next most favorite activity was listening to presentations on Russian culture; it was mentioned by seven students (10 percent). The cited reasons were that one can "learn more about Russia" through listening to the peers' reports.

Significantly, the majority of students (55 percent) in this cohort listed activities with high culture context as their favorite. This indicates that when learning a language takes place in external surrounding learners feel the need to know more about the culture and people of the target language and tend to substitute a lack of direct contacts by intensifying indirect contacts. Language teachers may want to take into consideration this tendency and introduce authentic materials in the classroom (i.e., materials not specifically designed for teaching the language), such as video materials. Besides, in the intermediate- and advanced- level language classrooms a part of curriculum could be devoted to learning the target language through watching a movie or animation and then devising classroom activities around selected segments of the movie.

In short, empirical findings of this study reveal that there are significant relationships between students' preferences for the activities adopting the 3Ps format of instruction. Also, the results indicate that a chasm between the two instructional methods could be bridged through introducing activities that involve "real-life" situations but employ a familiar for the learners' format. Another interesting finding of the present research is that the students placed high value on the socio-cultural element in the foreign language program. Based on these finding, it is suggested that authentic materials could offer a suitable premise where a gap can be bridged between the traditional 3Ps

method of language instruction and CLT.

CONCLUSION

This study recognizes a fact that foreign language learning and second language acquisition are different phenomena. Especially, in the case of beginner learners, tasks built around "real-life" situations cannot be comfortably performed or even much enjoyed till the students acquire a sufficient language "baggage" and gain some linguistic confidence. As several studies report, it is not the teacher's desire to be in charge of the classroom that determines the selection of classroom activities and pedagogical procedure in the foreign language classroom. Results of the present study support the previous research studies' findings stating that learners themselves prefer a traditional type of classroom organization where teacher-led activities are predominant (Garrett & Shortall, 2002; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1998). Such activities usually focus on obtaining grammatical competence and achieving formal accuracy rather then the overall communicative competence that would allow learners to function efficiently in "real-life" situations.

When deciding on the classroom procedure, the stress, perhaps, should be put not on the choice between the two pedagogical paradigms – the 3Ps method vs. CLT – but rather on the distinction between the processes of FLL and SLA. In the former, a language is learned in the external setting with limited or non-existent opportunities for direct contacts with native speakers and culture of the language while in the latter learners have more exposure to the target language and wider opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom. Acknowledging these considerable differences, it becomes clear that a different pedagogical procedure might be required in the foreign language classroom.

In FLL, introduction of culture elements should be given some prominence and classroom activities should be structured so that indirect contacts with

the target language culture are promoted. Authentic materials (songs, poems, proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles, video clips, movies, newspaper and journal articles, etc.) could stimulate learners' interest in the language and lead to their more active engagement in the classroom activities. To determine what type of activities would warrant a better participation of students, "on-site" enquiries on their preferences for classroom activities would be of a great benefit both for the language teacher and students. This kind of research could help to pinpoint activities which students enjoy or dislike most and help the language instructor to work out more effective pedagogical strategies.

The cohort of learners in the present research indicated a strong preference for activities associated with a traditional method of language instruction. Also, they showed a considerable interest in the activities with high culture context, especially activities based on the video materials. Therefore, as students advance in their knowledge of the foreign language instructor may want to move from educational video materials to authentic video materials (movies, animations, news segments, TV advertisements, etc.) and devise classroom activities based on these video materials. Selecting a movie that students are likely to enjoy (or discussing with the students the choice of a movie) and arranging some part of curriculum around the video sessions could help address several quandaries encountered in a foreign language classroom, i.e., it will provide space for authentic materials, it will give learners much needed exposure to the culture and language (and the colloquial language at that!), it will help to design an outlay for "real-life" situations around which more classroom activities could be developed. For example, appropriate segments from a movie could be "tied-up" to the topic being taught (eg., going on trip, describing people and their characters, talking about the weather, shopping, etc). Dialogues from the movies could be used for developing students' listening comprehension skills. Furthermore, some situations from the movies could be acted out in the classroom.

To conclude, there are possibilities to bridge a gap between the traditional method of language instruction and CLT, even at the beginners' level. There are multiple ways in which a synergy between attention to the form and

appreciation of the contents could be achieved. Language instructor's knowledge of his or her audience, its preferences and inclinations combined with creativity and willingness to look for new pedagogical strategies may help to find a point where learners' needs and preferences and teachers' pedagogical agendas converge.

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