Chapter 3
Views from the library: Culture in the TESOL literature

3.1 Introduction

This study was motivated by a desire to better understand the place of culture in TESOL, and to identify effective ways in which culture could be dealt with in the teaching of ESOL. The original plan for the research involved an extensive review of the TESOL literature (including work in language teaching in general, where relevant) in order to inform the other parts of the research. The outcome of the survey of teachers reported in Chapter 2 has informed this review of the literature in two ways. First, by identifying a culture conundrum faced by the teachers. The review of the literature needed to provide insights into the way that such a conundrum might be resolved. Secondly, given that the teachers surveyed were well qualified and experienced, it was also possible that the TESOL literature and discourse, which had shaped their professional awareness, could have contributed to this conundrum. This possibility needed to be explored.

The nature of the conundrum is that sophisticated understandings of culture in a general sense do not lead to a clearly defined way of dealing with culture in the classroom, and that the practice of teachers in relation to culture seems more intuitive than theoretically informed. This relates most particularly to how culture is incorporated into the TESOL curriculum, most specifically in relation to identifying principles that can guide decision making in relation to what is taught and how it is taught.

This refines the question asked in Chapter 1 in relation to culture in the TESOL literature, which was:

How may the place of culture in language teaching (TESOL) best be understood? What does its literature say on the subject?

This chapter will explore this question, with particular attention to how the literature may explain or resolve the culture conundrum.
3.2 The nature of the literature

Culture is a topic that is often referred to in the TESOL literature. The focus of the review reported here was literature with a specific focus on culture. This included books, articles and chapters and some recent conference presentations, although some attention will also be given as to how culture has been dealt with more implicitly, or in passing, in the context of other parts of the TESOL literature. This is a vast body of literature, dating back for 50 years or so. The volume of literature on the topic of culture during this period has ebbed and flowed. Atkinson’s comment about the dearth of articles explicitly addressing culture for the 15 years prior to 1998 was mentioned in Chapter 1. However, since that comment was made, there have been a significant number of publications on culture in TESOL.

This is not the first review of how culture is dealt with in the language teaching literature. Paige and several co-researchers conducted an extensive survey on the literature on teaching culture as part of a large project looking at the teaching of culture in language teaching, including LOTE teaching and TESOL, (Paige et al 1999). They saw the literature as problematic:

….. evidence from methods courses, conference sessions and workshops, and theoretical writings in the field indicate that foreign language and culture pedagogy is extremely eclectic and largely dependent on the individual teacher's definition of culture. (Paige et al part 3)

As well as the extent of the literature, problems they identified include contradictory findings, a greater volume of literature related to application of ideas, less on theorising culture in language teaching and researching aspects of language teaching, and a patchiness in coverage. They reported that while some issues have been addressed, other have not. They also note that some aspects of the literature, such as teaching methodology, relate strongly to the type of conclusions made in another area, such as the nature of a theory of culture, and so it was difficult to disaggregate conclusions from different contexts or other variables (ibid).

Because the focus of this review is on how conceptions of culture can inform and influence the teaching of culture in TESOL, the literature was reviewed with a view to identifying how different texts made connections between understandings of
3.3 Perspectives on culture in the TESOL literature

Figure 3.1 presents a ‘map’ of different perspectives on the teaching of culture within TESOL (and to a lesser extent, language teaching in general). The perspectives are presented as oval or rectangular shapes, arranged to provide an approximation of the period at which the perspective has been influential. The time frame is presented in the rectangle as the base of Figure 3.1. Each perspective includes a name of the perspective, a brief comment identifying the principle attitude or insight it offers in relation to the place of culture in TESOL, and selected references that represent that perspective. Other shapes (rectangles, arrows) have been used to identify sub-themes within a perspective. Overlapping of ovals indicates some interconnection, or similarity shared, between different perspectives.

These perspectives are loosely located along a time line that marks the decades from the 1960s to the first decade of the 21st century. Each of these decades has been labelled with a phrase that loosely labels the influential paradigm of most significance for the consideration of culture in TESOL in that decade. So, the 1960’s are labelled as ‘Behaviourist Decline’, as discussions of culture still resembled behaviourist conceptions reflecting the prominence of behaviourist influences on thinking about language teaching the middle of the 20th century, which were prominent in the 1950s and early 1960s. In the 1970’s the literature in TESOL reflected the influence of cognitive theory reflecting Chomsky’s critique of behaviourism (Chomsky 1959), and the idea of culture, along with language, as a mental competence within the individual (Chomsky 1965), so this decade can be labelled ‘Cognitive Ascendancy’. By the 1980’s theoretical and practical arguments about the communicative nature of language and the purpose of language learning became prominent, so that decade has been labelled one of ‘Communicative Ascendancy’. Communicative views became a very well established orthodoxy through the 1990’s, and so that decade is labelled the period of ‘Communicative Orthodoxy’.
Figure 3.1: Perspectives on Culture in the TESOL Literature

**The Conventional perspective:**
*Culture as a way of life*

- **Explicit explorations of culture and its teaching:**
  - Exploration of the nature of culture and techniques for teaching culture, often utilising techniques derived from Cross-Cultural Communication.

- **Implicit attention to culture:**
  - Integration of language and culture in models of communicative competence
  - Canale & Swain (1980), Bachman (1990)

**Learner cultural background information:**

**Comment:** In the ‘challenges’ era:
Perspectives toward lower end are more prepared to identify discrete aspects of culture for analytic and teaching purposes: cultural learning through a variety of techniques – articulation of different layers/levels of connection between language and culture teaching to consciously address all levels of interconnection.

**Critical Applied Linguistics:**
*TESOL has cultural and political consequences*


**Comment:** In the ‘challenges’ era:
Perspectives at top tend to emphasise the connectedness of language and culture – culture as bound up in discursive practice – cultural learning akin to socialisation processes.

**Systemic-functional linguistics:**
Language as social semiotic (rather than psychological); text as linguistic and cultural connection; Comprehensive linguistic analysis of textual features; (Halliday 1978)

**Post-structural perspective**
*Culture as discursive practices, subjectivities and ‘border crossings’*

- Critique of ‘essentialising’ effect of conventional perspective

**Sociocultural perspective**
*Culture is created in interaction: learning from social interaction*


**Practical perspective**
*Classroom materials and techniques*


**Revisionism**

**Conventional Extension**
- DeCapua & Wintergerst (2004)

**Sociocultural perspective**
*Culture is created in interaction: learning from social interaction*


**Practical perspective**
*Classroom materials and techniques*


**Revisionism**

**Conventional Extension**
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In recent years, for varying reasons, different perspectives have challenged the adequacy or some core precepts of communicative language teaching. Hence the name given to the early 2000s, ‘Challenges to Communicative Orthodoxy’.

The basis of the perspectives depicted in Figure 3.1 is a similarity of viewpoint between writers. In some cases, some work, for example the work in sociocultural theory, is rather tightly integrated around the psychological learning theory of Vygotsky and followers. In other cases a practical concern is the basis of allocation to a ‘perspective’ on the provision of ideas and resources for teaching culture in TESOL classrooms. In some cases, such as Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) the perspective spans both a theoretical orientation and concern, and practical concerns that flow from that. The grouping of authors under various perspectives is a useful means of bringing some order to an extensive and complex body of work. However, such classification also carries with it a danger of appearing to oversimplify complexities both in considering the nature of particular perspectives, and in identifying variations within a perspective. The perspectives identified here are rather loose affiliations in some cases, and there are ways in which some work has something in common with more than one perspective, and some work is cited with approval as informing others working within other perspectives. Some authors have written articles that have been attributed to different perspectives, usually because of different points of focus in different pieces of work.

Despite the number of perspectives, one theme is evident across the literature. This is a distinction between the integration of culture within a more holistic view of language within language teaching, and other perspectives that are more inclined to look at culture more explicitly and analytically, and to attend to culture, or parts of it, as discrete elements within a more complex model of language teaching. This distinction takes a slightly different form at different periods depicted in the diagram. During the communicative era, which includes the decades labelled ‘Cognitive Ascendancy’, ‘Communicative Ascendancy’ and ‘Communicative Orthodoxy’ this tension is evident within a single perspective, described as the Conventional perspective. As we shall see in the section on the Conventional perspective below, culture was either incorporated into models of communicative competence, or
addressed explicitly in work that explored the place of culture in TESOL and language teaching in general. In recent years, however, a more distinct set of alternative perspectives has emerged around this distinction. As noted in the comments (in the boxes on the left hand side of the diagram), the more recent perspectives (placed toward the right hand top of the page) tend to treat language and culture as a more holistic phenomenon, realised in discursive practices and exploration of the learners’ social world, in which culture becomes manifest in language use which integrates other types of action and interaction to the dynamics of negotiation, and even contestation, of meaning in everyday language use. These perspectives tend to see the basis of cultural and linguistic learning as socialisation into these practices, although the views of the nature of the learning process are different. The perspectives towards the lower end of the diagram, while also holding a view that language and culture are closely interconnected, are more ready to make explicit what they see as the points of connection between language and culture, and, at times, to explore culture separately from language in order to facilitate learning, using a variety of pedagogical techniques, and in various ways adding cultural learning to linguistic learning.

Another complexity in this literature, pointed out by Corbett, is the tendency for work in North America and Europe to draw on different disciplinary bases and assumptions, to a considerable extent (Corbett 2003). In Great Britain, the literature on culture has drawn both on the cultural studies and sociolinguistically oriented approaches to linguistics concerned with how language gets used in social situations. The focus has also been more on the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), which is often referred to as English Language Teaching (ELT). This is taught in Expanding Circle contexts, or to temporary visitors to Britain. More recently there has been some focus on the multicultural concerns of an increasingly interconnected Europe where different cultural groups are interacting on a temporary basis, rather than immigrant groups coming to live permanently in the target culture. In North America, where social science paradigms have tended to prevail, TESOL has largely been considered in terms of teaching ESL to immigrants or to international students immersed in North America for extended periods of time. There has been a focus on approaches to linguistics that centre on the nature of linguistic systems and the
human capacity for language processing, and culture has been considered as an anthropological phenomenon and to be related to a more psychologically informed view of language learning. To some extent, approaches to investigation and theorising have reflected differing disciplinary bases, with work in the British tradition (including some work done in Australia) utilising conceptual frameworks and research techniques of the humanities (including critical analysis of conceptual understanding), while work emanating from North America reflects a more empirical approach involving collection of data to support an argument. While this in itself is an overgeneralisation (there is, of course, conceptualising work emanating from North America, and data generating studies emanating from Europe), the generalisation holds for a lot of the TESOL literature. However, this dimension adds an element of complexity to the literature, which is not captured in Figure 3.1.

The nature of each of these perspectives, and their conclusions for the question raised at the beginning of this chapter, are explored in the following sections. An extract of the relevant section of Figure 3.1 introduces the discussion of each perspective. The description of each perspective includes its general argument and rationale, description of the way the perspective understands culture, the ways that it can be dealt with in language teaching, and then evaluative comment on how the perspective sheds light on the culture conundrum.

3.4 The Conventional perspective: Application of anthropologically derived understandings of culture to communicative language teaching

3.4.1 The Conventional perspective in the period of Behaviourist Decline to Communicative Orthodoxy

This perspective is the mainstream writing on culture in TESOL and language teaching from the late 1950’s to the end of the 1990’s. It has tended to look to anthropology for understandings of culture. It is characterised by an acceptance of ‘culture’ in anthropological terms, as the everyday way of life of speakers of the target language. The focus on culture as the everyday way of life of the speakers of the language replaced the ‘Capital C’ or elite view of culture as the canonical
Figure 3.2: The Conventional perspective from the period of Behaviourist Decline to Communicative Orthodoxy

This perspective contains three parts. Two of these make explicit explorations of culture and cultures in different ways. One is literature which involves explicit exploration of the place of culture in teaching. The second part involves descriptions of the cultural backgrounds of learners. The third part of this perspective is a body of work concerned with understanding the nature of communicative competence, which also integrates cultural factors within its models of the linguistically-oriented goals of language teaching.

However, despite the longevity of this perspective, a number of writers have expressed concern at the limited extent to which this literature has informed the teaching of culture. The perspectives which emerged during the 1990s and which now challenge the Communicative Orthodoxy in TESOL (depicted on the right hand side of Figure 3.1), are responses to perceived inadequacies in this conventional perspective. Stern (1992) expressed his concern with the Conventional literature:

On policy, content, objectives and methodology there is a good deal of consensus among the writers. No major controversy has emerged, and there have been few changes in treatment over the last two decades. However, in spite of this strong endorsement by the theorists, the cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice. It does not play a major role in most curriculums, and there are only a few language courses where the cultural component is systematically treated. Stern (1992:206)
3.4.2 The ‘Explicit’ exploration of culture in language teaching

This part of the Conventional perspective considers the nature of culture and how it is to be taught within changing understandings of the nature of language and its teaching. This began with behaviourist approaches to language teaching. Lado (1957) asserted the importance of learners coming to learn to behave as members of the target culture as part of language learning. In the same way that points of difference between the learners’ first language and the target language were the points of focus in teaching language, so too were the points of difference between the cultures to be the focus of cultural teaching. Followers of this approach, such as Brooks (1985), produced lists of aspects of life that teachers might need to attend to in helping their learners to behave as members of the target cultural group. These are rather shallow labels of cultural behaviours.

Literature from the 1970s also reflected the influence of both understandings of language as a cognitive phenomenon, and the notion of culture as a deep phenomenon with a profound influence on the psychology of the individual. Paulston used a cognitive framework for her exploration of what it means to be bilingual, and whether biculturalism is possible in an individual (Paulston 1978). She compared cultural understanding and cultural action as analogous to linguistic competence and performance, and argued that an individual cannot coherently share two cultural systems in the way they can utilise two linguistic codes. She concluded that a coherent individual can be bilingual but not truly bicultural. She also argued that cultural learning involves affective as well as cognitive learning, but that it is only possible to teach the cognitive dimensions of biculturalism. In the end, therefore, cultural teaching can really only be limited to raising awareness, as adoption of the aspects of culture are a choice the learner needs to make, based on a knowledge of the options. The nature of cultural learning has been a topic explored in later perspectives also.
In the 1980s, Valdes and Damen made extensive explorations of the nature of culture and its place in language teaching (Damen 1987, Valdes 1987). While there are notable differences in the style of their work, there are also similarities. Both looked to similar sources, especially to anthropology, for understandings about culture and to Intercultural Communication (IC) for ideas about teaching culture. Both bemoaned the limited attention culture seemed to receive from language teachers. However, the end results were presentations of possibilities for teachers, rather than presentation of a coherent and principled way of integrating language and culture within communicative language teaching.

These explorations of culture took a broad perspective, and they explored the connections between language, thought and culture. They noted a trend in anthropological understandings of culture that move from early 20th century ways of seeing culture in terms of actions and practices of groups of people (culture as ‘content’) to a more abstract understanding of culture as a type of framework, psychological and social system, or parameters, that shape and influence the way a group of people live their lives. So culture becomes a matrix, or system that guides people as they go about living their lives. Valdes and Damen also considered the task of language learners as moving into the cultural environment of the target speech community and relating to native speakers of the language. They also emphasised similarities between cultures.

Both Damen and Valdes presented culture teaching techniques drawn from earlier approaches to the teaching of culture, such as the use of literature, and the use of newspaper and other media such as movies. However, they both also drew extensively on the techniques of IC for techniques teachers can use to increase their students’ understandings of the target, and their own cultures. These included the use of descriptions of the cultures of different countries, cross cultural comparisons and techniques such as ‘critical incidents’ and ‘cultural assimilators’ which involve learners in exploring the nature and causes of culturally-based miscommunication. IC is a field that develops the ability of individuals to participate successfully in communication with members of other cultural groups. It does this through using techniques that raise awareness of the nature of culture in general, and which raise
awareness of aspects of the specific culture(s) with whom one is interacting. It utilises a range of techniques that involve active learning, including complex role-plays and simulations (Fowler & Mumford 1995), in ways which do not systematically consider aspects of the various linguistic systems of the cultures concerned. The Conventional perspective has drawn on this field for techniques for teaching culture.

Damen provided some generalisation about the nature of cultural teaching techniques as being placed on a continuum between ‘Structured’ (techniques which involve explicit attention to and focus on aspects of culture, such as a discussion of American jazz) and ‘unstructured’ (techniques that are more responsive to learners’ concerns and experiences, such as the discussion of problems being experienced by foreign students) (Damen 1987:246). She also suggested that the teaching of culture in a communicative approach should be related to the learning needs of the students. This would involve the teaching of culture specific information, such as the norms of the target language, valued and disvalued cultural behaviour and behaviours that expressed intentions, and culture-general learning such as learning how to learn aspects of culture, increasing the self awareness of the learner’s own values and background, and learning how to deal with others with different value systems (ibid: 279).

Both Valdes and Damen argued that culture was not as widely taught in language teaching as they considered appropriate. They put this down to the difficulty of teaching culture, because of its complexity, and its role in changing the individual:

‘. . . the process of culturing accompanies language learning, although in many ways it is more complex because of the nature of culture and its many manifestations. In addition, culture learning is likely to cause greater change in the individual. It may force the transcending of native and familiar culture patterns and, in some cases, result in their being discarded. This may produce culture shock, disorientation, and temporary loss of cultural identity. If prolonged these side effects can lead to marginality and alienation.’ (Damen 1987: 222)

This explicit approach to the consideration of culture in language teaching also illustrates aspects of the culture conundrum. Culture was identified as a complex area of learning, which involved more than knowledge, and which was related to values, thought and language. For the individual learner it also involved attitudes and feelings, which added to the difficulty of cultural learning. The literature was
identifying and advocating some techniques for teaching aspects of culture, but it was not systematically relating these to what had to be taught.

In the 1990s the Conventional literature came to be informed by more complex understandings of culture. This was due to partly to the influence of European thinkers working in cultural theory, who were pursuing ideas of how culture and ideas affected patterns of everyday life, such as Habermas (see Habermas 1987), Foucault (see Macy 1994) and Williams (see Williams 1989, 1989a)), and ideas from work in anthropology, such as Hofstede (1994), which looked at broad dimensions of culture as a means for comparing them. For instance, in his concise handbook on Cross-cultural communication for language teachers O’Sullivan (1994) utilised Hofstede’s identification of comparable dimensions of cultures (Hofstede 1980, 1994). He continued the tradition of drawing on the techniques of cross-cultural communication as strategies teachers can employ in the classroom.

Murray and her co-authors (Murray 1992) asserted the value of cultural diversity against notions of an essential cultural knowledge that conservative thinkers, such as Hirsch (1987), argued should be shared by all members of a society. Murray and her co-authors utilised Williams’ notions of a common culture (the everyday way of life of ordinary people in a society) and a culture in common (a minority or elite culture forced on people by powerful interests to encourage social cohesion), to better understand the cultural learning needs of ESL learners. They argue that learners of ESL will be assisted in their learning by being encouraged to explicitly draw on their common cultures and comparing those with the common culture of English speakers. By helping learners to better understand their own culture and how it relates to the culture they are adapting to, learners will better understand themselves, and the adjustments they might choose to make in adapting to a new cultural environment. This can be done through a range of classroom techniques which build cross-cultural awareness, including role plays (of familiar rather than unfamiliar roles), getting learners to tell their oral life histories, allowing and encouraging learners to use their primary languages in specified situations, getting students to observe and record speakers of their primary language speaking and using English, and having learners analyse it for grammatical accuracy and – in spoken language – for intelligibility.
This approach has much in common with the work of the 1980s, but is more explicit in its acknowledgment and exploitation of a multiplicity of cultures in TESOL classrooms, and it advocates practices that in some ways resemble some that the surveyed teachers reported using (Chapter 2). As well as asserting the value of cultural diversity, echoed in other work in the Conventional perspective, this work reflects a stronger orientation to the learner as a factor in learning than in earlier work, and places more emphasis on this, involving the learners in consciously relating their home culture and its practices and expectations to the cultural practices and conventions of the culture they are learning. As well as advocating teachers drawing on the learners’ own experiences, this work has similarities with aspects of ILT (see below) in that it works at developing a bilingual consciousness of the nature of the two culture environments in which they exist.

By the end of the 1990s, other perspectives on culture had emerged. These will be explored in the sections that follow. However, as Stern had earlier noted, there was no explicit controversy in which these differences were explored. This lack of explicit dialogue is illustrated in Hinkel (1999), which continued the tradition of explicitly exploring aspects of culture and its teaching in language teaching. Some of the writing, in for instance Hinkel’s Introduction (Hinkel 1999a), and Hinkel’s article on culture in academic writing (Hinkel 1999b), is consistent with earlier work in the Conventional perspective, and notes the complexity of culture. However, the volume also contains articles by authors writing from other perspectives, without dialogue or explicit signalling that different perspectives are represented. The other perspectives represented include the presentation of cultural background of learners (Wong-Scollon 1999), explorations of acquisition of aspects of pragmatics by second language learners (Bouton 1999; Judd 1999; Rose 1999; and Scollon 1999), exploration of culture in different contexts in which TESOL is practiced (Kachru 1999), a Sociocultural perspective (Lantolf 1999, Hall 1999), a Critical perspective on cultural dimensions of TESOL practice (Harklau 1999) and an exploration of how culture should be dealt with in ESL and EFL textbooks from the perspective of ILT (Cortazzi & Jin 1999).
Some elements of the culture conundrum can be seen in this explicit exploration of culture within the Conventional perspective, which has grappled with the complexity of understanding culture and its relationship with language. The explorations have provided rich insights, but have not in themselves identified a principled way for teachers of ESOL to integrate the teaching of language and culture. They have identified some techniques and strategies for explicitly dealing with culture in the language classroom. These derive largely from the techniques used by cross-cultural communication, and involve an explicit exploration of the general nature of culture, specific and explicit knowledge of the target culture, and explorations of points of difference between the target culture and the learners’ home cultures. But this body of work largely represents possibilities, rather than a consistent and systematic means of integrating language and culture in TESOL.

3.4.3 Descriptions of learners’ backgrounds

This body of teacher reference material has been informed by a Conventional view of culture as common elements in the everyday ways of life of a group of people, and which assumes a degree of homogeneity that is based on traditions and adjustments the group makes in order to live their lives (for example, Brick (1992), Duke (1998) and Ronowicz (1995)). The significance of this part of the literature lies in its role as reinforcement to teachers that anthropological understands of culture can be valid and productive.

3.4.4 ‘Implicit’ treatment of culture: culture in models of ‘communicative competence’

The development of communicative language teaching coincided with the development of understandings of language learning as a process of cognitive construction of the language system by the learner. This was a response to the realisation that linguistic competence was a deeper phenomenon than just behaviour or habits. The notion of ‘communicative competence’ is an abstraction of the ‘cognitive map’ speakers of a language possess in order to enable them to use a language to communicate.
The notion of ‘communicative competence’ was derived from Chomsky’s notion of the ‘grammatical competence’ possessed by a native speaker of a language that enabled the speaker to use the language to interpret and make meanings (Chomsky 1965). Hymes added the notion of a ‘sociocultural competence’, which encompasses the rules for appropriate use of the language that complement the grammatical component of communicative competence (Hymes 1972). During the ‘communicative era’ this notion has been further expanded and elaborated in models of communicative competence such as Canale & Swain (1980) or Bachman’s model of communicative language ability (Bachman 1990, Bachman & Palmer 1996). These have added further dimensions, such as ‘strategic competence’ (Canale & Swain 1980) or specified culturally related aspects of language use, such as ‘pragmatic competence’ (Bachman 1990). These have increasingly come to include recognition of the discursive and social dimensions of language use. These theorised notions of the goal of communicative language teaching have been complemented at a more practical level by the advocacy and widespread use of teaching practices that deal with language in meaningful contexts and in ways in which learners see how linguistic forms are used to make meaning in particular contexts (Savignon 1991). This resulted in a more holistic approach to language education. Because culture is always present in some way as part of communication, it is experienced by learners as they become familiar with how the language is used. Because it is necessarily present in language in context, and meaningful communication, learners are being exposed to the culture. Indeed, because of the number and complexity of factors involved in communicative use of the language, it may be difficult to make explicit the cultural factors. Perhaps this can explain the apparent contradiction in the two responses from teacher S14 quoted at the beginning of Chapter 2, where the teacher indicated that cultural learning is essential for communicative language use, but that she was only able to mange an implicit approach to the teaching of culture.

In terms of the culture conundrum, this integrated approach to language and culture has the effect of acknowledging the significance of cultural factors as always present in language use. However, the place of culture as one of a rich combination of factors that interact to enable language to be meaningful in specific contexts means that it is more difficult to provide explicit and systematic attention to cultural factors in
syllabus design and classroom teaching. The teaching of culture is very difficult to manage.

3.4.5 The Conventional perspective in the early 21st century

Figure 3.3: Recent developments in the Conventional perspective: Extension and Revision

As has already been mentioned, different perspectives on the nature of culture within TESOL have emerged since the early 1990s. These have not replaced the Conventional perspective. Some of this work continues without explicit acknowledgment of the other perspectives, while other writers within the Conventional perspective acknowledge challenges presented by alternative perspectives, and attempt some revision of the conventional approach in light of work from other perspectives.

3.4.5.1 The extension of the Conventional perspective

Literature that follows the conventional perspective is generally intended to influence classroom practice. This work continues to work with a very broad understanding of culture, and advocate certain classroom practices. These tend to involve students in explorations between their home cultures and the new culture they encounter, in ways that are not dissimilar to those advocated in Murray (1992).

Recent examples of such literature include Coffey (1999), which advocates the development of cultural awareness through consciously developing a sense of community in Intensive English Programs in colleges in the United States. Recent
professional presentations, including some presentations at the 2004 TESOL Convention, including presentations by Coakley (2004), Suarez (2004), and Jackson (2004), were also framed largely within the Conventional perspective. Although they focus on different techniques and learners in different contexts, these involve some conscious cross-cultural exploration involving explicit exploration of the experiences of the learners as seen from the cultural perspective of the learners, and the cultural perspectives of other participants in the events explored.

De Capua & Wintergerst (2004) illustrates the continuation of the Conventional perspective at a more general level. This manual for teacher education courses, for both ESL specialist teachers and generalist classroom teachers, presents a conventional approach to understanding and teaching culture, despite making passing reference to ideas of ‘intercultural competence’ derived from Kramsch (1991: 28). Culture is presented as a shared way of life of a group of people, consisting of elements of beliefs, values, norms, taboos, and attitudes. The relationship between culture, thought and language are presented as deep and profound, though not immutable. Techniques derived from IC are utilised to raise the cultural awareness of learners. The culture of the USA is used as a reference point, with examples being made with reference to some other cultures such as that of The Philippines, Mexico, and Korea. While this work is well informed and sophisticated in many respects, it fails to inform as to how culture can be systematically built into language courses and classrooms, other than as a general awareness on the part of the teacher, and techniques to specifically and explicitly explore cultural differences in the classroom. It treats generalisations about cultures as natural and unproblematic.

While this work adds some sophistication to earlier work in the Conventional perspective, it continues to work with a very broad notion of culture, and does not make specific connections between language and culture. This work encourages an active exploration by language learners of how their home culture relates to the culture of English, but tends to identify classroom processes, rather than identify the content of cultural learning.
3.4.5.2 Revisionism

This literature acknowledges other perspectives and explicitly attempts to accommodate the critiques made of conventional perspectives, or explores problems that have emerged within a conventional perspective and attempts to address the issues identified.

Atkinson attempts to reconcile a conventional understanding of culture with aspects of post structural perspectives (Atkinson 1999). He identifies how post structuralist perspectives challenge the conventional ‘received’ view of culture. He goes on to argue that these competing views can be reconciled, by postulating six principles about culture. These are that ‘all humans are individuals’, ‘individuality is cultural’, ‘social group memberships are multiple, contradictory and dynamic’, ‘social group membership is consequential’ (in the sense of affecting aspects of the individual), ‘methods of studying culture are unlikely to fit a positivist paradigm’ and ‘language (teaching and learning) and culture are mutually implicated but culture is multiple and complex’ (ibid: 642 - 646). However, these principles don’t provide a basis for practice, other than a call for general incorporation of some post structuralist understanding within a more conventional conception of culture.

The other area in which the Conventional perspective literature has revised its understanding of cultural factors is work that explores the role of teachers who are not native speakers of English. Communicative theory has traditionally tended to presume the teacher will be a native speaker or have native speaker like proficiency of the language they are teaching (see Harmer 2001). However, due to the increasing diversity of Inner Circle contexts, and the growth of TESOL in Expanding and Outer circle contexts, (see section 3.6 below) this assumption, and its desirability, is now seen to be much more problematic. While earlier communicative literature assumed the superiority of native speakers as teachers, Phillipson challenged the way the professional discourse privileged native speakers of English on the grounds of the imbalance of power relations it created (Phillipson 1992). Later research questions the efficacy of native English speaking expatriates (Duff & Uchida 1997) and revives the possibilities that bilingual teachers might be more effective, although Neiderhauser
reported that bilingual teachers were less effective teachers while native speaking teachers were not made welcome in the schools to which they were appointed (Neiderhauser 1995). More recently, there has been revival of acceptance of the idea that bilingual teachers may have particular insights and provide more relevant and appropriate role models than native speakers (Cook 1999). Rampton (1990) argues that the native/ non-native-speaker distinction, though resilient, is increasingly meaningless (Rampton 1990). He argues that it is more appropriate to think of teachers in terms of their linguistic expertise, and the nature of their affiliation to English.

This literature, which is couched in general terms and not just the specific contexts of EFL, is paralleled in the literature that looks explicitly at teachers in Expanding circle contexts and the teaching of English as an International language. That work is described in the section on ‘Culture in context perspective below (section 3.6).

This Revisionist literature suggests that some researchers are aware of the need to review some of the Conventional perspective’s understandings and assumptions about culture and communicative language teaching, although a clear consensus has yet to emerge as to what that may be. However, it includes the development of an understanding that the assumption that a native-speaker teacher is not the norm in many teaching concepts, and that a native-speaker teacher may in fact not be the most appropriate model of a competent user of English, particularly in Outer and Expanding Circle contexts.

3.4.6 The Conventional perspective and the culture conundrum

The Conventional literature fails to provide a clear resolution of the culture conundrum. In fact, it seems to nurture it. This literature has looked at culture as a very broad concept, and while it has argued that culture should be an integral part of language teaching, it has failed to specify a principled way in which culture could be systematically integrated with the teaching language within a communicative approach. Alternatively, the literature that explicitly integrated language and culture implied that meaning oriented attention to language in the classroom could automatically result in cultural learning. While the recent literature within the
Conventional perspective has advocated the exploration of learners’ experiences of the cultural environments of their first language and English, it still fails to identify a principled way in which more explicit and systematic integration of culture can be achieved. It continues to work with a very broad and complex understanding of culture that is difficult to operationalise in teaching. While the Revisionist literature is acknowledging areas that require rethinking, this is still presenting argument at a high level of generality, as in the case of Atkinson’s six principles (Atkinson 1999). The work that explores the nature of the expertise of teachers of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is interesting, and relates to the explorations of the nature of TESOL in different societal contexts, as well as providing a potential theorised means of giving teachers a better understanding of their role as cultural informants, guides and mediators for their students. However, more practical application of such understanding is needed.

### 3.5 Systemic functional linguistics

**Figure 3.4: The Perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics**

3.5.1 *The perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)*

SFL, which is also sometimes referred to as ‘genre theory’, has coexisted with the Conventional approach for over two decades. This school of thought is based on the linguistic theory of British linguist, Michael Halliday, and attained considerable prominence within Applied Linguistics in the late 1980s and 1990s. Halliday’s linguistic theory emphasises the social nature of language and language learning, rather than seeing it as a psychological phenomenon. In this perspective, a language system is less an internalised psychological system, than an understanding of the social values and appropriacy of the different linguistic options that could (potentially) be used in specific situations (Halliday 1978). Societies and cultures, he argues, not only have preferred ways of using the elements of their linguistic system,
they also interpret the different linguistic options as conveying different socially agreed meanings. This has led to an approach to teaching which holds that teaching typical texts (spoken and written), known as genres, will lead to competence and improved ability in the language. This is an approach advocated for both native speakers and second language learners. The approach involves teaching learners about the social context of the text (in terms of the text’s field, its subject matter; its tenor, or the relationship between those involved in communication; and its mode, the nature of the language medium of the text, such as speaking or writing). It is also considered important to model the conventions that are valued or expected in such texts, in terms of the structures of the texts, and their linguistic characteristics (such as grammatical structures, the nature of cohesive devices, lexical choices and so on). This approach has been critiqued as imposing a set of conventions on language learners who may prefer to mark their linguistic and cultural difference in certain ways. The counter claim to this has been that empowerment lies in a conscious, rather than naïve ability to utilise and even break conventions in order to achieve certain communicative effects.

3.5.2 SFL and the culture conundrum

Where genre based teaching has been implemented with a full and complete theoretical understanding it would seem to have the potential for a rich and systematic exploration of culture arising from the text, providing some integration of culture and language teaching. However, genre-based teaching has tended to focus on the genre as a linguistic form and focus on the linguistic, rather than the cultural dimensions of the text, a danger Corbett warns against (Corbett 2003). Genre-based teaching is perhaps also open to the critique that it tends to present cultural expectations and practices as relatively homogenous, consistent, fixed and unchanging. In this way its full potential as the basis for a more systematic approach to the teaching of culture is unfulfilled, and at worst neglected. In TESOL SFL has been quite influential in informing English for academic purposes, and in curriculum frameworks in many states of Australia (Hyon 1996), and nationally in the CSWE, the curriculum framework adopted by the AMEP (AMES NSW 1996, 2003). The focus in these contexts, however, has been oriented towards students mastering the linguistic
conventions, and the relevant cultural conventions have not been so extensively explored.

3.6 Explorations of the nature of culture and communicative language teaching in the Expanding circle

Figure 3.5: The Culture in context perspective

3.6.1 The ‘Culture in context’ perspective

This perspective explores the cultural implications of language teaching in different context. It involves two bodies of literature that explore the application of Inner circle understandings to Expanding circle contexts. They are a collection of articles in English Language Teaching Journal, which explore the nature of cultural teaching in Expanding circle countries such as turkey, Greece and Morocco, and work that explores the application of communicative approaches to Expanding circle contexts in the 1990s.

Both bodies of literature question the extent to which communicative language teaching based on Inner circle norms is universally applicable. This issue was initially explored in a relatively small body of literature described here as the ‘Culture in ELT debate’ of the 1980s and early 1990s. This was largely conducted in articles in the English Language Teaching Journal, focussed predominantly on British approaches to TESOL in Expanding circle contexts. This was followed in the 1990s by a body of literature exploring issues that arose from attempts to implement communicative
language teaching models of Inner circle contexts to Expanding circle contexts. These
discussions reveal dilemmas and different resolutions to them that arise from the
application communicative approaches to language teaching in Expanding circle
contexts.

This literature identifies and some dilemmas that emerge in applying a
communicative approach that was developed in Inner circle contexts to Outer and
Expanding circle contexts. This debate began a dialogue about the place of native
speakers of English and bilingual local teachers well before the mainstream and
critical TESOL literature took up these issues.

Alptekin & Alptekin pointed out that the teaching of English in Expanding Circle
contexts was frequently conducted with reference to the norms of English speaking
countries and native speakers (Alptekin & Alptekin 1984). The emphasis on native
speaking norms, led to either a lack of learning by students who couldn’t identify with
native-speaker teachers, learning that resulted in alienation of students from their
home culture, and the use of an inappropriate goal of teaching, native speaker like
(and generally monolingual) communicative competence. They argued for a bilingual
model of communicative competence, for use of a language as a lingua franca, where
the cultural norms of Inner circle countries are hardly relevant. A similar view was
put by Podromou who argued that teachers could help their students by focusing
explicitly on how it was used in their countries, using examples of the use of English
in Greece as an example (Podromou 1988). Such an approach was adopted in a
curriculum project for the teaching of English in schools in Morocco, based on an
argument that many aspects of English speaking cultures were alienating for
Moroccan students (Askadou et al 1990). The approach was to include cultural
teaching in semantic and pragmatic dimensions, as these were relevant for
communication in English, while omitting aspects of culture that were sociological
and aesthetic in nature, as these related overwhelmingly to English speaking countries
and were the predominant sources of alienation for students in Moroccan schools.
This evoked a reaction that claimed such an approach amounted to censorship, and
avoided the issues learners need to confront in such a context (Hyde 1994). Hyde
argued that rather than avoiding such confronting issues, teachers needed to deal with
the culture as a whole, and the issues it raised for students, and work to help students learn how to deal with and confront such issues from a position of understanding themselves and their own cultural perspective.

Kramsch and Sullivan argue that appropriate teaching needs to reflect a sense of both global use of English, and local use of English (Kramsch & Sullivan 1996). In this way learners will be prepared for use of English in a range of contexts and dimensions. McKay supports this view in her review of the teaching of English as an International Language (McKay 2002). Expanding circle contexts are not just remote outposts in which Inner circle norms need to be learned, they are particular contexts where the varieties of English, and ways the language is used generate their own imperatives in relation to the teaching of English language and culture.

These discussions illustrate the significance of context in how culture is treated in TESOL, and illustrate the limitations of native speaker norms as the reference point of teaching. The idea that the norms of native speakers of English are inappropriate learning outcomes for learners in Expanding circle contexts is put by Meier (1997), in the context of an argument that native speaker norms of politeness are an inappropriate focus of teaching:

Teaching culture is necessarily part and parcel of teaching appropriate speech act behaviour. The goal is not for learners to internalize a particular culture or subculture, but rather, as Seelye (1984: 31) states: ‘to get the student to begin looking for the reasons behind human behavior’. This enables learners to be better ‘understanders’ of both their own world and others’, encouraging a more positive attitude towards differences, namely, an understanding of them rather than a mere identification, which may in turn lower the barriers of stereotyping. (Meier 1987: 26)

Such views have been echoed in the literature in recent years, for example in Brown and Lumley’s rejection of the interactional norms of native speakers in a test of proficiency in academic English for learners in Indonesia (Brown & Lumley 1998) or in McKay’s approach to teaching of EIL (McKay 2002).
As CLT came to be applied in a variety of contexts, a further discussion explored the interplay between the usual practices of communicative language teaching and learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. These learners were usually learning in their own countries, in the Expanding circle, or when they moved to study in Inner circle contexts. In some ways these explorations address similar issues to the Culture in ELT literature, except that they focus more on the methodology of communicative teaching, rather than the cultural content of teaching. The export of communicative teaching proved to be problematic, and this literature identifies cultural factors as one of the issues that contributed to the problems that emerged. Holliday (1994) explored the phenomenon of the transfer of expertise from what he termed ‘BANA’ (the professional domains of TESOL in Britain, Australasia and North America) to ‘TESEP’ (English Language teaching in formal education in tertiary institutions, secondary and primary schools in Expanding circle contexts). Holliday is interested in the spread and application of communicative methodology, and curriculum projects in which BANA expertise is utilised to increase the effectiveness of teaching in TESEP. He argues that such work often yields disappointing results as it assumes that the transfer of technical practices of BANA to TESEP is unproblematic, when, in fact it is highly problematic, because of differences in assumptions and values that arise from cultural differences between those involved. He argues that an appropriate methodology for different contexts needs to be based on an ethnographic approach, which enables the teacher to reflect on the social dimensions of the classroom, and to adopt methodologies that are informed by communicative theory, but which are adapted to the conditions of the classroom, and its societal and institutional context.

The connections between communicatively informed pedagogic practices and local cultures in university and school English language classrooms were also explored in Coleman (1996). A number of chapters by different authors deal with the interplay of pedagogic approaches informed by communicative orthodoxy with local cultures in Japan (Lo Castro 1996), Indonesia (Coleman 1996b), Egypt (Holliday 1996), Pakistan (Shamim 1996), Kenya (Muchiri 1996), China (Cortazzi & Jin 1996) and international students studying in Australia (Ballard 1996). Flowerdew and Miller looked at the ways that Cantonese-speaking students reacted to native English speaking lectures in a university in Hong Kong (Flowerdew & Miller 1995). In other
publications Sullivan (1996) described the practices of English language classrooms in Vietnam, and explored how students with such prior learning experiences fared when they encountered more communicatively influenced classrooms in North America, and Li looked at difficulties in the application of communicative practices in South Korea (Li 1996). In some ways, this work follows a theme in some earlier work done in ESL contexts, which argues that ESL learners need to be explicitly oriented to the practices and expectations of ESL and mainstream classrooms (Richards 1990, Chamot & O’Malley 1994). However, a major thrust of this work is a recognition that the language teaching pedagogy derived from communicative language teaching is not an automatically effective or even a ‘superior technology’ that can be directly or automatically applied in different cultural contexts. Two explanations are provided from this work. Allwright (1996) points out the significance of socialisation factors in language classrooms and how the pedagogic dimensions of the classroom need to interact with the social. Coleman applies a distinction earlier made by Street in relation to literacy (Street 1993), to talk of ‘autonomous’ and ‘ideological’ approaches. An autonomous approach to language teaching implies that there are certain practices that are universally effective and applicable, while an ‘ideological’ approach to language teaching involves an interaction between ideas about effective teaching and an understanding of a particular context to develop an approach that will be effective in that context. Cortazzi and Jin argue for the blending of ideas derived from traditional Confucian education in China with modern western pedagogical practice as a ‘cultural synergy’ which can be very productive in a language classroom (Cortazzi & Jin 1996: 202-2). This work represents some ‘problematisation’ of at least some of the orthodoxies of communicative language teaching. Another dimension of these studies is that they often explore issues related to either native speakers of English as teachers in Expanding circle contexts (see also section on the Culture in ELT debate), or to the circumstances of bilingual, or non-native speakers.

As we saw above, these discussions inform exploration of the roles of native and non-native speakers of English as teachers within the Revision of the Conventional perspective. The interplay between the cultures of learners and of the English they are learning is also seen as significant in ILT.
3.6.2 *The ‘Culture in context’ perspective and the culture conundrum*

The significance of this perspective is that it suggests that the conventional target of CLT, native speaker or native speaker like use of English, is not an appropriate goal for teachers and learners in Outer and Expanding circles. It also suggests that culture learning in language teaching has broader goals, beyond getting learners to act in ways reminiscent of native speakers of the target language. It suggests that learners also need to develop a consciousness of themselves, and of others who come from different cultures and experiences, together with an ability to see such differences in relative terms, without instant evaluation based on the norms of the home culture. It suggests that there is no universally correct method or approach to teaching, but different approaches, based on the particular needs of different contexts need to be devised. This has developed into an argument that a general awareness about the role and nature of cultures and the diversity within cultures needs to inform the teaching of English to students who are not likely to ever encounter or use it in context where it is a dominant language. Instead they need to be culturally aware in a general sense, to prepare them for the diversity they may encounter among the people who use English in their contexts, and to be ready for the intercultural negotiation involved in cross cultural communication. This literature also challenges the communicative orthodoxy by questioning whether expatriate native speakers of English necessarily offer the most appropriate attributes needed by teachers of English in Expanding circle contexts, and whether language by Inner circle native speakers is the only basis on which to judge learners’ use of English.

The discussion of the nature of teaching English in the Expanding circle has contributed to significant rethinking of the assumptions of communicative language teaching, and has informed recent literature in the Conventional perspective, particularly the exploration of teacher expertise. This process of exploration of communicative language teaching outside the Inner circle, and the ways that the cultures of the context of teaching, including the cultures that learners and teachers bring to the classroom, together with a more refined exploration of the learning needs of students in such contexts, provide useful insights in relation to the cultural dimensions of language teaching. It suggests that there are significant differences in
the goals of cultural learning for learners of English studying in different contexts, and hoping to become competent users of English in different contexts.

In relation to the culture conundrum, this realisation of the significance of the cultural context of teaching suggests that there is not going to be a universal, ‘one size fits all’ approach to the treatment of culture in TESOL. Instead, the nature of the cultural learning, and even the nature of the culture of English itself, that will be relevant to learners will be related to the context(s) in which learners expect to use English. The identification of different ‘circles’ of English teaching and the exploration of the dynamics of TESOL in different contexts provides a useful foundation for the integration of culture into TESOL. This indicates the need for informed culture and language teaching to take account of the context of use of the English and the cultural implications of the use of English in that context, in other words, to be context sensitive.

3.7 The Practical perspective: Classroom resources for teaching aspects of culture

Figure 3.6: The Practical perspective: Classroom resources for teaching culture

3.7.1 The Practical perspective

There is literature that presents ideas for teaching culture within TESOL, or language teaching in general. These resources are presented in different formats, which to some extent represent varying degrees of theorisation. The most theorised part of this literature is a number of frameworks for teaching culture. The other parts of this literature are collections of ideas for teaching culture, course books for the teaching of culture within an ESOL course, and other ideas that are presented independently of a broader body of work in journal articles or conference presentations.
3.7.2 Frameworks for teaching language and culture

These are a series of steps or procedures that have some principled basis as a means for teaching language and culture. These arise from some lengthier explorations, and to varying extent, involve some connection with other perspectives in the literature.

Fantini (1997) presents a framework for building cultural awareness on to language teaching. In any teaching cycle, he argues the following steps should be involved (although not necessarily in this sequence):

- Presentation of new material
- Practice of new material within a limited, controlled context
- Explanation or elucidation of the grammar involved (more so for adolescent/older learners) (could be deductive or inductive)
- Transposition and use of new material in freer, less controlled contexts
- Sociolinguistic exploration – interrelationship of contexts of use and appropriateness
- Culture Exploration – appropriate interactional strategies and learning about values, beliefs customs etc
- Intercultural exploration comparing and contrasting target culture with students’ native culture. (Fantini 1997: 40-42)

This represents an extension of the traditional ‘PPP’ (Presentation, Practice and Production) model of language teaching methodology (see Harmer 2001, 1998) with the addition of three cultural elements. These elements involve a focus on the appropriacy of language in particular contexts, culture in a broad sense, and an exploration of issues involved in moving between cultures and relating the target culture to the students’ home culture. This framework offers comprehensiveness and versatility in that it can be related to any aspect of language being taught, although a PPP methodology has been criticised for focusing more on the linguistic code than other aspects of communication (Harmer 1998).

Canagarajah offers another possible framework for a systematic exploration of cultural factors based on a critical approach to pedagogy (see below for a discussion on critical perspectives and theory). He presents this approach in the context of his analysis and critique of how Inner circle pedagogies are inappropriate to Outer circle contexts (Canagarajah 1999). He argues that even inappropriate texts can be appropriated and made to serve a critical enquiry, which is essentially cultural in nature. He uses a process of deconstruction of texts provided in language course...
books (ibid: 189). After conventional language comprehension and practice activities are completed, Canagarajah argues that a process of problematisation of the text can be implemented. In this stage the teacher and students ask certain questions about the text and its author(s), which can be productive in helping students to obtain critical cultural insights, as well as understanding the purposes of the authors of the text, and responding to these in ways that accord with the wishes of the teacher and learners. This involves asking questions like ‘What are the text book authors teaching about proper conversational style?’ ‘How does this compare with typical ways of talking in our society? What cultural factors influence us?’ ‘What is your reaction to the direct style of westerners?’ ‘How do others in our society perceive this?’ ‘How do our conversational styles appear to westerners?’ ‘Why does it appear like this to them?’ and ‘To what extent should we maintain our styles, to what extent accommodate to the conversational stylers of ‘native speakers of English?’ While he presents this in the specific context of Sri Lanka, the application of this procedure to other contexts seems feasible.

Another systematic framework is offered by the application of the research methodology of conversational analysis to teaching culture in the context of developing skills in conversational English (Barraja-Rohan 2000, Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1998). This approach is based on the view that conversation is more complex than just ‘speaking’. Everyday conversation involves many culturally based factors such as the pragmatics, the paralinguistic norms, the nature of the intentions of the participants and so on. They argue that these factors are often not considered in the teaching of speaking skills in ESL and EFL teaching. Instead, they argue these must be attended to, and socio cultural facets of conversation and linguistic features such as adjacency pairs should be explicitly taught. They propose an approach directed to learners of intermediate proficiency and above. This involves a number of phases. An awareness phase in which a model of an everyday conversation is presented on audio or videotape, is followed by a reflective phase where the students analyse the structure and features of the conversation presented. This leads to an experimental phase, in which the learners role play and implement the relevant language and an introspective phase, in which the learners reflect on how they felt acting in ways that were different from their usual or preferred ways of doing things.
This is followed by a cultural evaluation phase in which explicit comparison is made between what occurs in English and what is likely to happen in similar contexts in conversations in the learners’ first languages. This framework offers a means of providing some cultural input to spoken interaction in specific situations and cross-cultural comparisons for learners.

These frameworks offer the potential of systematic means of providing a focus on aspects of culture as well as integrating these with language. Because they have some degree of theoretical coherence, they offer teachers some coherent ways of connecting cultural and linguistic learning, and of making connections between these. However, adoption of the framework, means acceptance of the theoretical perspective on which they are based.

3.7.3 Collections of ideas for culture teaching activities

The main focus of much of this literature is on providing teachers with practical procedures and materials that they can use in classroom activities. The emphasis tends to be on specific classroom activities, with much less attention given to understanding the nature of culture and culture teaching, although there may be some brief presentation of an understanding of culture in the introductory section of the book.

Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) introduce their collection of ideas with a brief introductory discussion, which presents ‘elements of culture’ as Products (including literature, folklore, art, music and artefacts), Ideas (beliefs, values and institutions) and Behaviours, (customs, habits, dress, foods and leisure) and adapt a framework of goals of cross-cultural communication skills from Seelye (1988). As well as these goals, they present practical teaching principles to be incorporated in every lesson in which aspects of culture through language is being taught, and they encourage group work, sharing and discussing and interpretation of what is presented in comparison with the learners’ home cultures. They organise their collection of ideas into sections based on recognition of aspects of culture, examination of patterns of aspects of culture and language and exploration of values, attitudes and experiences (ibid 12-13). However the organisation of the book is such that each activity can easily be utilised independently of the rationale with which it is presented and organised. In
this context many of the activities appear to decontextualise teaching about culture, and have the potential to trivialise by focusing only on certain aspects of culture.

The collection of ideas presented in the collection edited by Fantini (1997) is organised around the stages of his framework. ‘Activities for Language Culture Exploration’ include simulations about culture itself, identification of cultural artefacts, sociofacts and mentifacts, unspoken assumptions about words, and nonverbal communication. They generally involve a contrived situation or artefacts provided by the teacher. ‘Activities for Sociolinguistic Exploration’ focus on the appropriacy of aspects of language in particular contexts and with different speakers including development of a sociocultural matrix, awareness of inappropriate language, relationships in conversations, choosing or avoiding topics in conversations, conversational overlap, vulgarity, politeness. These activities tend to involve consciousness raising and collection of data, or examples presented of native speaker use. The activities related to ‘Activities for Culture Exploration’ aim at raising cultural awareness (values, beliefs, attitudes, and to some extent artefacts) partly by focussing observation skills or elicited discussion. A number of resources are also utilised – segments of movies, episodes of sitcoms, cartoons, current affairs, pictures of homes in different parts of the world. The ‘Activities for Intercultural Exploration’ aim at increasing students’ sensitivities in relation to exploration of cross-cultural differences in a range of areas. Almost all involve explicit comparison of aspects of differences about cultures – or about procedures for exploring aspects of cultural differences or phenomena associated with intercultural communication (culture shock, miscommunication). Again, the framework presented offers some coherence to the approach, however, the way the ideas are presented means that the ideas are likely to be utilised eclectically, and the coherence provided by Fantini’s framework may be lost.

Gill and Cankova (2002) provides another collection of ideas for learners at low proficiency levels. These activities are aimed at learners at lower levels of proficiency. Culture is described as ‘everything related to the customs, institutions, achievements of a country, group, or community’ (Gill & Cankova 2002). But they go on to point out that when a second language learner wishes to communicate in the
second language they also wish to communicate something about their own culture, so they identify one of their aims as the ability for learners to talk about their own culture and background (ibid: 1-2). The lessons they provide are all intended to last for 45 minutes to 1 hour. They involve some language focus and a culture focus. They usually involve some comparison of the phenomenon in different culture, with some input and modelling of the relevant focus in English speaking cultures, with some sort of discussion or exploration as a concluding task. The topics covered include greetings, school life, food, weather and climate, health and fitness, celebrities.

These publications provide a range of interesting and stimulating ideas for teachers to use and apply in the classroom. They may well be effective tools for teaching specific aspects of English speaking culture if teachers can use and adapt them in ways that intersect with the needs of their students. They may also be effective in teaching general understandings about culture, or about raising awareness of the nature and significance of culture in communication. Given the diversity of teaching contexts and the creativity of teachers, it is likely that these activities will be used in varied ways. To some extent, their efficacy and impact is likely to be dependent on the extent to which the way they are used coincides with the learning needs and preferences of students.

However, while reasonably coherent frameworks and rationales are offered for these collections, there are potential problems that may arise from these resources. The way they are presented lends itself to an eclectic selection, which results in a series of engaging tasks, without any coherent selection and sequencing in terms of what is being taught or presented. To some extent the tasks run the risk of overgeneralising about cultures – even though some of the activities are directed to raising awareness of stereotyping, and there is potential for a limited selection which in fact focuses on more superficial aspects of culture (which may well be easier to teach) at the expense of the more complex and more profound (which may well be more difficult to teach.) While these activities set up contexts for meaningful language use, the extent to which they explicitly explore links between language and culture are quite limited; they tend to focus on culture in a way that is largely removed from language. Some of
these problems are of course expected in a collection of teaching ideas. There are also collections of techniques for teaching culture that are presented in more coherently.

3.7.4 ‘Course books’ on teaching about culture

These are North American publications written for students in US colleges and universities. They draw on cross-cultural communication as much as or more than ESL teaching, although they use many language teaching techniques.

Examples of such texts include Levine and Adelman (1982) and Schulman (1998). Both these texts serve a similar purpose, being presented as course books for ESL or English for Academic purposes classes, and employ similar approaches, despite different emphases and the eighteen-year time gap between them. They make use of readings on topics relevant to life and study in North America and use readings or extracts of longer texts to explore issues to do with interpersonal relationships, cultural conflict, aspects of communication, aspects of educational practices and expectations and cultural adjustment (Levine & Adelman 1982, Schulman 1998). In both texts a situation or an issue is related to a reading which is the basis for some further cultural exploration, related to some degree to the students’ own experiences. Both texts involve assumptions about what students will find relevant to their experience, and involve some ‘presentation’ of what the authors see as mainstream views of the topics they cover. They vary in ways that reflect a more complex understanding of the nature of culture, such as, in Schulman, exploiting several texts in each topic to present different perspectives on the topics covered (Schulman 1998).

These texts reflect a conventional understanding of culture. However, what they present as North American culture is middle class white American culture. Although to some extent Schulman at least illustrates diversity that might be encountered within the culture, this diversity tends to be presented in a rather stereotypical way.

3.7.5 Other ideas for culture teaching activities

The TESOL literature also contains specific suggestions of ideas for teachers in respect to teaching aspects of culture. These are usually presented in journal articles
intended for teachers, conference presentations, or sometimes a single chapters in the practice oriented sections of edited books addressing aspects of teaching culture. Such publications usually focus on either the needs of particular groups of learners, or on a particular technique for teaching culture. They usually offer a specific procedure for teachers, and sometimes provide extensive rationales, while in other cases little or no rationale is offered. Examples of this literature include Moder and Halleck (1995), who suggest group work tasks that explore the sources of ideas in some texts read by the class, as a means of exploring the western notions of plagiarism and expectations in higher study (Moder & Halleck 1995). Flowerdew (1998) makes suggestions as to how group work can be exploited in order to increase active participation in class by students from Confucian backgrounds. Other writers advocate use of specific materials, such as Tomlinson (2000), who advocates the use of poetry to teach about culture, or Washburn (2001) who advocates the use of television situation comedies, as they play with or breach cultural conventions, and so can be an effective means of exploring cultural norms of English speakers to learners. Conference presentations are often more focused on the task and less on the underlying theories. For example Honigsfield and Pompetti-Szul (2004) presented ten ideas for teaching aspects of culture in a 90-minute workshop, with emphasis given to the procedures to be followed, rather than what was being taught or a rationale for doing it that way (Honigsfield & Pompetti-Szul 2004).

3.7.6 The Practical perspective and the culture conundrum

On the whole, ideas for teaching and learning activities are generally presented to teachers in terms of what they teach about culture, rather than how they teach about culture. When they are presented in journal articles, they are usually preceded with a mini theory of culture, and they are presented as helping teachers to teach an aspect of culture deemed important by the rationale. When they are presented in collections, they are organised in terms of what dimension of culture they teach, according to the rationale on which the collection is organised.

While the practically oriented literature offers teachers some specific strategies, the insights it provides are limited. First, it makes specific suggestions of cultural content (partly because it is based on ideas experienced teachers have found to work), but
does not provide a theorised or principled way of identifying cultural content. Secondly, the methodology of teaching tends to arise from each specific task, and doesn’t provide teachers with a principled or theorised way of understanding the options open to them. This is largely true also of the frameworks, for although they provide a teaching sequence that has some theoretical basis, they require teachers to work within the framework, rather than enabling teachers to develop their own, or adapt.

This part of the literature demonstrates that experienced teachers can produce productive techniques for teaching aspects of culture, which may have varying degrees of theorisation.

3.8 Critical and Poststructuralist theory

‘Critical’ is a term often applied to theories and practices which seek to question and transform the status quo. These are often related to ‘post structuralist’ perspectives, which emphasise the socially constructed nature of ‘common sense’ understandings of social realities and social structures. The TESOL literature on culture contains two areas that can be described as ‘Critical’. The first is a body of work that is sometimes described as ‘Critical Applied Linguistics’. While this literature is not explicitly concerned with the teaching of culture, it argues that the teaching of TESOL has cultural consequences for the individuals who experience it, and on the societies in
which it is practiced. The second has a more theoretical orientation, in that it attempts to apply post structuralist understandings and theory to aspects of TESOL, including cultural teaching and cultural learning (Norton 2000, Norton Peirce 1995, and Miller 2003). This work is interested in applying understandings of post structural theory to TESOL.

3.8.1 Critical Applied Linguistics

These critiques of the practices of TESOL are based more on analyses that suggest that consequences of TESOL in certain contexts are contrary to the values and rhetoric espoused in the professional discourse.

Early examples of this literature were the questioning the nature of certain survival skills and cultural orientation courses for immigrant refugees in the United States (Auerbach 1986, Tollefson 1986), who found these programs offered limited options for learners, rather than empowering them. This was the result of a curriculum that focused on language that was ‘relevant’ for the learners working in low paid semi or unskilled occupations. Phillipson critiqued the ways in which the established practices of TESOL were complicit in the spread of English as an international language (Phillipson 1992). He argued that this is not a socially and politically neutral process, but is indeed an inherently political process in which certain interests are rewarded – including most notably the national governments of the Inner circle English speaking countries, and large business and institutional interests in these countries. This is at the expense, usually, of weaker and smaller groups in Outer and Expanding circle contexts. Similarly, Benesch argued that the pragmatic orientation of English for Academic purposes in fact resulted in a process where, despite professional rhetoric about the value of diversity, it worked towards moulding students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds to meet the norms and expectations of the white middle class valued in higher education in Inner circle societies (Benesch 1992).

Another strand of this work has been to confront and challenge TESOL in the way that it uses culture, and the rhetorical practices that arise from the use of cultural labels. This argument is based on a view that the idea of national cultures, and labels based on these, is overly simplistic and deterministic (Kubota 2004, Morgan 2004,
and Spack 1997) and ‘essentialises’ learners by focusing on only one aspect of their complex and multidimensional identities. This view also holds that traditional views of culture lead to stereotypical views of learners, as well as seeing ‘the other’ as inferior to the native English-speaking target. The conclusion of this argument is that TESOL should desist from using national cultures as a label and conceptual tool because of these negative consequences of its use. This represents a significant challenge in a profession that has increasingly come to see the notion of culture as central to its endeavours. However, these authors fail to identify the basis of alternative practices (Spack 1997). Harklau (1999) also argues that the way TESOL conceptualises and treats ‘culture’ and the cultural backgrounds of students is problematic. In the courses she investigated in a US college she argues there was oversimplification of national cultures in course materials, plus a lack of differentiation between long-term US residents and recently arrived ESL learners. This resulted in ESL classes in which teachers and course materials provided representations of what was supposedly their ‘home’ culture in ways the students could not identify with and found insulting, leading to increased alienation of the long-term US resident students. However, while this work identifies problems in TESOL practice, they do not provide well-developed proposals for alternative courses of action.

3.8.2 Post structural perspectives on cultural learning and teaching

To varying degrees, this body of work draws on post structural understandings and the critical theory of writers such as Bourdieu (1991) and Foucault, who reject the Enlightenment notion of an ‘objective’ truth, and emphasise discursive processes in the construction of what is taken to be ‘knowledge’, and the role of subjectivity in understanding. Rather than a single narrative or truth, truth can be seen as multiple, and different individuals and different groups have their own valid experiences and interpretations. When applied to culture in TESOL, this leads to an understanding of culture, not as a received ‘entity’ but as a pattern of constructed and contested discursive processes in which dominant groups represent the nature, value and attitudes of the group. Culture is conceived very much as a social phenomenon. From an individual perspective, national culture is one of a number of the social affiliations that contribute to the development of an individual identity, which changes as the
person moves between different social contexts in different aspects of their life. Learning a culture is more a process of socialisation into a new social environment, including developing an identity as a user of the target language, rather than learning about a body of information. Diversity within cultures and differences between cultures is emphasised over similarity and homogeneity within cultures. This literature also tends to argue for dropping such labelling practices, without offering or exploring alternative courses of action.

3.8.3 The use of post structural theory to investigate cultural learning and adaptation

Norton (2000) and also Miller (2003) utilise post structuralist understandings, in the sense of the subjective facets of culture, in their investigations of the movement of immigrants into Inner circle societies. The message is that the learners need to empower themselves in order to assert their rights to speak.

The studies of Miller (2003), Norton (2000) and Norton Peirce (1995) suggest that cultural factors in TESOL and the learning of English are related to the subjective self of the learner and their sense of identity, which is the result of a dialogic process between how they see themselves, and how they are seen by those they interact with. Norton documented the experiences of women in Canada and she concluded that learners found it difficult to speak and interact in English because of the cultural factors in Canadian society that contribute to their marginalisation, which limits their rights as much as their ability to ‘speak’. Teaching needs to help learners to develop a sense of themselves as users of English, and to encourage them to see the use of English as a means of projecting their sense of themselves in the society into which they have moved.

Canagarajah (1999) writes from a perspective of critical pedagogy, which seeks to challenge the imposition of English on learners in post-colonial societies of the Outer circle. He challenges Phillipson’s views of the nature of the processes by which English is imposed. Canagarajah illustrates how in his study of adult Tamil-speaking learners of English in northern Sri Lanka, the learners are anything but passive learners who quietly absorb the cultural messages of the English speaking centre. In
fact his learners take on the language and ways of English and use it for their own purposes, which are both different from the norms of their own community, and different from the norms of the English-speaking centre. The learners in fact appropriate English and make it theirs, giving it a form they wish to give it, based both on their home culture and interpretations they make of other users of English. He argues that such appropriation is part of the learning process where learners are strongly based in their home culture. As seen above, Canagarajah advocates learners in Outer and Expanding circles utilising the practices of critical pedagogy, which involves teachers and learners in explicit exploration and interrogation of the assumptions and intentions of texts emanating from the centre (Canagarajah 1999).

3.8.4 The Critical and Post-structural perspective and the culture conundrum

A result of the arguments of Phillipson and Benesch (see also Benesch 2001), and other critical writers, has been greater exploration of the impact and consequences of TESOL. One response has been for teachers to acknowledge that there are tensions in their work and to consciously acknowledge and manage them (Williams 1995). A recent work has identified three types of responses by teachers to the tensions involved in the interactions of the ‘global contact zones’ that ESL and foundation studies classrooms have become with increasing numbers of international students in higher education in Inner circle countries (Singh & Doherty 2004). The types of responses that emerge tend to avoid an explicit dialogue between different cultural perspectives, for varying reasons (for one, an exclusive focus on language, for another, an argument that learners must conform to the norms of where they are now, and for another an argument that the mainstream educational culture needs to value more what learners bring with them). Instead, a ‘facing up’ approach to pedagogy is advocated, in which different expectations and conventions are directly presented and explored, together with looking at ways in which examples of hybridity have been achieved and what they may look like. This literature and the responses it has evoked, suggest that teachers need to explore and reflect on the cultural implications of their work.

At a more theoretical level, there are differences in responses. For some, such as Spack and Morgan, TESOL should desist from using the concepts of culture and
labels based on national culture. But what they might be replaced with is unclear – although some suggest that use of ‘culture’ as verb and ‘cultural’, but not as a noun, would be appropriate. Atkinson suggests some sort of reconciliation of both traditional and post structural conceptions is possible. While his argument seems reasonable, the principles he presents remain vague. It is only in the work of Byram (see below) that any attempt has been made to combine the insights of both perspectives. Canagarajah is more optimistic that the insights of post structural theory can be built on more traditional practices to produce more effective approaches to the treatment of culture.

The significance of this perspective for the teaching of culture lies mainly in three general areas. The first is that it provides a warning that the teaching of culture, like any human activity, is one that has consequences. The critical and post structural perspective reminds teachers (and learners) that the teaching and learning of English relate to values, and will have potential benefits and harmful consequences for those involved, and perhaps others in their communities. This can significantly complicate the teaching of culture, but it also suggests that an important part of the teaching of culture and language should be some explicit reflection, and exploration of the values of those involved, and of the consequences of teaching in light of the values of the relevant participants.

The second consequence is an insight into culture as something far more dynamic and more dialogic than the ‘received’ notion of the Conventional perspective. Atkinson’s comment that these can be reconciled seems to point to a potentially more productive endeavour, rather than an outright rejection of conventional understandings in favour of something that is not precisely specified, even though that work has yet to be done.

The third consequence is the insight into the processes and subjectivities of identity formation revealed by work such as that of Norton (2000), Norton Peirce (1995) and Miller (2003). For teaching, this is a reminder that an informed approach to the teaching of culture must be conscious of the subjectivity of learners, and be aware that part of what the teaching of language and culture is doing is the development of a sense of identity as a learner of English.
At a more specific level, as we have already seen in dealing with frameworks for teaching culture, Canagarajah’s work within this perspective illustrates that this perspective can generate a principled classroom procedure for teaching culture for teachers who can either step into the theoretical perspective sufficiently to utilise it or adapt it.

3.9 Sociocultural Theory

Figure 3.8: The Sociocultural perspective

3.9.1 The Sociocultural perspective

A recent development has been the application of sociocultural theory to the teaching of culture within language teaching and TESOL. Sociocultural theory is based on the theories of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. In this perspective, learning is seen as occurring when a learner is assisted in meaningful and purposeful interaction, to the point when she or he is ultimately able to perform the interaction autonomously. Learning is seen as moving from an external social plane to an internal psychological plane (Lantolf 1999). The area in which the learning is taking place on the social plane is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Learners and the others who assist them with their learning don’t come to this endeavour with inherent attributes, rather they begin this process with their prior social and learning experience. So their learning is historical, in the sense that the previous experiences of those involve shape their perceptions and their understanding of what they are doing at the present. Some writing from this perspective accepts more conventional conceptions of culture to some extent (for example Lantolf 1999), while others (such
as Hall 2002) reject the Conventional perspective for reasons similar to those put forward by the post structuralists.

Kramsch (1993) illustrates the understanding of culture that arises from this perspective. She argues that language teachers must understand culture less as homogeneities within cultural groups and as commonality between cultures. Instead they should deal with diversity within cultural groups and engage with culture as difference between groups of people. She sees understanding the contexts of incidences of language use as crucial to understanding the meanings of a text, and sees the use of a language by learners of diverse cultural backgrounds as a practice that both reflects and in turn reshapes the culture of the language, rather than only being dependent on it. She argues that communicative language teaching has concentrated too much on the conveying of messages, and not enough on communicating in the ways speakers of language do, and about the things they communicate about. In order for language learners to gain insights into texts, they need to understand both the cultural frame of the producer of the text, and their own cultural frame, which leads them to interpret texts and react to them in the ways they do. There needs to be a ‘sphere of interculturality’ in language teaching in which the differences between cultures are explored. This leads to an emphasis of the boundaries, the points at which there are differences between cultures, rather than points of similarity. This involves approaches to teaching that explore the perspectives of cultural ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, which leads to learners coming to understand ‘third places’ that are both inside and outside their native cultures and the target culture they are learning.

In the Sociocultural perspective, culture is a more amorphous phenomenon than in the Conventional perspective. It is not located in social groups, nor the individual mind, but in the dialogue between individuals. Identity is fluid and varies from context to context and from interaction to interaction. But also, the history of the individual and the groups they live among is obviously significant, as the nature of past experience, and the environment in which it has taken place, is going to influence the perceptions, dispositions, expectations as well as the resources an individual brings to new interactions.
From this perspective, the learning of culture is much more a process of socialisation into the use of language than an activation of internal psychological mechanisms. This is effected through various mediational mechanisms, of which language is one, that are utilised and in turn mastered, in order for learners to gain control. Learners learn through being guided and assisted in a range of different interactional activities by their mentors, and through their own collaboration. They come to see regular patterns within and across activities, and make progress as they become more in control in a wider range of contexts and types of interactions.

Tseng (2002) provides a practical application of Sociocultural theory. She proposes a number of classroom activities as classroom techniques for teaching aspects of culture. These techniques use cultural differences as a source of what she calls ‘productive tension’ (ibid: 20).

3.9.2 The Sociocultural perspective and the culture conundrum

Like post structural theory, sociocultural theory offers a less structural, more dynamic and abstracted understanding of culture, as a phenomenon that is both historically constructed, both by the individual and the society. It involves a much more specific learning theory than other perspectives. It places culture in a new ‘location’ which is not in the learner’s background, nor is it an internal attribute of the learner. Rather, culture is manifest in the interactions in which an individual is involved. The historical nature of the learner’s previous experience in interaction in different social and contexts sets up different patterns of dispositions among individuals. Learning to operate in a new linguistic and cultural environment means understanding the practices of the new environment and adapting existing predispositions. Teaching needs to provide opportunities for this. It therefore reinforces the argument, evident in other parts of the literature, for conscious exploration of the learner’s engagement with and reaction to the cultural context of the new language, in a way that is conscious and meaningful for the learner.

Sociocultural learning theory has become quite influential in general educational discussion about the nature of teaching and learning. However, as it is largely
focussed on the process of learning it has little to say on what should constitute the content of cultural learning in TESOL, other than to say it should involve exploration of the learners’ social environment.

3.10 The Perspective of Intercultural Language Teaching

Figure 3.9: The Perspective of Intercultural Language Teaching

3.10.1 The Intercultural Language Teaching perspective (ILT)

This perspective has arisen from work by Byram and associates (Buttjes & Byram 1991, Byram & Morgan, 1994, Byram 1997) which was initially focused on modern language teaching in Europe, but which has been applied more recently to TESOL (Corbett 2003). A number of Australian writers have been productive in exploration of ILT. While these writers have focused more on the teaching of languages other than English (Liddicoat 1999, Liddicoat et al 2003,) some of this work also explicitly addresses TESOL (for example Barraja-Rohan 2003, Corbett 2003, Williams 2003). The disciplines that have influenced this approach are more humanistic, with cultural and literary studies being drawn on more than anthropology, although many of the approaches and techniques advocated are familiar in the Conventional perspective literature. ILT is not to be confused or equated with intercultural or cross cultural communication or training, but is a specific approach to language teaching which argues that communicative language teaching and its conceptualisation of culture has not been sufficiently systematic nor adequate.
Like the rest of the literature, ILT accepts the interconnection between language and culture. However, work within this perspective is more concerned with developing an explicit understanding of the nature of cultural learning, and with developing a means by which the elements of culture can be identified and explicitly dealt with in language teaching.

ILT claims that the failure of communicative language teaching to systematically incorporate culture and language teaching is a fundamental weakness (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999). But, communicative language teaching is not rejected out of hand. ILT claims to build on and enhance communicative teaching, to develop an effective approach to the teaching of language and culture.

The native speaker target of language learning is rejected on the grounds that such a conception has generally been in narrow terms of a monolingual native speaker which does not present an insight into the nature of the proficient bilingual speaker (Byram 1997, Corbett 2003, Crozet & Liddicoat 1999, Crozet et al 1999, Kramsch 1998, Liddicoat et al 1999, Lo Bianco et al 1999). Others whose work is either within this paradigm, or in some ways consistent with it, include Cortazzi & Jin (1996, 1999) and in a sense Fantini’s (1997) process framework. While the precise terminology of the components of ILT varies slightly from author to author, the dimensions of the approach are explained by Crozet, Liddicoat and Lo Bianco (1999) as:

- the teaching of the linguaculture (which is the totality of linguistic and cultural learning) involved in being able to use a language effectively;
- the comparison of the learner’s first language and culture and the target language and culture;
- intercultural exploration, which involves the exploration of the differing world views of different cultures and can involve a mediation between the culture of the learner and the target culture (Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco 1999: 12-13.).

This perspective is cognisant of both conventional and post structural perspectives, and argues that it incorporates both. Byram (1997) accepts that conventional conceptions of culture in language teaching provide insights, but also acknowledges the validity of critiques arising from post structural thought, and accepts the need to acknowledge the tenuousness of generalisations about a culture, the diversity that exists within cultures and the dynamic nature of cultures.
Kramsch’s notion of language learners coming to occupy a cultural ‘third place’ and cultural learning as the exploration of the boundaries, or points of difference between the learners’ home culture(s) and the target culture have been accepted and explored in considering the nature of the competence of bilingual language learners.

The goal of language teaching in ILT is more transformative of the learner, as language teaching should help learners:

…to transcend their singular world view through the learning of a foreign ‘linguaculture’ – leading them to intercultural competence, which is defined … as someone who can operate their language skills and knowledge to manage interaction across cultural boundaries to anticipate misunderstandings caused by differences. (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999: 115).

Corbett expresses it as akin to the skills possessed by diplomats:

Intercultural communicative competence includes the ability to understand the language and behaviours of the target community and to explain it to members of the ‘home’ community – and vice versa. In other words, an intercultural approach trains learners to be ‘diplomats’, able to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding. (Corbett 2003: 2).

He acknowledges the paradox of intercultural learners who know more about cultural ‘border crossing’ yet are less proficient speakers of the target language than native speakers when he says ‘..intercultural learners are both less and more skilled than a monolingual native speaker.’ (ibid: 39).

Work in ILT has covered a number of dimensions of language teaching. Some of this is more theoretical in focus, while some work is more focused on aspects of classroom teaching utilising the broader conceptual framework of ILT.

Some of the more theoretical work includes Byram’s (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which includes a number of dimensions of competence (Savoirs) in which Interculturally competent language users need to develop competence, that augment the types of competence addressed by conceptual models of linguistic competence, such as those of Canale & Swain (1980) or Bachman (1990). This model is discussed further in Chapter 4. It specifies a number of different levels, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and draws on a wide range of concepts
in the literature, including aspects of more traditional conventions of culture, together with aspects of post structuralist understandings of culture as patterns of discursive construction. So intercultural competence is added to the other types of competence (such as grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence) as both a dimension of communicative competence and a goal of language teaching. Byram (ibid) acknowledges the additional complexity this brings to the task, and argues that the language classroom is not the only site of intercultural learning. Classrooms can prepare students for their own independent learning or fieldwork opportunities.

Another more theoretically oriented framework is Crozet & Liddicoat’s conceptualisation of points of connection between levels of language and levels of culture (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999). These range from the very general to the very specific, moving from a world knowledge-culture in context; pragmatic norms-culture within shorter units of text; grammar, lexicon, prosody etc., culture in linguistics structures, and so on. This scheme provides a means for teachers to connect elements of culture with linguistic learning in the design of culturally conscious language teaching and is explored in more length in Chapter 4.

Byram argues that the context of teaching is a crucial determinant of what is to be taught as intercultural competence. Factors that need to be considered in planning a cultural curriculum for language learners include the geopolitical context of learning, institutional aspects of the learning environment, developmental factors and the objectives that are identified. The specifics of the level of ICC to be achieved need to reflect these and the situations in which learners are likely to be involved (Byram 1997). The balance between the elements of ICC that need to be developed and taught in different contexts will vary. He argues that cultural learning does not follow a linear pattern, and draws an analogy with a jigsaw puzzle, arguing that what is taught will become like the outer edge of the frame of the puzzle, from which the process of working on other sections can begin. He points out that the jigsaw puzzle may never be fully completed (Byram 1997: 80-81).
The Methods for teaching culture in ILT are generally recognisable from other parts of the literature on applied linguistics, although some teaching ideas are given more detail and structure within an intercultural framework. Familiar techniques such as critical incidents are, and the types of activities presented in collections such as Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) are endorsed, but with a warning of the dangers of unprincipled eclecticism (Byram 1997). Corbett provides a more comprehensive approach to teaching spoken English involving explicit exploration of the structure and purpose of conversations, and the intentions of the participants. Many of the techniques advocated by Corbett draw on techniques that are common in the communicative approaches. This is echoed in Barraja-Rohan’s advocacy of conversational analysis as a tool for language teaching. This involves comparison between what happens in the target language culture and the learner’s first language. Corbett argues that genre based approaches have a lot to offer in relation to teaching written language, provided that genre is not reduced only to a linguistic ‘form’ and an exploration of the cultural dimensions of the text in the contexts of its production and interpretation are explored. (Corbett 2003)

Byram (1997) advocates the development of an understanding of culture as a ‘method’, rather than knowledge alone, so that a society is not seen only in terms of its dominant group, This means that learners come to see themselves as social actors engaging with other actors, rather than imitators or inferior imitations of native speakers (Byram 1997). Corbett argues that cultural awareness activities can involve systematic observation and understanding followed by intercultural mediation and or imitation (Corbett 2003). This involves culture general learning, so that learners develop general understandings about culture and cultural factors in intercultural communication, as well as culture-specific learning. This can be achieved through any techniques that involve learners in exploration of cultural factors involved in communication, including the types of activities found in other parts of the literature, such as in the Practical perspective and the Conventional perspective.

Cortazzi and Jin have applied the principles of ILT to the teaching of English in Expanding Circle contexts such as China. In their work, they emphasis the importance of learners relating to the culture of English as it is likely to be
encountered in the context in which it is learned, and how native speaking teachers can interact with Chinese learners to develop an intercultural understanding (Cortazzi & Jin 1996), and the issues involved in building development of Intercultural awareness in English language teaching course books and resources (Cortazzi & Jin 1999).

Through identification of the elements of culture, ILT sees the assessment of cultural learning as feasible. Byram argues that it is possible to assess knowledge, attitudes and skills by means of a variety of conventional approaches to assessment including tests, portfolios, continuous assessment, self assessment, and reflection (depending on what is being assessed) (Byram 1997). But Byram also points out that a blind use of native speaker norms as the basis of criteria is to be avoided:

What is at issue here is that native speakers do not necessarily accept that intercultural speakers should adopt and imitate conventions of interaction (particularly those which are non-verbal) which are the norm for their group. The intercultural speaker too may not wish to adopt conventions which engage their whole personality and cultural identity, again particularly the non-verbal conventions which are often unconscious. They may be able to accept intellectually that a particular gesture is a norm of greeting, but resist doing it themselves because it is different from their own non-verbal behaviour. For example, the convention of men greeting each other by kissing on both cheeks is, for members of some cultures, breaking a taboo on male-male physical contact. Such taboos are difficult to overcome because they are part of early socialisation. The ability of the successful intercultural speaker is to find a modus vivendi satisfactory to them and their interlocutors (Byram 1997: 94).

He points out that the adoption of native speaker norms are particularly inappropriate as the only basis of assessment in contexts where English is used as an international lingua franca. Corbett (2003) argues that adding assessments of ICC to traditional linguistic assessment is quite feasible, and suggests that assessments of a variety of types of knowledge are preferable to assessment of a single measure. He suggests that tasks that can be useful assessment tasks include identifying genres, selecting appropriate language for certain situations, transformation and rewriting tasks (eg writing as another genre), reflective essays, role plays/simulations (in which learners take certain responsibilities, such as maintaining conversation, using formal and informal styles) can be used to elicit cultural knowledge. Projects and portfolios can
also be used to assess the nature and depth of learners’ intercultural communicative competence.

A recent study by FitzGerald (2003) illustrates the potential of ILT as framework for research as well as provider of a conceptual basis for teaching. FitzGerald studied a number of cultural aspects of cross-cultural communication among adult learners of ESL in Australia. She made recordings of groups of ESL learners of various diverse cultural backgrounds (including some native speakers of English) completing various problem-solving tasks. She analysed the data on a number of levels: the values that motivated their points of view and the arguments they used to justify their opinions, the styles of communication, the turn taking patterns and distribution of the talk and the extent and manner in which assertiveness and conflict were presented and handled by different individuals. The learners were involved in a program that explicitly taught about cross-cultural communication during the period they were involved in the discussions. She found marked differences between different cultural groups in all these aspects of the data. In some cases the values reflected a collectivist orientation. The values revealed in the discussions were compared to the values and attitudes participants revealed on self-reporting instruments, which elicited more general cultural values. This was used to consider how general cultural values influence particular points of view and patterns of interaction in the discussions. The data also reveal how cultural differences can hinder a consensus from emerging from a group, and how, when differences are addressed explicitly, or when members of a group are familiar with each other, cultural differences can lead to richer and more productive solutions being found. FitzGerald found that her subjects used different rhetorical structures (for example, presenting the main point followed by reasons, or slowly building up to the point), which did interfere with communication in some instances – especially where participants slowly build up to the main point (they were seen as either off the point, or cut off before they could make their point). She found that a variety of contextual, cultural and individual factors affected the nature of the interactions. In some cases, predictions made by the literature were contradicted, such as when learners from ‘collectivist oriented’ cultures behaved in individually quite forceful ways. She also found evidence of learners adopting what they perceived to be ‘mainstream Australian’ approaches to their interactions.
FitzGerald (ibid.) concludes that while the learners often adopted styles and practices in their communication that conformed to what they saw as ‘good’ use of English in Australia, they were also influenced by the communication practices of their first language and culture, which caused some miscommunication, but were overwhelmingly effective in communication. They were aware of differences in their communication styles, were tolerant and respectful towards these differences, and were able to accommodate them. To some extent they did this without drawing on the training they were given, but in other places it was evident the training program helped the learners to deal with some aspects of cultural differences.

FitzGerald’s study illustrates the capacity of ILT to identify aspects of cultural teaching and how teachers can adopt teaching practices based on a deeper understanding of Intercultural Communicative Competence that is both richer than a native speaker norm, and which can enable learners to explore their reactions to the target culture, and explore their own ways of interacting with that culture based on a bilingual identity. This is a contrast with the difficulties identified by Stern just over a decade earlier, mentioned earlier in this Chapter. Fitzgerald also makes a strong argument for explicit culture learning and an approach based on problem solving using critical incidents, which is a well-established curriculum option in intercultural training courses.

3.10.2 Intercultural Language Teaching and the culture conundrum

ILT has an openness and breadth of vision that is not so evident in other perspectives. It is more of a synthesising approach than the other perspectives. It is accepting of insights provided by a number of perspectives (especially the Conventional, Practical and Sociocultural perspectives), and it is sensitive to the variable contexts in which teaching takes place. In this sense it builds on some of the insights of other perspectives. It also extends some, such as the way it extends the notion of the learners’ comparisons between aspects of their home cultures and the target culture to the development of an intercultural awareness. The arguments for teaching towards a bilingual, intercultural target, rather than a native speaker target are powerful. The addition of conceptual schemes for integrating the teaching of language and culture
provides more specific guidance for teachers in terms of what they should be striving for in an integration of language with culture, which other perspectives fail to identify. It has also begun to attempt to identify bases for the design of cultural syllabi and principled ways of discussing methodological options for teaching culture in language teaching.

However, ILT adds complexity to an already complex multidimensional language curriculum, and it seems difficult to envisage how all dimensions of both culture and language can be consciously mapped and recorded all the time in the course of teaching. This is a significant aspect of the culture conundrum for teachers, who face the problem of fitting the teaching of a vast, complex and nebulous phenomenon into specific periods of limited time. Nonetheless, the identification of the changing needs of different contexts allows teachers to be reflective and sensitive to the different cultural learning needs of different learners in different contexts; addressing concerns of the Culture in Context perspective. It provides a different theoretical context and emphasis. However, much of its conceptualisation is at a general level, which again poses teachers with the problem of having to make a significant leap from broad, general concepts to the specifics of planning a curriculum and implementing lessons. Some work, such as that of Cortazzi & Jin (1996, 1999) does provide some more specific exemplification of how these principles can be applied in particular Expanding circle contexts, and some of the issues that arise. FitzGerald’s (2003) work also illustrates how problem-solving tasks may provide a basis for a cultural syllabus, and how attention to interactional strategies can contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence. However, despite the rich and potentially useful conceptual schemes relating to many of the significant issues teachers face in cultural teaching, there are still gaps that need to be bridged by teachers seeking to utilise its insights.

3.11 The literature and the culture conundrum of TESOL

Paige et al.’s (1999) comprehensive review of the place of culture in language teaching and TESOL has already been referred to. Their study reached conclusions based on a comprehensive review of both empirical and theoretical studies, and studies from North America, Europe and other parts of the English speaking world
such as Australia. They found considerable lack of clarity, uncertainty in findings, and a limited and problematic nature of much of the research they reviewed. They found that while foreign language teachers believed learning about the way of life of another group of people was a major goal of language learning, they were uncertain about what they should be teaching as culture. They found that instructional materials and assessment of cultural learning focused on the culture specific, rather than culture general learning, and on the superficial (cultural knowledge) rather than the profound (values and attitudes).

This review of culture in the TESOL literature found a similar picture. However, some themes do emerge. First, there are multiple perspectives in the literature. Second, there is virtually unanimity from all perspectives in relation to the interconnectedness between language and culture. Some of the literature has taken a more holistic approach to the teaching of culture, tending to integrate it with elements of language. Where the Conventional perspective literature has looked explicitly at culture, it has either taken a broad view of culture and had difficulty operationalising it for teaching purposes, or utilised teaching procedures without integrating them into a more coherent conceptual framework. Alternatively, aspects of culture have been integrated within communicative teaching, with an implication that if language is dealt with in a meaningful way, cultural learning will take place; because it is there in the way that language use is modelled in context. In other words, at least in the Conventional perspective, in spite of sophisticated understandings about culture and its connections with language there is no coherent approach with regard to the teaching of culture.

This mirrors the attitudes and understandings of the teachers in the study reported in Chapter 2. Given the experience of the teachers, it is reasonable to conclude that they have had exposure to the literature from within the conventional perspective at least as part of their professional training and the discourse of the profession. The conventional literature it would seem, may well have played a role in shaping the teachers’ perceptions, and therefore of contributing to the culture conundrum. Do the other perspectives offer some way out of this conundrum, and offer the potential of offering a resolution of the culture conundrum, in the form of a coherent
approach to the teaching of culture? The different perspectives offer some potential. There is a clearer choice between two types of perspectives. There are perspectives that treat language and culture in a holistic, integrated manner (the Post structural and the Sociocultural perspectives), and those which are prepared to separate cultural and linguistic factors for the purposes of analysis and exploration. While the ‘integrating perspectives’ provide additional insight into the nature of culture, they have not yet provided a basis for a more detailed specification of cultural content in language teaching. They are limited in the extent to which they provide insight into the nature of cultural learning. However, the Post structural perspective offers ‘identity’ as a useful category to pursue, while the Sociocultural perspective identifies the significance of the first culture as part of the historical formation of individual learners. Both provide insights into the nature of learning process that have the potential to be productive, if combined with an informed understanding of what needs to be taught and learned.

On the other hand, the perspectives that are prepared to deal with culture in a more analytic manner have more to offer in terms of identifying the nature of culture learning. However, the Conventional perspective has not adequately confined and contained the concept of culture, and the Practical perspective offers an untheorised, fragmentary set of teaching ideas. SFL has focused on language more than culture. ILT remains as the perspective offering considerable potential in that it offers a breadth that is missing in other perspectives. It has the capacity to accommodate the insights offered by the Post structural and Sociocultural perspectives, and to adopt a more explicit and analytical approach to decision-making and management of cultural teaching and learning in the language curriculum. The way that it has potential to do this has been explored in some of the ILT literature (Byram 1997, Crozet & Liddicoat 1999, Corbett 2003, Liddicoat et al 2003). The ways that some of the concepts of ILT have potential to provide starting points for resolution of the culture conundrum will be considered in Chapter 4. However, while it offers many valuable insights, these remain focused on particular aspects of culture and language teaching. While some significant areas of teaching are addressed and potentially useful principles have been suggested, such as the identification of elements of intercultural communicative competence and points of connection between language and culture, the problem
remains as to just how these can guide teachers in the day to day endeavour of teaching culture in the TESOL classroom.

Before exploring how ILT may assist in resolving the culture conundrum, the outcome of this review of the literature needs to be considered. As well as finding the presence of the culture conundrum in the TESOL literature, and speculating that this may have contributed to its manifestation in the teachers survey data reported in Chapter 2, the review has identified ILT as offering a broad perspective that appears capable of providing the basis of a resolution of the culture problem. This will be explored further in Chapter 4.

It is worth returning here to the questions asked at the beginning of the Chapter.

*How may the place of culture in language teaching (TESOL) best be understood?*

*What does its literature say on the subject?*

The answer to these questions can be summarised as follows:

1. The literature on culture in TESOL includes competing and different perspectives with only limited dialogue between them. There is a Conventional perspective that builds on anthropologically derived understandings of culture as the everyday patterns of life of communities and techniques from Intercultural communication for exploring intercultural differences. In the last decade this perspective has been critiqued as invalid or inadequate, or rejected from several different perspectives. This perspective has been interconnected with the communicative orthodoxy that language and culture are closely interconnected, that learning a language involves being familiar with what is considered ‘the culture’ of the language, and that language and culture can be taught if language is dealt with in a meaningful context. The critiques from other perspectives make one or all of the following points:
   - the Conventional perspective has led to an inappropriate cultural imposition on second language learners by aiming at the norms of native speaking members of the target language speech community;
• the Conventional perspective adopts an overly simplistic view of culture on one level, which is not cognisant of the constructed, discursive and contested nature of cultures, and over emphasises national and ethnic dimensions of culture at the expense of other aspects of identity. It ignores more subjective elements, and in seeing cultures as relatively homogenous ignores hybrid cultures and blending of cultures, and tends to essentialise both the culture of learners and the target culture, leading to and perpetuating disempowering practices. On another level, by taking an anthropological view, it constructs culture as a whole system, which is unmanageable for teachers;
• the Conventional perspective sees culture as a fixed body of understanding, and ignores the nature of culture as constructed in interaction based on the lived histories of the individuals involved, and the transformative effect of interaction on culture;
• Communicative Language Teaching has failed to develop a systematic approach to the teaching of culture and language.

Two of the alternate perspectives, Post structural theory, and Sociocultural theory, provide some perceptive and intriguing insights missed by the Conventional perspective, but either reject the insights of the Conventional perspective, or are undecided on the relationships between insights derived from Conventional approaches and their own insights. Attempts to reconcile these have been limited and inadequate, and the extent to which these perspectives can inform teaching is not yet adequately resolved. The Revisionist literature is reactive, rather than actively exploring productive new ways of understanding culture and its teaching. ILT provides more extensive conceptualisation of a systematic integration of language and culture teaching, and to some extent incorporates insights from post structural perspectives, but on the whole, involves an extensive conceptual framework, and assumes an extended period of language learning.

There has been limited dialogue between these perspectives, indeed, only limited acknowledgment of different perspectives. This acknowledgment is often made in the context of rejection of the traditional perspective. Rejection of aspects of the traditional perspective is often based on an ‘essentialised’ representation of that
perspective. Sustained dialogue and debate would appear to enable clarification of issues that could be useful theoretically, and for the purposes of informing teaching. But to date this opportunity has not arisen.

2. The conceptualisation of culture remains inadequate, incomplete and insufficient for the development of a coherent, informed and systematic approach to the teaching culture within TESOL. A conceptualisation of culture as a vast, multidimensional phenomenon of human societies, with profound effect on individuals that interacts with language in communication is an essential part of language teaching, but it has not yet been (and may never be) adequately conceptualised for language teaching in the way that language has been.

However, the literature, including the insights of different perspectives, exhibits increasing sophistication in understanding the nature of culture in many dimensions, including its dynamic nature, its constructed and discursive nature, its subjective elements, and the dimensions of cultural differences, as well as the nature of diversity within cultures.

3. There is some convergence in the literature, across different perspectives, towards an understanding of what is involved in cultural learning as a notion of ‘intercultural learning’. This term has been frequently used in recent years. However, within different perspectives in the literature it can have rather different meanings. For instance it can mean the nature of a cross cultural interaction, or an understanding of oneself or individuals as people whose lived experience and competence spans more than one culture, or the integration of elements of different cultures in a classroom, a conversation or a text. This partially reflects the different starting points, focus and concerns of the different perspectives. But it also raises the possibility of confusion around a widely used term meaning different things to different people, to some extent replicating the experience of ‘communicative language teaching’, which can mean rather different things in different contexts.

The nature of the cultural learning task has been conceptualised differently in the literature as akin to a psycholinguistic process (the individual’s internalisation of
elements of a new culture), a process of socialisation, or a critical encounter that both enhances and relies on self-awareness in the learner. Yet how such different conceptions may differ in their consequences, and the extent to which they can be coherently reconciled to provide a productive and informed basis for teaching remains to be explored.

4. The literature suggests that the nature of cultural learning is significantly different in different societal, linguistic and educational contexts. The differing nature of intercultural competence in the different contexts of the Inner, Outer and Expanding circles is evident in the literature, and the literature suggests that elements of learners’ motivations and purposes for learning, and their prior experiences need to be taken into account in considering the nature of their cultural learning. However, while there have been explorations of some types of contexts, especially the Expanding circle and the teaching of ‘English as an International language’ (such as McKay 2002), some of the significant parameters that shape the dynamics of different contexts can be identified.

5. The problem of how culture can be dealt with in curriculum and syllabus design remains. Although the close connection between language and culture is widely acknowledged, this has not been widely converted into principles that can inform a systematic incorporation of culture into a language syllabus. The work of Intercultural language teaching has made most progress in this dimension, but the problem of bases for the coherent and manageable integration of language and culture into course design, and assessment, remains. To some extent this depends on an ability to specify cultural learning goals as well as language learning goals, and how to plan and manage attention to diverse elements of cultural learning as well as to learning the diverse elements of the linguistic system, not to mention finding valid, reliable and sensitive means of assessing such learning.

The concept of culture-general learning and culture-specific learning is a useful distinction and a necessary part of this process is an exploration of how they relate to each other as well as how they can be related to language learning and learning how to learn skills in language education. The concept of culture-general learning has
potential in contexts where learners are from mixed cultural groups, such as many of the classes taught by the teachers who were surveyed in Chapter 2. The idea of culture-general understanding helps identify points of comparison between different cultures.

6. The literature provides many practical ideas for teaching about culture or teaching elements of culture which have intuitive appeal, or whose efficacy is claimed by their authors. These cover a wide range of dimension of culture, include the apparently trivial and concrete, to the more profound and subtle, and some more recent ideas also address elements of subjectivity and perception. These usually involve some sort of exploration of the phenomenon by learners, and exploration of comparison and contrasts between the learner’s home culture and the target culture. However, they also exhibit the following problems, to varying degrees:

- cultural elements are often removed from language, and linguistic connections with the object of attention are often absent or limited;
- many are based on ‘eccentric’ understandings or mini-theories of culture that are not widely shared or understood, or which are based in different or selective interpretations of differing broad theories of the nature of culture;
- some of these ideas arise from a particular theoretical perspective, such as critical pedagogy, which is not necessarily widely understood or accepted by teachers;
- even where they provide some systematic means of connection between language and culture they still need to be related to overall course and curriculum design.

7. The literature reveals that there is potential for an unreflective and uncritical approach to TESOL resulting in consequences that are contrary to the espoused values of the professional rhetoric. Many of these consequences have a cultural dimension, and may involve either pressures for immigrants to shed their cultural identity and adopt the norms of native speakers of English in order to be empowered in their new society, or for the cultural norms of English speaking countries to intrude on and displace the cultural values and practices of societies in the Outer and Expanding circles. The literature suggests that TESOL teachers are vital elements in such processes, yet that they may bring very different attributes and understandings to
their role, depending on the nature of their linguistic inheritance, and the nature of their affiliation with English, and the variety or varieties of English they speak.

There are ways in which the TESOL literature on culture is a fragmented and fragmentary literature. The ways in which it can inform the practice of TESOL is limited at present. In such a situation teachers are given only partial (and perhaps potentially misleading) guidance. Nonetheless, significant insights arise from the literature. They arise from different perspectives, for no particular perspective within the literature is sufficiently well developed to be able to claim to yet provide an informed and comprehensive base for a systematic approach to the treatment of culture within TESOL. Despite these limitations, there is considerable insight and understanding about theoretical and practical aspects of culture and language teaching. However, there is some need to synthesise what appear to be useful insights from this literature.

This review suggests that the TESOL Literature is limited in its ability to inform the practice of teachers in relation to the teaching of culture in the following ways:

- the literature hasn’t been able to conceptualise ‘culture’ in ‘operational’ terms for teachers;
- by looking at broad understandings of culture derived from anthropology, the literature has not been able to adequately relate culture to language, nor conceptualise the ‘culture of English’ as it is realised in different societal contexts;
- as a result, it has not been possible to systematically identify approaches to dealing with culture in the curriculum;
- a principled methodology for teaching culture, which goes beyond specific techniques has not been developed.

So, despite the extensive range of the literature, and the richness of many of the ideas and studies it presents, teachers are left to find their own way. The literature fails to provide teachers with the understandings and guidance they need in order to systematically integrate the teaching culture into their teaching of language in an informed and principled manner.
ILT has already been identified as appearing to offer some potential in terms of finding a way out of the culture conundrum, in a way that allows it to integrate some of the valuable insights from a number of different perspectives. The ways in which this may be possible will be explored in Chapter 4.

In terms of the original design for this research, this review was intended to provide a conceptual basis for the professional development activity that would form the second phase of the research. In the reformulation of the study, the focus of the professional development activity needs to be framed in terms of finding a way out of the ‘culture conundrum’. This involves finding a way in which the complex, and often highly abstract theoretical perspectives on culture and its teaching can be operationalised in the design of courses and techniques and procedures in the classroom. The identification of the starting point for the design of such professional development is dependent on drawing together the insights of the different perspectives, and considering how ILT may provide an organisational framework. This is the focus of Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Developing a pragmatic understanding of culture for TESOL

4.1 The basis of the practical knowledge of teachers

The previous chapter revealed that despite the extent of the literature on culture in TESOL, it has only a limited ability to clearly inform practice. The TESOL literature reflects and contributes to the culture conundrum by failing to make adequate connections between theoretical understanding and exploration about the place of culture in TESOL, and practice in relation to the practice of dealing with culture in the work of TESOL practitioners. Nonetheless, from the differing perspectives and points of focus in the literature, there are insights that have potential in terms of identifying a starting point for the development of a more systematic approach to teaching culture in TESOL, based on theoretical understandings and the needs of practitioners. This chapter attempts to bring together and make explicit some of these possibilities, based on concepts and themes that can be derived from the literature.

Teaching is a complex activity. It has a practical focus, in that classes need to be organised in a way that engages and focuses students, and practical tasks need to be designed so that there is learning of the designated content of teaching, which can be on many dimensions; knowledge (cognitive and metacognitive), skills (from very concrete and practical to more abstract and complex) and attitudes and dispositions. There is a social dimension to classrooms, and also a dimension on which learners are learning about themselves as people and how they relate to the rest of the world (or a particular part of it). Teachers need to combine understanding of what they are teaching with understanding about learning and the nature and needs of their students in order to design effective learning experiences. They need to combine practical skills with interpersonal and communication skills in order to be able to implement the learning experiences they design. Language teaching adds to this complexity. Language is a complex phenomenon and adds complexity to the nature of a classroom. While linguistic systems can be isolated and described (as, for example, in a teachers’ reference such as Leech, Cruikshank and Ivanic 2001), they are comprised
of a number of elements of organisation (such as lexis, phonology and prosody, graphology, syntax, textual organisation), and elements of pragmatics that apply in their use (for example, functional potential, aspects of appropriacy, register and naturalness). Language teachers need to involve their students in learning experiences that enable them to see how the language is used to convey meaning, and to both understand, and develop an ability to fluently use, the elements of the linguistic system, giving them the ability to understand and make meanings in situations they are likely to encounter, and to use the language in both its spoken and written form. The integration of these complex elements is already a complex task, without consideration of the addition of another complex phenomenon, culture.

The failure of the TESOL literature to produce a sufficiently coherent understanding of culture and the teaching of culture raises the question of the nature of teachers’ understandings of their subject matter and what it is they are teaching. Tsui (2003) investigated the nature of expertise in TESOL, from the point of view of understanding the differences between novice and expert teachers. After an extensive review of the literature on teachers’ knowledge in the general education literature and the TESOL literature, she identified four aspects of teacher knowledge. She argues that teachers’ knowledge is manifested in their classroom practice, and can’t be divided into different ‘domains’, and secondly, that the personal conceptions of teachers strongly influence their practice. She regards teachers’ pedagogical knowledge as including both how to manage learning of the content they teach, and how to enact the curriculum in the classroom, and she sees all of these as interacting with the imperatives of the contexts in which teachers teach, to influence what teachers do in their classrooms. This suggests that TESOL teachers need an understanding of the cultural content they teach, together with an understanding of how it can be enacted within a language curriculum, in different contexts.

This chapter seeks to identify ways in which such a pedagogical understanding of culture together with the options for enacting it within a TESOL curriculum can be developed, in a way that is informed by the literature reviewed in chapter 3. In earlier attempts to consider the place of culture in language teaching, Damen spoke of the need for a practical focus, informed by more theoretical understandings (Damen
1987). In education, and in TESOL, empirical studies are also seen as a basis for
guidance of teachers. However, because of the current lack of clarity in relation to
theoretical understanding of culture within TESOL, the literature can give, at best,
limited guidance to researchers. As a consequence, there is only a limited body of
studies, generally in relation to the acquisition of aspects of pragmatics, or the
experiences of learners of particular backgrounds in particular learning contexts to
guide teachers. This chapter therefore seeks to identify theoretical foundations that
might assist in guiding teachers in the practical challenge of integrating the teaching
of culture into their TESOL practice.

No broad guiding principle capable of informing this task emerged from the literature.
The following sections therefore attempt to identify key concepts or principles, which
may form a basis for the formulation of a more systematic and coherent approach.
The first section brings together the insights from the various perspectives reviewed
in the previous chapter. Drawing on those considered most useful to the task here, I
then address the central issues as summarised in the findings at the end of the
previous chapter, viz: the nature of culture, the nature of cultural learning, context and
cultural learning, culture in the TESOL curriculum, techniques for teaching culture
and professional practices in TESOL

4.2 Insights from the divergent perspectives in the TESOL literature

When presented with differing perspectives on an issue, there are two options. One is
to decide which perspective is the most satisfactory, and then to work within and from
that perspective. The other option is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each
perspective and to develop some way of utilising the best insights arising from
different perspectives whilst avoiding the weaknesses. This can be appear to be
attractive as it appears to offer the best of everything, and forms the basis of an
‘eclectic’ approach. However, for this to be done effectively requires the
identification of a principled basis on which to select and reject elements from
different sets of views, and to combine them in a meaningful way. Before considering
how to react to the differing perspectives identified in the literature, it is worth briefly
reviewing each perspective, and its relative strengths and weaknesses. This will
provide a deep base from which guiding principles may emerge to inform TESOL in the ways that it deals with culture.

The Conventional view of culture in TESOL offers a very broad understanding and appreciation of culture, and by incorporating understandings from other disciplines and fields of professional practice, it offers a rich understanding of culture and cultural learning and a wide range of techniques for the teaching of culture. However, it has had problems conceptualising culture in a way in which it can be explicitly applied to language teaching, and the dangers of too rigid and definite a view of a culture have been well articulated by post structuralist critics. The conception of language and cultural proficiencies in terms of native speaking norms is emerging as a significant problem. Nonetheless, it represents a strong tradition in the field, and to most practitioners, as well as to students and people who are not specialists in language teaching or cultural theorists, would represent a ‘common sense’ understanding of culture.

The literature described in Chapter 3 as the ‘the nature of culture and communicative language teaching in the Expanding circle’ largely utilises a traditional, though more humanities-oriented understanding of culture, and reveals a significant weakness of the traditional perspective. This is a ‘one size fits all’ approach in TESOL to the teaching of culture in relation to different teaching contexts, and failure to recognize that it may be possible and necessary to modify what is taught as ‘culture’ in different learning contexts, particularly Inner circle and Expanding circle contexts. This literature also suggests that expatriate native speakers (especially those with limited experience of living in the relevant context) may present different attributes as cultural models to bilingual, local teachers. The literature that explores the attributes of teachers of differing backgrounds and affiliations with English shows that they bring different combinations of qualities, and weaknesses (if that is not too strong a word) to the practice of TESOL in different contexts.

Critical perspectives offer many and powerful interesting insights, and an argument that in significant ways, the traditional conception of culture should be abandoned. Regardless of the extent to which anyone may agree with the analysis and conclusion,
these views stimulate us to question our assumptions and what is it that we consider ‘natural’ or ‘normal’. From this literature we can gain insight into the fluid, constructed, diverse and dynamic nature of culture, as well as insight into the more subjective elements of an understanding of culture, such as identity, sense of affiliation, and the interactive nature of such constructs. This literature also offers warnings about the dangers of uncritical and unreflective application of some of the understandings offered by conventional approaches. These insights can certainly augment traditional understandings of culture, and can expand and enrich more traditional understandings. However, in relation to the argument that conventional conceptions of culture and culturally based labelling be abandoned, there is an aspect in which critical perspectives can be critiqued. This is that while writers within this perspective are prone to argue that conventional approaches lead to an ‘essentialising’ of learners through overgeneralisation, they themselves can be critiqued for ‘essentialising’ the more conventional writing on culture in TESOL. While the more traditional literature does make generalisations about national and ethno-linguistic cultures, its discussions often acknowledge the diversity that exists within such cultures (see for example, Damen 1987, Murray 1992, O’Sullivan 1994). Another problem is that Critical arguments are not explicit about exactly what conceptualisation should replace the notion of ‘culture’, other than a general understanding of the processes and formation of discourses. A dubious critique, and lack of a clear conception of an alternative theorisation of culture is not a strong enough basis for the rejection of conventional conceptions of culture, and what they offer. To do so, would seem to be an example of ‘throwing out the baby with the bath water’. Nonetheless, the subjective dimensions of culture appear to be a fertile ground for research purposes, and the concepts of identity offer some potential to teachers and learners, along with the cautions provided by this perspective.

Sociocultural theory offers a very powerful understanding of the learning processes of students involved in profound learning in classrooms. The understanding of the learner (and teacher) as a historically formed social being is useful for teachers wishing to understand the cultural dynamics of TESOL classrooms. The insight that learners perceive their new learning experiences on the basis of their prior experience, and insights into the nature of teacher and student interaction are valuable
contributions from this perspective. The conceptualisation of the learning process as moving from the social to the interpersonal provides powerful insights about cultural learning processes. To some extent the dynamic, discursive focus of the sociocultural perspective echoes the types of understandings about the fluid and constructed nature of understandings of culture in the post structuralist perspective, while the historical dimension suggests that traditional views of culture are part of the learning process. However, while this perspective provides insights into learning and to some extent the dynamic processes of cultural creation and change, it doesn’t provide guidance in terms of identifying what has to be taught and learned.

The perspective of ILT is broad and comprehensive, drawing significantly on the traditional perspective, and taking up some ideas from post structuralist perspectives. As it has arisen mainly out of modern language teaching, and been applied to TESOL, it has addressed a variety of different teaching contexts. In Byram’s (1997) work on identifying the elements of intercultural communicative competence it has worked at synthesising understandings from a traditional perspective with those from a post structural perspective. It has explored the nature of cultural learning, the nature of connections between culture and language and began to explore how language and culture might be more systematically integrated. It has to some extent researched techniques for teaching culture, though these seem to relate more to the effect of study abroad or other immersion experiences in foreign language teaching and less to TESOL. However, some of its ideas still remain rather broad and general, and need to be refined further if they are to assist ESOL teachers in their management of what is to be learned and their enactment of the curriculum. At present it appears to have more to contribute to discussions about culture in the language curriculum, and while it is not silent on methodological aspects of teaching culture in language teaching, it provides less clear direction in this area. The broad perspective it offers, and the fact that it has already done some work at integrating insights from different perspectives suggests that this perspective is generating valuable insights. In particular, its advocacy of a target for language and culture learning based on explicitly bilingual rather than monolingual norms, together with an understanding of what it means to be working across and between cultures, is useful and realistic from a practical and theoretical perspective. The critique from ILT that communicative language teaching
has been insufficiently systematic in its approach to the treatment of culture is borne out by the review of the literature in Chapter 3.

A problem with a broad perspective is that it provides a relatively loose association of ideas and concepts, and conceptualisation in rather general terms (at least in relation to TESOL), which may not be easy to apply to practice, or which may be open to rather widely varied interpretations. Nonetheless, in relation to the concerns of this thesis, if the insights of the other perspectives can also be drawn on as appropriate, the perspective of ILT offers considerable potential. Indeed the interest of this thesis, the attempt to develop a more informed and systematic approach to the teaching of culture in TESOL, is one of the concerns of ILT.

Guiding principles are required to identify ways in which teachers may better manage the cultural content of TESOL, and effectively enact a cultural curriculum. Guiding principles emerging from the literature covering these perspectives are presented in the following sections. These incorporate insights from a number of perspectives in relation to the key issues: the nature of culture, the nature of cultural learning, context and cultural learning, culture in the TESOL curriculum, techniques for teaching culture and professional practices in TESOL and their implications. These are the areas about which teachers need clear conceptual understanding if they are going to manage what students learn and enact a cultural curriculum.

4.3 The nature of culture

Clearly, culture is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Attempts to completely theorise it are appropriate in a discipline like anthropology, in which it is a central concept. However, one of the conclusions of the literature is that culture can be conceived of in different ways, depending on the purposes of the exploration. If that pattern is to be followed, it would seem that language teaching does not need a fully theorised understanding of culture in all its dimensions. There are two reasons for this. First, such theorisation seems difficult and problematic, and the practice of language teaching needs to go on: it cannot await the delivery of a completed theorised understanding of culture. In these circumstances, it is necessary to work
with what is currently in hand. The second reason is that language teaching may be better served by a more focussed conceptualisation of culture that relates primarily to culture as it interacts with language, as it is realised in the context of language teaching and learning, and in language teaching programs.

Even in this more restricted focus, culture remains a complex phenomenon. However, from the literature it is possible to derive a set of working propositions in relation to the concept of culture in language teaching programs. The main points of such an understanding involve:

- acknowledgment that while language and culture holistically form combined linguacultures in contexts of language use, it is necessary for teaching purposes to explicitly focus on and consider the cultural dimensions, as well as linguistic factors;
- culture in the context of language teaching refers to a multidimensional system of symbolic meanings, without which the language code alone would be inadequate; the cultural system interacts with the linguistic system to refine the possibilities allowed by the linguistic code, to fill gaps that are not covered in a literal interpretation of the linguistic code, and which allows language users to apply the linguistic code to a wide variety of social contexts;
- the cultural system includes many dimensions, including knowledge (about a wide variety of phenomena), attitudes, perceptions, values, beliefs, behaviours, practices, artefacts and symbols, and understandings about human beings, their social and physical environment and their interactions between each other;
- some aspects of this system are concrete and discrete, while other aspects are highly abstract or difficult to isolate from other components;
- cultural systems are not susceptible to easy description, in the way that linguistic systems are;
- while there are universals and similarities between different cultures, different cultures are distinct, and there are discernable differences between different cultures;
- cultures can be identified at many levels of social grouping, not just national or ethnic or speech community, even though national or linguistic cultures are often significant in the socialisation of people in each state, national cultures are also
highly susceptible to construction by dominant groups; nonetheless, there are usually distinctive cultural patterns, including numerous patterns of internal variation, associated with speakers of the same language;

- despite the difficulties of describing cultures, there are ways in which they can be compared; the most widely known used in the language and cultural areas is Hofstede’s comparisons of inferred values (Hofstede 1980, 1994) which has potential to be useful within TESOL as a tool for making such comparisons when doing so could be useful;

- cultures exist on both a social plane (the life practices, discourses and dialogues of a society), and an individual plane (the way one lives, perceives, acts and reacts); there is a dialectical relationship between the ways of individuals contributing to the group culture, and the culture of the group influencing the individual;

- cultures are highly dynamic, even though some are more traditional in orientation; cultural changes are accompanied by and reflected in discursive practices and changing trends and developments in these;

- the psychology of an individual is profoundly affected by the culture of the society into which she or he was socialised as an infant and child, and, while this is susceptible to some modification, primary enculturation usually has lifetime impact;

- ‘insiders’ to a culture see subtleties within the culture, but compared to relative ‘outsiders’, may not be aware of the nature of their own culture; they may see their own culture (or aspects of it) as ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ and other cultures as ‘exotic’ or different in some way, while ‘outsiders’ perceptions of a culture may be influenced by myths created within their own culture about the second culture;

- ‘outsiders’ to a culture will see the culture through the perspective of their home culture, which may include myths it has created about itself; this may never change, though familiarity with a culture can lead to an understanding of ‘insider’ perceptions to some extent;

- while there may be differing attitudes toward a culture or aspects of it, by both insiders and outsiders, there will be mutual knowledge among those who ‘know’ a culture, and to some extent, mutual understanding of, points of reference around which disagreement and contestation take place;
• within a culture, there are often unstated, culturally preferred ways of doing things, including using language, and learning;
• part of cultural affiliation is a sense of identity as a member of a culture, and a sense of being accepted as having some sense of legitimacy within that culture by other members of the culture;
• there is diversity within any cultural group, on many dimensions, and any individual will have differing cultural and subcultural affiliations based on age, gender, region, social and economic status and potentially many other diverse factors.

Having adopted this as a relatively simple understanding of the nature of culture for the purposes of TESOL, and having stated that culture and language are closely interrelated, the issue remains as to how this connection is to be understood. A schema for understanding points of connection between the cultural system and the linguistic system has been provided by Crozet & Liddicoat (1999), who identify the areas in which cultural and linguistic factors interrelate (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Crozet & Liddicoat’s points of articulation between culture and language

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<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kinesics/prosody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture in Context</td>
<td>culture in general Structure of Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture within shorter units of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture in organisation of units of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture in linguistic structures/words/syntax/non-verbal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crozet & Liddicoat 1999: 116

This illustrates how complex, multidimensional cultural phenomena relate to particular aspects of the linguistic system. Such a scheme enables teachers to consider
the different types of connections they can make between culture and language. Teachers can use such a schema to monitor what sorts of culture and language learning they can enhance and also includes scope for consideration of culture in ways that don’t directly connect with specific aspects of language (world knowledge/culture in context). This makes a complex interrelationship concrete and manageable, and a useful basis for planning language curriculum and course design.

Such a conception of culture, and the nature of its connections to language, provides a sufficiently rich, yet informed basis for teachers to manage and enact a cultural curriculum. But as in other areas of teaching, an understanding of the content itself is not sufficient. Effective cultural teaching needs to be informed by an understanding of the nature of cultural learning.

**4.4 The nature of cultural learning**

If culture itself is a complex phenomenon, then teaching and learning it is also complex. The literature includes suggestions as to the nature of this process, but in the absence of a coherent theorisation of culture, it is difficult to develop a coherent theory of cultural learning. Different perspectives have suggested different metaphors. Within the traditional paradigm, cultural learning is often referred to as the raising of ‘cultural awareness’. For example, Paulston (1978) argued that a bilingual person does not become bicultural in the same way that one can become bilingual, but eclectically adopts some aspects of the second culture, adding these in part to their idiosyncratic personality. While these may exhibit varying degrees of similarity to those who are natives of the target culture, they are profoundly shaped by the individual’s socialisation into their home culture. In this way the bilingual learns to ‘operate’ in the second culture, but not completely become *of* the second culture, as some elements of the first culture are never completely replaced. Post structuralists would see this as the development of a ‘hybrid’ culture, that arises as a result of an individual’s socialisation into another cultural group or environment, involving a blending of the new culture with the home culture. Sociocultural theory also sees cultural learning as initially a process of socialisation, which leads to the development of certain cognitive structures derived from the target culture environment. Lantolf
notes that the ‘acquisition’ of a culture should accompany the acquisition of a linguistic system, as in the gradual internalisation of the new culture. Kramsch has argued that learning a language and culture involves the development of a ‘third place’ that is culturally different from monolingual speakers of both the native and second language, and others have taken up this notion (Kramsch 1993). ILT sees the process in terms of developing an intercultural competence, or the ability to operate within different cultural environments, and make transitions between them.

Given that culture is a very broad, multi-faceted phenomenon, and that this thesis is open to drawing on the insights of many perspectives, rather than one, ‘learning a culture’ is best seen as not any one of these processes, but rather as an amalgamation of all of these. Learning a culture certainly requires awareness, and in learners who progress to significant levels of proficiency in a language, results in intercultural individuals who are capable of exhibiting the characteristics of native speakers of both languages. Learners come to be adept in interaction with other speakers of the second language, after initially being more hesitant and having to more consciously process and analyse how such interaction may be different from interaction in their first language. They also come to have an awareness of the other culture from an outsiders’ perspective, come to have a sense of how speakers of their second language perceive their first culture, and develop a sense of themselves as straddling two cultures.

It may be more productive to better understand how the different dimensions of cultural learning may be analogous to ‘awareness raising’, ‘adopting hybrids’, ‘developing third places’ or ‘acquiring’, rather than arguing that any one of these metaphors completely captures the whole process. But whatever is the most appropriate metaphor for the nature of the overall process, teachers need a more specific understanding of what it is that students must learn and that teachers must teach.

The literature includes some attempts to identify the ‘content’ of cultural learning. These stipulate the dimensions in which learning needs to take place. In some ways these mirror models of linguistic communicative competence, such as the models of
linguistic or communicative competence presented in the ‘Conventional’ literature, in
that they identify a number of dimensions of competence or learning, and identify to
some extent the dimensions of such competence, but don’t necessarily identify
relationships between different components. Two recent proposals are considered
here, that of Paige et al. (1999), and Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural
communicative competence).

Paige et al. (1999) identify what needs to be taught in the cultural dimension of
language teaching. They identify three types of learning: Knowledge, Behaviour and
Attitudes. Each of these dimensions includes learning that is both culture-general and
culture-specific. Their model is presented in Table 4.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture general</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural phenomena</td>
<td>• cultural adjustment stages&lt;br&gt;• culture shock&lt;br&gt;• intercultural development&lt;br&gt;• culture learning&lt;br&gt;• cultural identity&lt;br&gt;• cultural marginality</td>
<td>Intercultural skills</td>
<td>• culture learning strategies&lt;br&gt;• coping and stress management strategies&lt;br&gt;• intercultural communicative competence&lt;br&gt;• intercultural perspective-taking skills&lt;br&gt;• cultural adaptability&lt;br&gt;• transcultural competence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture specific</th>
<th>Target culture skills</th>
<th>• little ‘c’ culture appropriate everyday behaviour&lt;br&gt;• big ‘C’ culture-appropriate behaviour</th>
<th>• positive attitude toward target culture&lt;br&gt;• positive attitude toward target culture persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>little ‘c’ target culture knowledge&lt;br&gt;big ‘C’ target culture knowledge&lt;br&gt;pragmatics&lt;br&gt;sociolinguistic competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Paige et al. 1999: Part 1

While the logic of this scheme is easy to follow, and the model provides a
comprehensive statement of areas in which learning needs to take place, it also seems
rather prescriptive, particularly in relation to culture-general learning. For instance,
while it may be useful in certain circumstances for learners to be aware of phenomena such as culture shock, to have coping and stress management strategies, or the notion of cultural marginality, these seem narrow concepts to be specified in a broad model applicable to a wide variety of teaching contexts. Conversely, a number of terms in this model are problematic in that they include very broad entities, including ‘little ‘c’ target culture’, ‘Big ‘C’ target culture’ and ‘intercultural communicative competence’. These terms require further breaking down in order to obtain a better understanding of what they involve. A further problem relates to the stipulation of the development of positive attitudes in relation to both culture general and culture specific learning. While it is possible (and desirable) for teachers to endeavour to foster positive, empathetic attitudes and demeanours, the development of attitudes cannot necessarily be controlled or even predetermined by teachers. The formation of attitudes depends on a wide range of factors particular to individual learners, and may not be so easily controlled, predetermined or designated. Paulston (1978) referred to the unusual and extreme, but illustrative, case of Israeli intelligence officers who are linguistically and culturally adept in Arabic, and who mix with those they perceive as their Arabic speaking enemies, and who are capable of appearing ‘Arabic’ to Arabic speakers. Their goal is gaining intelligence to thwart the plans of some of the people with whom they interact. This may even involve incarcerating, physically harming or even killing them in order to thwart their plans. This would hardly seem to be an example of an all-embracing ‘positive’ attitude to all aspects of a target culture and all its speakers, but is an example of an impressive level of linguistic and cultural proficiency nonetheless! While it may well be that some degree or type of empathy with some speakers of Arabic is present, as long as they are not identified as enemies, this suggests that a notion of an all-embracing positive attitude is a problematic construct in such a model. The attitudes of learners are likely to be more complex than just ‘positive’ or ‘negative’: there is likely to be a range of finer distinctions and degrees of ambivalence and selectivity in the attitudes of learners towards the target culture in general, the speakers of the target language, or sub groups defined in all sorts of ways, as well as to aspects of learning other cultures. This suggests that the stipulation of positive attitudes as expressed in this scheme is overly simplistic. Such a view may well imply the sort of value system often expressed by those interested in cultural diversity (including TESOL professional associations), which may not
necessarily be shared by learners. The question is how much it has to be shared to enable effective learning. In the end, while this model of cultural learning is interesting, and makes some useful distinctions, there are problems of inconsistency in the level of the dimensions of learning that are specified, and with the way that attitudes are dealt with.

Byram’s (1997) model of ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’ identifies the dimensions of what he sees as the necessary learning that must accompany the development of linguistic competence. His model identifies areas of learning and understanding involved in the intercultural competence that is necessary to accompany language learning, leading to proficiency in the total linguaculture of the target language. This is presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Factors in Byram’s model of intercultural communicative competence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpret and relate</td>
<td>Of self and other: of interaction; Individual and societal</td>
<td>Political education and critical awareness</td>
<td>Relativising self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Savoir comprendre</em></td>
<td><em>Savoirs</em></td>
<td><em>Savoir s'engager</em></td>
<td>Valuing other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Savoir etre</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover and/or interact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Savoir apprendre/faire</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Byram 1997: 34
While there are similarities to the coverage of the model of Paige et al., Byram’s model includes a broader identification and description of the areas in which learning is to take place, and provides a more open-ended set of categories. Byram’s model identifies areas of different types of learning, rather than what is to be learnt about. In dealing with attitudes, Byram’s model has a similar values orientation to that of Paige et al. but expresses this in a more open-ended way, referring to ‘relativising’ and ‘valuing other’, a more open ended terminology which allows for ambivalence and a more sophisticated range of attitudes on the part of the learner. Byram claims that his model is cognisant of different perspectives, arguing that the ‘education’ dimension refers to the insights about the dynamics, processes and inequities that poststructuralists hold are the essential learning for language learners in learning the culture of the target language. However, while the subjective aspects of self can be included in the ‘knowledge of self’, perhaps the significance of the sense of identity and development of a new bilingual identity as a user of the new language and the developing degree of ‘insider’ status could be more prominently signalled. While the categories do not make explicit the distinction between culture-specific and culture-general leaning, Byram includes these categories in the elaboration of his framework. This framework has the attraction of offering a richer conceptualisation of the domains of learning. It has the potential disadvantage of being more complex, and covering a very extensive range of learning. Byram sees the model as covering what is to be learned over some twelve years of language learning in formal education. This raises a question as to the practicality of such a complex model to, for example, the Australian AMEP entitlement of adult immigrant ESL learners to 510 hours of ESL instruction, and to how adequate coverage of all these areas, plus the necessary linguistic content, can be dealt with. Another potential issue of detail is that, in some countries, the terminology such as ‘political education’ may carry specific meaning, other than the broad social awareness intended by Byram, such as countries with Marxist-oriented governments (such as Vietnam) where ‘Political Education’ specifically means instruction in Marxist-Leninist theory. Nonetheless, this is a promising conceptualisation of the nature of cultural learning that needs to be integrated into language teaching. Paige et al. (1999) make the point that the knowledge dimension of cultural learning is easiest to deal with in the classroom and the curriculum. Byram’s conceptualisation of Intercultural Communicative
Competence provides a reminder of the relative importance of knowledge compared to other areas of learning, understanding and ability that language learners need to develop in relation to the language(s) they learn.

Byram’s model also conveys a stronger sense of the individual learner in the learning process, and the complex and multifaceted ways in which they need to develop. This perhaps reflects the humanities orientation of his work, while Paige et al. are working within a social sciences framework that sees areas of knowledge as more definable and discrete and learning more as the mastery of the specified content.

A simple categorisation of the domains and nature of cultural learning can be derived from these more complex frameworks, which can be a useful starting point for teachers and curriculum developers. Synthesising the ideas presented from these models, the nature of cultural learning in TESOL can conveniently and concisely be described as development in the following:

- *awareness of* the target culture and environment(s) where the target language is used, and *sensitivity to* the real and potential impact of cultural factors on communication;
- a degree of *fluency* in participating and ‘operating’ in that environment (in ways that are generally understood by members of the target culture). Fluency in this respect refers to a lack of excessive hesitance in interaction;
- a sense of *identity* as a bilingual user of English in that environment, in which there is some concept of oneself not only as a user of the target language, and a member of their primary (and other) cultural groups, but a sense of the particular nature of the combinations of cultural identity that bilingual status involves.

Such a scheme implies less rigidity than ‘knowledge, behaviours and attitudes’, and a little more focus than the approach presented by Byram’s model. These categories provide the starting point for a more precise specification of what might need to be taught and learned in the different contexts in which TESOL is taught. But in order to be able to move to this step, it is necessary to consider how the varying environments in which TESOL is conducted may impinge on the nature and processes of cultural learning and teaching in different TESOL programs.
4.5 Context and cultural learning in TESOL

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 raises the question as to whether there can be one uniform approach to the teaching of culture in TESOL, a ‘one size fits all’ approach, or whether there is a need to adapt the approach taken to the teaching of culture to different contexts of teaching. If different approaches are appropriate for different contexts, then teachers need to appreciate how approaches might vary in different contexts. The Culture in context literature, along with the argument that ideological dimensions of bilingualism are rather different in different contexts, indicates that there is a need to adapt the teaching of culture to the context in which teaching is taking place, and in which learners will be using English.

To some extent, the divergence in how the literature deals with context is less related to perspective, than to the geographical location of the author. The North American based literature tends to assume TESOL to be the teaching of ESL to immigrants, or to international students studying in North America, while the British TESOL literature tends to be concerned with the teaching of English in Expanding circle contexts. The main point of difference in cultural learning lies mainly in the assumption that in ESL contexts, the task facing the learner is a moving into the mainstream English speaking environment, while critical perspectives are interested in exploring issues that may inhibit or problematise that process. In foreign language contexts learners will be less likely to do so, and indeed may be using English for more limited purposes, and may feel some reluctance to adopt the norms of native speakers of English. But there are more extensive issues that arise from the literature, which either explicitly or implicitly provides insight into the role of context on the teaching culture in TESOL. The primary issue, and the one which relates to the ‘ESL’ – ‘EFL’ distinction mentioned above, relates to how far learners of English may wish to succeed in moving towards the cultural and linguistic norms and expectations of native speaking societies. In addition, there is the question of the attributes of different types of teachers in different teaching contexts. There are also issues that relate to how learners have access to the culture of English in different contexts, which also raises questions about teaching methodology. Finally there are the ethical
implications of TESOL in different contexts, an issue raised largely by writers from the critical perspective.

4.5.1 The contexts of TESOL

The conceptualisation of Kachru was referred to in Chapter 1 as an appropriate way of broadly understanding the nature of different contexts in which English is taught. This is a useful framework for considering the different social contexts of TESOL. However, two points need to be explored here, in order to draw conclusions from the issues raised in the literature.

The first relates to the nature of generalisations about contexts. In any general scheme of contexts, care needs to be taken in making assumptions about particular contexts, because of apparent similarity with other contexts. The ‘context’ of a particular country or region will not be homogenous, and there will be further variations based on location, educational sector, the ages of learners and so on. For example, immigrant communities in Inner circle contexts may have high or low rates of significant interaction with the society at large (for example in-group and out-group marriage, and therefore intercultural families). In Expanding circle contexts, there may be some locations (certain business precincts, areas of tourism or academic institutions, even media outlets such as cinemas or satellite television channels) where English is a language of frequent daily use, to which some individuals have very high exposure. On the other hand, in some rural or regional areas English may never be publicly used, and these sources may not be available.

The second relates to the concept of English as an international language in many Expanding circle contexts. Indeed, it is this variety of contexts, and the place of English as the most widely used international language, including its association with nations, multinational companies, and technologies, which are in turn associated with wealth, political power and military strength, that contribute to the dynamics of TESOL in different contexts. When English is used as an international lingua franca there are issues related to the extent to which the cultures of the participants in an interaction (who may well not be native speakers of English) and a culture of English shape the interaction. It is likely that those using English as an international language
in this way, need to have a stronger sense of culture-general understanding and less
culture-specific awareness than may be the case for immigrant learners in Inner circle
contexts.

4.5.2 Context and the goal of learning: the nature of English bilingualism in
different contexts

Drawing on one of the main arguments of the advocates of ILT, it is more appropriate
for the goal of TESOL to be derived from an understanding of bilingualism, rather
than from an idealised native-speaker target, which has been largely conceptualised in
terms of monolingualism. While bilingualism has been explored in largely
psycholinguistic terms (Romaine 1989), Street’s conceptualisation of the social nature
of skills possessed by individuals can inform a richer and enhanced understanding of
the nature of bilingualism in different contexts (Street 1993).

Street (1993) points out that while literacy has traditionally been seen as
‘autonomous’ skills possessed by an individual, it is necessary to understand literacy
as the ability to utilise these skills in ways that are socially valued in order to
participate in certain types of social events (Street 1993). Coleman (1996) applies this
distinction to the practice of TESOL in different contexts, and argues that an
‘ideological’ approach to TESOL is necessary. That is the use of teaching practices
that are sensitive to the context.

This concept can be applied to the notion of ‘bilingualism’. There is a sense in which
the cultural dimension of bilingualism can be considered as a combination of
‘autonomous’ and ‘ideological’ attributes and skills. These interplay with the different
environments in which bilinguals learn to be bilingual, and the contexts in which they
utilise their bilingualism. The ‘autonomous’ dimension of bilingualism can be
considered to be the skills related to fluency in both languages spoken by bilinguals.
The position of languages in the society and the ways in which bilinguals use their
languages provides a deeper understanding of the ‘bilingual’ target of language
teaching than a conception that sees ‘bilingualism’ as a set of ‘autonomous’ skills.
This involves understanding aspects of the context such as the positions of bilinguals
in that society, the types of status they enjoy (including their abilities to be seen as
competent and authoritative speakers of English and the other language they speak, and their potential status as teachers of these languages), their acceptance by members of the society, and the sense of identity they have of themselves in their social context. This can be illustrated by taking the nature of bilingualism in, for example, Australian English and Vietnamese as an example. Whatever the attributes of a bilingual in terms of ‘autonomous skills’ an ‘ideological’ dimension is clearly evident when the social and cultural circumstances and identities of individuals with the particular attributes are considered in different social contexts (Table 4.4). This concept can be further extended by considering these dynamics should these individuals be immersed in other English speaking contexts. For example, what happens to the nature of their bilingualism as they move to other English speaking societies, such as North America, or other Vietnamese speaking communities, or in contexts where Vietnamese may be used with say a native speaker of Russian who is proficient in Vietnamese?

Table 4.4: Some possible variations in patterns in the ‘Ideological’ dimensions of English-Vietnamese bilingualism in different contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language background</th>
<th>Australia English speaking context</th>
<th>Vietnam Vietnamese speaking context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native speaker of English, Vietnamese as a second language</strong></td>
<td>• learner and user of Vietnamese among immigrant communities</td>
<td>• user of English and Vietnamese in Vietnam – likely in occupational or professional contexts, or tourism (likely to have less proficiency in Vietnamese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vietnamese as a native language, English as a second language</strong></td>
<td>• adult immigrant • child immigrant • Australian-born child of immigrants • Vietnamese learner of English in Australia to complete academic, professional or vocational training</td>
<td>• learner and user of English in Vietnam, in occupational, professional or academic contexts • adult immigrant returning to country of origin for short term visit • Australian born child of immigrant making first visit to Vietnam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This illustrates that even the conceptualisation of a bilingual goal for TESOL needs to be informed by an understanding of the background of learners and the context(s) in which it is anticipated they will develop to be bilingual users of English, and the purposes for which they will use English. In the terminology of sociocultural theory, bilinguals are *historically formed* individuals living in a particular social context. This is a richer and more useful concept than a general concept of bilingualism as a cognitive phenomenon.

Such understanding has relevance for the nature of learning in terms of the development of all three dimensions of cultural learning identified in the preceding sections. Understanding the nature of the bilingualism that is common in a particular context, and the expectations about bilingualism in that context, will enable teachers to better understand the nature of the awareness and sensitivity, the type of fluency and the nature of the identities they need to develop and enhance in their learners. In some circumstances, where there is a likelihood of learners being involved in using English in more than one context, teaching will need to be mindful of the imperatives of the relevant contexts. But such an understanding enables more focused and relevant teaching across varying contexts than a general goal framed in terms of the characteristics of native speakers of English in Inner circle contexts.

### 4.5.3 Context and the attributes of teachers

The literature demonstrates that while the distinction between native and non-native speaking teachers is undoubtedly an oversimplification, teachers of TESOL carry different attributes as cultural as well as linguistic models. This is compounded when the dynamics of different contexts of TESOL are considered. At issue here are the possibilities teachers offer as models of bilingual speakers of English and another language, or models of a native-speaker of a variety of English, the extent to which a teacher can provide an insider’s perspective of the culture of English, or an outsider’s perspective on the culture; either as insider with a cultural perspective shared with learners, or from another (but different) outsider perspective. The final attribute is the ability of a teacher to model and provide an intercultural perspective, which involves moving between two cultures.
These attributes will vary with different teachers, who will provide different combinations of such attributes. The nature of teachers is likely to be largely determined by demographic factors, institutional practices and perhaps the values and ideologies of employers. The literature illustrates not that one set of attributes is superior or inferior, but that they are different. Program administrators may need to consider what balances of attributes are desirable (and available) in given contexts. Teachers themselves need to consider the attributes they bring to their teaching, and the relative advantages and disadvantages this might present for their learners in the specific context.

4.5.4 Context and access to the target culture

One point that emerged from the review of Paige et al.’s (1999) investigation of cultural learning in language teaching was their finding that the research related largely to immersion programs, or learning experiences that involved in-country visits to the countries where the target language is spoken. This is one area of language teaching which has been possible to investigate by empirical studies. Interestingly, many of these studies find that while learners report that they learn a lot about the target cultural group, and often develop positive attitudes, this is not always the case, and the experience can lead to slightly less positive or optimistic views of the target speech community (Paige et al. 1999: Part 3, Byram and Morgan1994: 40). The work of poststructuralists such as Norton (2000) and Miller (2003) further suggests that the settlement of ESL learners in English speaking Inner circle societies results in complex and in some ways ambivalent attitudes, as learners encounter difficulties, including prejudice and discrimination, as well as experiencing success (Norton 2000, Norton Peirce 1995, Miller 2003).

The concern with immersion or immersion-like experiences in the literature implicitly reflects a view that somehow learning of a culture is going to be easier if one is in some way immersed in the culture, rather than learning about a culture, rather than having to learn about a culture from some distance. Given the complexity, and the holistic nature of cultures, this view is appealing, at least from a ‘common sense’ perspective. But it is important to understand why this may be so, and to explore the
implications where learners are not learning in an immersion or immersion-like context.

In the first instance, this distinction suggests that the nature of the teaching task is different between the two contexts. In an immersion context, learning may well be based more on experience, but given the complexity of cultures and the richness and nature of the input, it is possible that learners may not notice, or may misunderstand, some aspects of the culture. In this context, the role of teaching may be to involve learners in exploration of their developing understandings, in order to monitor and check that they are not missing or misunderstanding significant aspects of what they experience. On the other hand, in a context where English speaking culture is more remote, the problem is more about how learners may be exposed to input about culture, and how they may produce target culture output (in the form of acting in culturally comprehensible and appropriate ways in English speaking culture).

This suggests that the source of cultural input may well be different between a context where a learner has extensive first hand experience of English speaking culture, and a context where that culture is more remote from the every day life experiences of the learner and input about the culture tends to be less direct, less experienced, derived more from report, or second hand experience. The characteristics of these different sources of cultural input are summarised in Table 4.5, below.

While making such a distinction can assist in conceptualisation, there are certain cautions that need to be taken into account. First, the contrast may well not be so clear-cut between different contexts. Following Kachru’s scheme (Kachru & Nelson 2001), in an Inner circle context the immersion of learners may be more limited than is assumed, for example if they use it only in certain domains of their lives, such as in training or in a social context where they are mixing largely with members of their home cultural community or other outsider immigrant or sojourner groups. The work of poststructuralist researchers suggests that where institutions or individuals fail to be responsive to the total needs of immigrant learners, immersion can be less extensive than it appears, or affective states can restrict the value of the interaction that occurs.
Table 4.5: Characteristics of different sources of cultural input in different contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential sources of cultural learning</th>
<th>First hand experiences</th>
<th>Second hand experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• direct exposure to insiders’ or outsiders’ experience and perspectives (such as experience of other family or community members)</td>
<td>• reporting by ‘outsiders’ (possibly by teachers from a shared cultural perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• opportunities to be immersed in interactions within these culture(s)</td>
<td>• presentations in course materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• opportunities to experience and reflect</td>
<td>• other learning materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• opportunities to explicitly explore with insiders</td>
<td>• some insiders representing themselves and their culture, but out of their cultural context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• viewing of movies, media (with or without cultural backgrounding and explicit reflection)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First hand experiences</th>
<th>Second hand experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of target culture more experientially based. Immersion may also involve strong positive or negative feelings, that may inhibit reflection and which may fluctuate, over time. Possibilities of ambivalence, misinterpretation or not noticing. Understanding more likely to be related to first hand experiences.</td>
<td>Understanding of target culture more cognitively based. Greater potential for exoticisation, romanticisation or overly rigid understanding. Understanding of target culture more likely to be constructed by another. Potential for limited understanding of the context of production of texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Outer circle and Expanding circle contexts, access to first hand experience of English speaking culture is not as remote as it may appear, if the target culture is deemed to be the ways in which English is used in that context by speakers who are bilingual and use English in that society, rather than assumed to be the culture of an Inner circle society. In being pragmatic, it is more useful to explore the extent to which particular groups of learners will have opportunities for first or second hand experiences as a means of accessing the target culture, rather than assuming a certain type of access to the culture, depending on the nature of the context of the learning. The attributes of the teachers working with learners are another aspect of the context that will impinge on these factors. TESOL teachers, and those responsible for
employing them and providing teacher education, need to understand how teachers with different affiliations to English relate in different ways to the development of their learners’ awareness and sensitivity, fluency in interaction and sense of identity, and the particular insights and models they can provide, as well as the points where the experiences and affiliations of teachers and learners may not coincide. When there is lack of coincidence, teachers can be modelling the nature of interactions between speakers of different varieties of English, and of different types of affiliation to the language and culture.

4.5.5 Context and the implications of TESOL

Writers working within the Critical perspectives have pointed out that TESOL is not a politically neutral or value free endeavour. Like any social activity, the teaching of English has personal consequences for those who learn it, and social consequences for the communities and societies where this learning takes place. Indeed, given the pervasiveness of English on a global scale, and its obvious significance in terms of consequences in the Inner circle, failure to learn or teach may also have significant consequences. The professional discourse of TESOL is one that values linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as reflecting concepts such as ‘individuality, ‘freedom’ and ‘equality’, which are part of the rhetoric of the cultures of English-speaking societies. But Critical writers have pointed out that TESOL is often implicated in practices and consequences that contradict the values of the professional organisations. These include making it easier for English speaking multinational companies to exploit local labour forces, the privileging of certain groups with easier access to learning English, or the displacement of local cultures in Expanding circle contexts. In Inner circle contexts the urgency to become empowered as a proficient user of English can make individuals reject or devalue their home cultures and languages (often resulting in cross generational conflicts or communication difficulties) or marginalisation of and discrimination against those who display characteristics of their home culture. In previous work I have pointed out that there is an inevitable tension between making learners ‘more like’ speakers of English and valuing their own cultural traditions and cultural diversity (Williams 1995).
The potential implications of TESOL need to be acknowledged in its practice. However, Teachers of TESOL and its professional bodies are not solely responsible for the forces that create the pressures that result in such consequences, and cannot control all dimensions of such circumstances. There are also differing values among different people and groups of people, and it is neither possible nor desirable for the profession to be dictating to others. Nonetheless, teachers and those involved in TESOL need to be aware of their own values, and alert to the possible intended and unintended consequences that may flow from their practice in the specific context in which they are working, and work to mitigate what they might consider to be harmful consequences to the extent that such action is within their control.

In summary then, the context of teaching and learning is likely to have a significant effect on the nature of the cultural teaching and learning. Most profoundly, the context of teaching is likely to define the nature of the cultural teaching and learning that is to take place in any TESOL course. In managing this learning and enacting a cultural curriculum, teachers need to be conscious of a number of contextual factors, including the nature of English bilingualism in the context of teaching, the attributes of teachers of English in relation to the nature of English bilingualism in that context, the ways in which learners have access to the culture of English and can receive cultural input, and the implications of the teaching and learning of English in that context.

### 4.6 Culture in the TESOL curriculum

As Chapter 3 revealed, the development of a cultural curriculum has been both neglected and difficult. This stems significantly from the difficulties in conceptualising culture for the purposes of language teaching, so discussions of how the teaching of culture can be planned have tended to deal with very broad conceptualisations, and been inconclusive. Most of this has been within the traditional perspective (for example Damen 1987, Stern 1984, 1992), with extensive work more recently in ILT (Byram 1997). Literature from Critical and Sociocultural perspectives reminds us of the need to avoid rigid and excessive generalisations about cultures, and to consider the subjective elements of cultural learning.
General goals for cultural learning were identified in section 4.4 above. These were identified as levels of awareness and sensitivity to the target language and culture and environment, a degree of fluency in participating and ‘operating’ in that environment (in ways that are generally understood by member of the target culture), and the development of a sense of identity as a bilingual user of English in that environment.

In considering how teachers can systematically integrate culture into the language curriculum, these broad categories provide starting points from which needs and goals can be identified, learning activities can be designed, and assessment and evaluation procedures and criteria can be developed.

4.6.1 Identifying and integrating the linguistic and the cultural curricula

The linguistic curriculum involves integration of a range of linguistic features of a language (including lexis, syntax, functional effect, textual features, phonology). The addition of another complex multidimensional phenomenon, culture, to the linguistic curriculum adds to this complexity. Chapter 3 illustrated how explicit approaches to the teaching of culture had somehow separated it from language, while when it was assumed that culture was automatically taught when language was used in a meaningful context, culture often became an invisible component of the language curriculum. The issue for teachers and course designers is how to blend one complex, multidimensional phenomenon, culture, with another complex, multidimensional phenomenon, language.

The solution to this problem may lie in blending one of the traditional devices of communicative language teaching, needs analysis, to Crozet & Liddicoat’s (1999) conceptualisation of the points of connection between language and culture, which has already been considered in section 4.2.

Communicative language teaching has endeavoured to prepare learners to use the language in contexts and situations of most relevance to them. One way it has done this has been through the use of needs analysis as part of the process of course design. Needs analysis involves identification of the linguistic skills and knowledge learners will require to communicate in specific situations, based on an analysis of the ways in which language is used in these contexts (Nunan 1988). Adding a cultural dimension
to such procedures would provide a means of identifying the most pertinent contextually appropriate cultural content. Here Crozet and Liddicoat’s identification of points of connection between language and culture has the capacity to provide a useful conceptual tool to support teachers and course designers in this task, and to help them manage the linguistic and cultural content of courses, as well as facilitating the ways in which language and culture can be linked. In this way relevant cultural teaching and learning can be related to the teaching and learning of relevant aspects of the linguistic system.

4.6.2 Categories of cultural learning

Another set of categories for cultural teaching and learning emerges from the literature. These categories also point to areas that teachers need to be aware of in their decision making in relation to a cultural curriculum in TESOL.

The first of these is the distinction between culture-general and culture-specific learning, that is identified in the Intercultural Communication literature and accepted by the conventional perspective, and is a key concept in Paige et al.’s model of cultural learning (Paige et al. 1999). This is a useful and significant distinction, which better helps teachers both in understanding the nature of different types of cultural content, and in making judgments as to what is the appropriate balance of such learning with different groups in different learning contexts.

Related to these categories is the idea of developing the skills of learners as cultural observers and interpreters. Again, this concept emerges from Intercultural communication, via the Conventional perspective literature, and identifies a significant and important area of learning. This is especially so given the complexity of culture, and the inability of any teaching to adequately teach everything about a culture.

4.6.3 The nature of the cultural curriculum

The integration of language and culture in the curriculum is a significant challenge, as has already been considered. The difficulty in managing complex elements of the
curriculum has been discussed. However, another concept from the literature suggests a useful starting point for considering how cultural learning may be organised. This is Byram’s analogy between learning a culture and a large jigsaw of many pieces (Byram 1997). He argues that a successful strategy for completion of a complex jigsaw puzzle is to construct the boundaries and then to gradually fill in sections of the puzzle as the patterns within them become clearer. So too a cultural curriculum may begin at the ‘boundaries’ between cultures of English and the cultures of the learners, with the filling in of finer detail in varying aspects of the culture as learners progress in their learning. This resonates with Kramsch’s analogy of cultural learning as ‘border crossing’, an analogy that has some appeal (Kramsch 1993). There is a consensus in the literature that contrast between target culture and the learners’ home cultures is a significant basis for cultural learning. This suggests that the points of difference between the learners’ home cultures and the culture of English can be a significant conceptual tool available to teachers in planning the cultural curriculum.

4.6.4 Assessment and cultural learning

The issue of assessment of cultural learning may be refined to some extent by the identification of areas of cultural learning. However, there appear to some problems relating to the assessment of cultural learning that require further exploration. Paige et al. (1999) note that assessment of cultural knowledge was the most frequent form of assessment, but that such assessment frequently focussed on trivia, rather than on more profound understandings about culture. It also seems that given the abstract nature of many aspects of culture, and the extent to which there can be variation within cultures, the development of procedures for the assessment of cultural learning are likely to be problematic. Assessing fluency and degree of comfort may be possible if teachers are in a position to observe students’ interaction in a target culture context, which presents logistic difficulties in many contexts. Assessment of the fluency dimension involves a degree of subjectivity on the part of the assessor. The development of sense of identity is also a largely subjective component of language learning. While it may be possible to ask students to reflect and report on this aspect of their development as users of a new language, there are difficulties relating to the extent to which they can be asked to, or be prepared to reveal themselves in this way,
especially for the purposes of assessment, not to mention the nature of criteria that could be applied to such tasks.

The literature includes some concepts of great potential for teachers in developing a cultural curriculum for TESOL. These include the linking of culture to the linguistic needs of learners, and utilising Crozet & Liddicoat’s (1999) model of the points of connection between language and culture. The notions of culture-general and culture-specific learning, and the development of skills as cultural observers, and the notion of ‘edges of the jigsaw’ have a capacity to inform teachers and course designers in the incorporation of a culture curriculum with the linguistic curriculum. While assessment of cultural learning is obviously necessary, this is an area in which the literature has less to offer, except to acknowledge its importance.

4.7 Techniques for teaching culture

The review of the literature reported in Chapter 3 found that the Practical perspective, and some of the literature from the other perspectives identified many techniques for teaching aspects of culture. Some of these were frameworks, or clearly identifiable stages or steps, capable of broad application (for example Fantini 1997, Cangarajah 1999 and Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard 1997). However, the majority of the techniques for teaching culture were ideas for teaching a specific aspect of culture. In some cases they were part of collections of such ideas, in other cases they were ideas presented with some sort of rationale. In some cases, they were techniques taken from the field of Intercultural communication.

The consideration of teaching techniques involves an understanding of the processes for teaching the cultural curriculum. At first glance, the literature provides two types of ideas in relation to the processes for teaching culture. The first are the frameworks, which aim at relating relevant cultural knowledge to aspects of language being taught. The second are the broad ideas for teaching culture, which are almost universally described in terms of what they teach, rather than how they teach it.
In relation to developing a systematic approach to the teaching of culture, this situation raises a number of issues. This is especially true in a context where ‘communicative’ language teaching tends to be rather eclectic in terms of its techniques. Indeed, it has been argued that there is no orthodox ‘methodology’ as we are now in a ‘post method’ era (Kumaradevilu 1994). This raises the question of the terms in which techniques for teaching culture are described. To some extent there is a dualism in the literature. As we have already seen, many of the techniques are described in terms of what they teach, while some techniques, especially those derived from Intercultural communication, are described in terms of a specific procedure, such as ‘cultural assimilator’, ‘critical incident’ or ‘simulation’ and so on. The development of bases of understanding for teachers to enact the cultural curriculum may be problematic if a reasonably clear basis for the description of techniques for teaching culture is not available, or if the terminology that is available is not particularly coherent.

4.7.1 Components of techniques for teaching culture

Teachers will have a more practical basis for exploring the ways that they teach culture if they are able to discuss techniques for teaching culture in some way that enables generalisation across specific procedures while conveying some understanding of the nature of the techniques being employed. Table 4.6, below, depicts a scheme derived from central concepts from the literature that have potential to form the basis of a terminology for discussing the teaching of culture.

This scheme is based on the understanding that cultural teaching techniques have certain essential components. These are objectives (each technique is attempting to produce a result), cultural input (each technique provides some sort of cultural knowledge, insight or understanding), and some sort of exploration of how the phenomena being attended to operate (each technique will or should involve some sort of intercultural exploration).

These components are depicted in the left column of Table 4.6. The factors listed in the second column indicate possible characteristics of each component. So for any technique for teaching culture a description can be generated, in terms of its

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characteristics in each component, or the extent to which its objectives fall within each of the broader areas of cultural learning, and the extent to which the input is based on first or second hand experience. The nature of the focus is likely to be described as fitting one of the patterns provided (hence vertical columns for this component), while horizontal rows are again used for the final component, in order to describe the extent to which either of these characteristics are present in the Intercultural exploration.

Table 4.6: Components of techniques for teaching culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Cultural Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural fluency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of cultural Input</th>
<th>Direct 1st hand experience</th>
<th>Indirect 2nd hand experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of cultural exploration</th>
<th>Linguistic to cultural</th>
<th>Cultural to linguistic</th>
<th>Predominantly cultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercultural Exploration</th>
<th>Contrast with first culture</th>
<th>The nature of cross-cultural interaction and bilingual transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This scheme would generate the following examples of descriptions for techniques described in the literature. Gill & Cankova describe a technique they call ‘Jobs for Men and Women’ (2002: 20-21). This involves the students in identifying, from a list, words for occupations, which specify the gender of the person in that occupation, such as ‘fireman’ or ‘stewardess’. Words that describe occupations without specifying a gender are then considered. The students then discuss the situation regarding the
gender distribution of occupations and incomes in their countries of origin. After this a number of fragments of information regarding gender issues in relation to occupation and income in English speaking countries is provided, and a general discussion of the extent to which there is gender equality in different countries and around the world follows. This technique could be described as focusing only on cultural awareness, involving both direct and indirect input, moving from a focus on language to a focus on culture, and being restrict to a rather limited comparison between the home culture and the target culture.

Fantini’s collection contains an activity called ‘What do you mean by polite??!!’ (Isogai 1997:112-116). This activity begins with a lecture on the nature of ‘equality between individuals’, and the notion of ‘we are relaxed’ in US culture, compared with Japanese equivalents of ‘you are my superior’ and looking busy as a way of showing a host is making an effort for guests. Students then role play workplace supervisors in a US company (one American, one Japanese in a subsidiary of a US company) supporting a worker who is generally competent, but requires assistance with a particular problem. The students then role play these situations in groups and observe each other enacting the role-plays. The students then discuss both what they observed, and the degree of comfort they had in playing each role. The task is apparently written for Japanese learners, but presented without a caveat that it is only for Japanese students. This technique involves objectives related to all three areas of cultural learning, and a significant degree of indirect input, although the learners consider how they felt in playing the roles. It moves from a cultural to a linguistic focus, in that students construct and analyse the dialogue of the role-plays. The Intercultural exploration involves comparison between home and target cultures (for Japanese students) and some exploration of the cross-cultural communication and the cultural transitions the learners may make as bilinguals.

The rationale for some of the components and characteristics presented in Table 4.5 is derived to some extent from the preceding discussion, and to some extent from the literature from the Practical perspective described in Chapter 3. Concepts that emerge from the earlier discussion include the nature of the objectives and the nature of the cultural input. The discussion on the aims of cultural learning in section 4.4 above
identified three broad areas of cultural learning, and the extent to which any teaching
technique has objectives in any or all of these broad areas can be identified. The
notion of direct or indirect experience of cultural phenomena was considered in
discussing different contexts for cultural teaching. This notion can be applied to any
teaching technique in order to identify the nature by which learners became aware of
cultural phenomena.

The identification of the nature of cultural exploration arises from analysis of
techniques in the Practical perspective literature. Three frameworks for systematic
integrated teaching of language and culture were identified in the literature. These all
involved a linguistic starting point, which leads to cultural exploration. Fantini bases
cultural exploration on any aspect of language being taught (Fantini 1997).
Canagarajah (1999) bases his cultural deconstruction and reflection on the text which
learners study in their course book. Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard (1997) base their
framework for analysis of the cultural components of a conversation on a naturalistic
conversation, which the students have observed on video. In other words, cultural
content is derived from linguistic content, or to put it another way, the cultural
curriculum is derived from the linguistic curriculum when such frameworks are
utilised. In terms of a teaching process, this can be described as Moving from a
linguistic focus to a cultural focus. This is the nature of all three frameworks
considered in the literature.

The Practical perspective literature also identified numerous techniques that are
largely described in terms of their content. However, the principle of a linguistic and
cultural focus can be applied to them in order to better ascertain the nature of the
cultural exploration they involve. Some of the techniques can be seen to be following
the same pattern as the frameworks, in terms of the teaching process. For example
Johnson (1997) in Fantini’s collection (1997) presents a technique called ‘“Vulgar”
words through culture and context’ (Johnson 1997: 110-111). This involves the
identification of taboo words in the first and target language, followed by students
observing native speakers of English using ‘coarse’ words or expressions for
homework. The students then discuss what they have observed, and compare this to
what would have been said in their first language(s). Similarly Tomalin &
Stempleski present a series of ideas in one section of their collection entitled ‘Examining patterns of communication’ (Tomalin & Stempleski 1993: 105-120). For example, in the activity ‘cross cultural introductions’ (109-10), they ask students to introduce themselves in their first language, and then directly translate into English what they said. Although no further instructions are provided, it would seem that such linguistic comparison could lead to comparison of the forms and the bases of the differences observed. So, some techniques at least, could be described according to the frameworks above, as Moving from a linguistic to a cultural focus.

The opposite of moving from a linguistic to a cultural focus is to move from a cultural to a linguistic focus. Fantini (1997a) provides an example of this in his activity called ‘A Sociocultural Matrix’ (Fantini 1997: 93-95) In this activity students make a list of other people, such as ‘friend’, ‘teacher’, ‘policeman’ with whom they may have contact. They identify characteristics these people may have, and the situations in which they may encounter them. In pairs the students role-play meetings with these people, and they note how the language they use changes in different contexts. So the process of moving from a cultural focus to a linguistic focus is also possible. However, this type of process occurs less frequently than other types of focus.

A final category in the literature is techniques that Have a predominantly cultural focus. Examples of these could include the ‘Cultural background pie’ of Honigsfeld & Pompetti-Szul (2004). In this activity learners divide a circle into segments to indicate the extent of the different identities they see themselves as possessing, such as for example, ‘Australian’, ‘mother’, ‘teacher’, ‘partner’, ‘sister’, ‘refugee rights activist’, ‘Brisbane lions supporter’ and so on. This technique is intended to encourage students to think of their identities and how they might change in different contexts, but has no explicit linguistic focus. The ‘cultural assimilator’ activity presented by Tomalin & Stempleski (1993: 89-93) presents certain courses of action in specific situations and asks the students to identify which is the appropriate course of action. (This is a variation of a technique of the same name derived from Intercultural communication in which the options provided are explanations of the cause of cross-cultural miscommunication, Damen 1987: 283-5) Some of the possible explanations may lie in choice of words or expression, and so have a linguistic component. Nonetheless,
the primary focus is on the exploration of the cultural imperatives that make particular language appropriate or inappropriate in such contexts. The primary focus remains on culture, even though there is some linguistic focus.

The other component of cultural learning techniques, the nature of the Intercultural exploration, also arises from the literature. The idea that explicit comparison between the target culture and the learners’ home culture(s) facilitates cultural learning is a constant theme in the literature. It is therefore worth considering this as a likely and valuable part of any Intercultural exploration. This aspect of this component is derived from ILT. This is the development of a consciousness of the nature of cross-cultural communication, and awareness of the cultural transitions made by bilinguals. This is another useful characteristic of Intercultural exploration.

As this section illustrates, the use of a conceptually sound and theoretically informed scheme for the discussion of techniques for teaching culture enables teachers to better analyse and understand what they are doing when they use different techniques and procedures they encounter in the literature, and helps make connections between what is being taught and how it is being taught.

4.8 The professional practices of TESOL and their implications

Two broad aspects of professional practice can be identified from the literature. One derives from reflection on the nature of professional practices in TESOL, while the second relates to issues arising from the values associated with TESOL and explored by the Critical perspective literature.

The professional practices of an entity as broad as TESOL are obviously quite varied. What is the basis of these practices and what informs teachers in their work? This is a significant question, as the efficacy and impact of the practice would seem to be bound up in the extent to which practice is well informed, in terms of what practices achieve optimal results. Richards (1998) has explored the basis of teachers’ practices and identified three conceptions that TESOL teachers have of their work. He terms these scientific, art or craft conceptions of teaching. A ‘scientific’ conception of teaching sees teaching as a highly informed, rational activity informed by empirical
studies that can tell teachers how to do their work more effectively. An ‘art’
conception of TESOL sees communication and engagement as central to a teaching
process in which teachers connect to the concerns of their learners to help them to
understand and act on the world in new ways. A ‘craft’ conception sees teachers as
using their professional skills to produce certain outcomes in their work. To some
extent the TESOL literature represents a mix of these conceptions. In evaluating their
teaching of language and culture, teachers need a consciousness of the ways they
understand the nature of their work. Given the lack of clarity that emerges from the
literature about the place of culture in TESOL, evaluating cultural teaching from
within any of these paradigms is going to be extremely difficult, without some clearer
framework from which to understand what they are trying to do.

Nonetheless, the literature does suggest certain possibilities and dangers, given the
value systems expressed and reflected in the discourses of the profession. The Critical
perspective literature illustrates the importance of teachers exploring and
understanding the nature of their practices and the intended and unintended
implications of their work. It signals warnings with respect to the following practices,
which may be involved in their work, and which contradict the values widely held
and expressed in the profession;

- a too narrow focus on relevance, which may restrict learning, limiting the
  potential of learners;
- overgeneralisation about cultures and aspects of cultures;
- privileging of native speaking teachers over non-native speaking teachers;
- the potential of teachers of TESOL to contribute to global social, political,
cultural and economic developments that are contrary to their own value systems
  and that of the organisations they affiliate with;
- understanding TESOL to be a teaching process in which learners are expected to
  become like native speakers, rather than learners making their own informed
  choices about their own appropriation of English.

Evaluation and monitoring of the teaching of culture within TESOL can only be done
effectively when what is being taught, what needs to be learned, and the goals of
teaching are clearly understood. This also requires an understanding of the nature and
dynamics of the context in which teaching is taking place. The potential issues identified by the Critical perspective literature provide one set of criteria to be alert to.

However, at present, the literature does not provide a clear, concise conceptual framework for the evaluation of teaching of culture in TESOL. The concepts that may be useful are either too vast, or there is no general framework for understanding specific aspects of the practice of teaching culture. The perspective identifies some danger signs, but there isn’t a comprehensive way of understanding how to avoid the danger. There is a need to more clearly identify how the teaching of culture within TESOL can be made more systematic, efficient and effective.

4.9 Bases of a systematic approach to the treatment of culture in TESOL

This exploration of useful concepts emerging from the literature was intended to lead to identification of a potential basis for the development of teacher expertise in the teaching of culture. This would be useful in its own right, but would also inform the professional development program that was originally conceived as the second phase of this study. However, to this point, the concepts that have emerged are not yet sufficiently coherent, nor integrated to achieve either of these functions.

The points that require connection are:

- the notion of culture in TESOL as the multiplicity of non linguistic factors that interact with language to make meanings in the contexts where English is used;
- the identification of culture learning within TESOL as involving the development of cultural knowledge, cultural fluency, and identity as a bilingual user of English;
- the understanding that the teaching of culture in TESOL is specific to different contexts, in terms of the outcomes of learning and aspects of the process of learning;
- the understanding that culture needs to be connected to language in the TESOL curriculum, and that the culture curriculum will involve more general areas of cultural learning, and relate to the boundaries between the cultures of learners and English speaking cultures;
• an understanding that cultural teaching needs to be reflective and critical in exploring not only its efficacy, but its consequences.

For the purposes of both finding some resolution of the culture conundrum teachers face, and meeting the objectives of the original plan of this research project, it is necessary to find a way of connecting these potentially useful concepts and insights.

A proposal of how this might be achieved is presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5

A conceptual framework for managing and enacting the cultural curriculum in TESOL

The re-examination of applied linguistics, especially of language teaching and learning in its inability to operationalise the culture-dimension of language study, is vastly overdue (Lo Bianco, 1999:58).

5.1 Addressing the culture conundrum

The previous chapter identified some principles and concepts that emerge from the different perspectives in the literature. These have the potential to inform a resolution of the culture conundrum. However, as the comment by Lo Bianco (1999) indicates, the key to a resolution of the culture conundrum lies in finding a way in which the theorising of the literature can be converted into some sort of basis that enables teachers to enact a cultural curriculum in TESOL. The nature of culture as a companion to language in enabling communication means that it is a significant factor in all facets of TESOL. The literature illustrates both the need for an all-encompassing understanding of the place of culture in teaching, and the difficulty of conceptualising the relationship between language and culture in language teaching. Any attempt to address the culture conundrum needs to either identify manageable principles that will clarify the language culture connection in all facets of teaching, or provide some framework which enables identification of principles and issues relevant to connecting culture and language in the various aspects of language teaching. These include contextually relevant teaching, course design, teaching methodology and reflective approaches to evaluation of teaching and its implications.

No broad principle that is both manageable and capable of informing systematic teaching of culture in TESOL emerged from the literature review in Chapter 3. In the absence of such a ‘key’, a more complex task is required to identify the bases for a resolution of the culture conundrum. This involves the development of a framework that identifies what needs to be considered where, and principles and concepts that can assist teachers in their enactment of the cultural curriculum in TESOL.
The framework presented here builds on the conceptual foundations presented in Chapter 4. The framework is largely consistent with, or derived from, the insights and concerns of ILT. This is the most productive perspective in the literature at present, as it is concerned with a more systematic integration of culture and language building on the general strengths of communicative language teaching. However, productive and useful insights from other perspectives are also incorporated into the framework at various points.

The framework is not prescriptive in the sense of telling teachers what it is they have to teach. It is based on the premise that while teaching is informed by theory, it is still dependent on teachers making decisions based on a clear understanding of both the nature of what they are teaching, the learning needs of their students, and an understanding of the preferred and effective teaching and learning strategies for their students. The framework indicates where analysis is required, what decisions need to be made, and the parameters of significant decisions to be made.

The framework involves three levels of conceptualisation:

- **the dimensions** which teachers (and course planners) need to consider in order to be able to rationally plan a systematic integration of language and culture; a dimension represents an area of thinking in the process of planning and implementing TESOL;

- **factors** that need to be considered and addressed within each of these dimensions; factors are derived from key concepts that emerge from the literature and the empirical study, and represent areas in which key concepts or issues need to be addressed;

- **principles** that underlie the thinking and planning that take place in course design and teaching; these principles are intended to provide a guide to decision-making that will be informed and effective, given the current literature and understanding of the place of culture within TESOL.
5.2 Foundations of the framework

The framework is based on the following general understandings:

1. The demands and nature of teaching and learning of culture in TESOL are significantly different in the different contexts in which TESOL is practised (see Chapters 3 and 4). A framework for the teaching of culture in TESOL needs to not only accommodate the dynamics of these different contexts, but also be premised on an understanding of the dynamics and imperatives of the context in which teaching is taking place. A clear understanding of the context is an essential foundation for the exploration of other considerations.

2. Culture in language teaching is best understood as a multidimensional semiotic system that interacts with the linguistic system or code to enable communication in the context in which it is being used (see Chapter 4). However, the specific nature of this cultural system, and to some extent, the linguistic system, will be determined by the context in which the learning of English and its culture is taking place. In this sense, identification of the nature of cultural teaching and learning needs to be based on an understanding of the variety or varieties of English, and their accompanying culture(s) will be pertinent to the particular context in which teaching is taking place.

3. While the framework is concerned with the integration of culture with language, it focuses on the cultural aspects of significance in TESOL. There is already an extensive literature on how linguistic elements are to be dealt with in language teaching. As the consideration of culture is much more limited, the purpose of this discussion is to elaborate the cultural factors. Further integration of linguistic and cultural elements is required, but to some extent the conceptualisation of this framework parallels orthodox conceptualisations of the design of language teaching. To some extent, the close connections between cultural factors and meaningful use of linguistic factors also mean that thinking through one provides strong starting points for the other, if a strong and systematic approach to their integration is adopted.
4. The framework is based broadly on the ideas articulated by advocates of ILT. The most significant ideas derived from ICLT to inform this framework are:

- communicative language teaching needs to be enhanced by a more systematic integration of language and culture;
- the goal of teaching should be framed as a bilingual competence, rather than in terms of the target of a native-speaker like competence;
- different theoretical perspectives on the teaching of culture offer a range of insights that can be used in a synthesis to produce an informed and rich conceptualisation of the nature of culture and the teaching of culture.

5. The framework can be used pro-actively in planning teaching and materials for teaching, by teachers and others involved in planning teaching, such as curriculum designers and materials writers. It can also be used reactively as a conceptual framework for analysing, understanding and evaluating the teaching and learning of culture in an existing program, or after a course has been taught.

**5.3 The nature of the framework**

The framework is presented below in Table 5.1. It begins with identification of the intended outcomes of the teaching of TESOL. These are derived from the exploration of the nature of culture and cultural learning in Chapter 4. These goals are related to the context of learning, with acknowledgment that there may also be teaching programs in which an awareness of other contexts of English use (such as pre-departure courses for students in Expanding circle contexts who about to embark on further study in an Outer or Inner circle context) may loom as a relevant context in addition to, or instead of, use of English in the context in which the teaching is taking place. These goals are expressed in the first box at the top of the table.

The framework identifies *factors* that need to be considered by teachers across five *dimensions*. These dimensions are the column headings in Table 5.1. The relevant
factors for each dimension are listed in the appropriate column. The principles, which apply across all dimensions, are listed in the cell at the base of the table.

5.3.1 The use of the framework

In working with framework, analytical thinking will generally involve beginning in the left and working towards the right. In other words an exploration and understanding of the context will help clarify thinking. However, in recognition that decision making in teaching is usually not a well ordered linear succession of ideas and decisions, it is possible that analysis and thinking may well be more intuitive and involve starting in other dimensions. Indeed, when the framework is used as an evaluative or analytical device, it may well be that an analysis of existing classroom practice involves a mapping of curricular and methodological options, prior to a more analytical consideration of the context and language and culture being taught. In such a case some articulation of areas for critical reflection may inform a review or evaluation, and so reflection may be the starting point of a reflective process that is informed by this framework.

The framework is presented in Table 5.1 below. An elaboration of the factors in each dimension, and the ten guiding principles follows in Section 5.4.
Table 5.1: A conceptual framework for enactment of a culture curriculum in TESOL

Overall goal: The development of cultural competence related to the use of English involving:
- awareness of the culture of English that pertains to the context(s) in which learners will be using English, and sensitivity to the potential of cultural factors to impinge on communication involving bilingual users of English in that context;
- a degree of fluency in operating with and within the relevant culture(s) of English;
- a sense of identity as a user of English in the context(s) of relevance to the learner.

Requiring consideration of and conscious planning and reflection by teachers in relation to the following factors within each of five dimensions, which is facilitated by following certain guiding principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding the context</th>
<th>The relevant cultures of English</th>
<th>Culture in the curriculum</th>
<th>Methodological options</th>
<th>Professional practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ‘who’, ‘where’ and why’? of language learning</td>
<td>What has to be learned – with an emphasis on the cultural dimensions’</td>
<td>The way in which the culture of English is ‘packaged’ and presented for learning</td>
<td>The learning activities that engage learners with the culture of English</td>
<td>The ways that teachers critically reflect on their teaching of culture and the implications of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding of the place and role of English in the social/political/economic/cultural context and the dynamics associated with this</td>
<td>• Variety/ies of English that are prevalent in this context – expectations, tolerance, presence, use of other varieties</td>
<td>• Connections between language and culture at different levels</td>
<td>• The nature of the goals of cultural learning activities (balance between awareness, fluency and identity)</td>
<td>• Cultural learning is a transformative experience: how are learners supported and challenged as they develop/acquire/move into a cultural “Third place”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding of the students in this context – their reasons for learning, their cultural</td>
<td>• Variation of expectations and practices in different special spheres in which English is used (such as education, business, professions, government)</td>
<td>• Extent to which there is culture general and culture specific content</td>
<td>• The nature of cultural input (direct or indirect)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Training</td>
<td>• The nature of the focus (linguistic to cultural, cultural to linguistic, exclusively cultural)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing skills as cultural observers and interpreters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continues
| Background(s), the contexts in which they are likely to encounter and use English, the types of interactions and communication they will be involved in and the expectations that will apply. |
| - Learner attitudes to learning English |
| - Teacher attributes and understanding of self in this context |
| - Ways in which the relevant culture(s) of English are or can be accessed, |
| - The nature of the dynamics of English language change, development, pressures influencing this in this context |
| - Social, regional, gender, generational and other socially-based variations in cultural practices associated with English |
| - The ways in which culture(s) of English interact with cultures of other languages |
| - Identification of cultural learning goals relevant to the learning context and the level of linguistic proficiency (and age of learners) |
| - Identification of significant cultural content, and planned sequence of provision of input (related to other linguistic content and cultural ‘boundaries’) |
| - The extent to which the learners analyse or experience aspects of the target culture |
| - Assessment practices which acknowledge cultural dimensions of language learning and use |
| - The nature of Intercultural exploration |
| - Is cultural teaching provided by a framework, or judicious selection of a variety of techniques? |
| - Which techniques may have greatest effect in this context? |
| - What is ethical practice for teachers in their role in the transformations of their learners? (Respect for and sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners, role as an agent of change, linguistic and cultural informant) |
| - Critical reflection on the implications of practices |
| - Exploration of how learners appropriate English and make it theirs i.e. develop an identity as ‘English-speaking’. |

| The Socially situated principle (incorporating the ‘varieties’ principle, the ‘relevance’ principle and the ‘bilingualism is ideological’ principle) |
| - The Language-culture connection principle |
| - The Multidimensional principle |
| - The Fuzziness principle (incorporating a ‘tentativeness’ principle) |
| The Relativity principle (incorporating a ‘self awareness-filter’) |
| - The Access principle |
| - The Explicit attention and exploration principle |
| - The Contrastive principle |
| - The Internalisation and appropriation principle |
| - The Teacher reflection principle |
5.4 Elaboration of the Framework

The following sections provide more extensive explanation of the components of the framework.

5.4.1 The goals of cultural teaching and learning in TESOL

These goals derive from the discussion of the nature of cultural learning in Chapter 4 (p. 147). They reflect the fact that learners need to have both culture specific understanding of the target culture, culture general understanding, which covers many different dimensions of culture, including a sense of themselves as a bilingual speaker of English, and which takes account of the varying patterns of cultural learning that may be required in different teaching contexts. The framework implies that language teaching involves helping language learners who are by definition ‘outsiders’ to a culture to move ‘inside’ that culture to a degree that they decide, in order that they may be involved in interaction and communication within the environment of the language and culture they are learning.

5.4.2 Understanding of the context of teaching

5.4.2.1 The ‘Context’ dimension

This dimension is based on the understanding that in different contexts there are different imperatives and different dynamics in the practice of cultural teaching and learning in TESOL. The context of teaching needs to be understood at the societal level, and the extent to which it can be considered consistent with the characteristics of Inner, Outer or Expanding circles. The context also refers to the local and institutional context, and the extent to which the location of teaching may constitute a variation from the general conditions of TESOL in that society, and the nature of the institutional imperatives of the TESOL program may influence the nature of teaching and learning. The factors relate to who is teaching whom, and where, together with place of English in that societal and institutional context.

TESOL is a global enterprise, conducted around the world in a wide variety of contexts, for a wide variety of purposes, by people of many different cultural
backgrounds, for an enormous range of purposes and in a wide variety of conditions. Theory building in TESOL has claimed to have a perspective across the field (as implied by use of the catch-all term ‘TESOL’ or ‘English Language teaching’, rather than more specific terms) and universal application across its many contexts. While there is a tendency to increasing acknowledgment of diversity in contexts, the field derives its cohesiveness from the assumption that there are universal principles that can inform and improve the teaching of English in different global contexts. Theory and dissemination of research findings are written with a view towards informing practice around the world. Acknowledging the nature of the context enables points of comparison to be made between different contexts, and enables exploration of the ways in which more general guiding principles can be applied.

The notion of matching learner needs to their learning context is well established in communicative language teaching, in terms of the teaching of language that has communicative potential in relation to the needs of learners.

The factors in this context help lead to identification of the specific culture of English that will be of relevance to learners, and the focus of teaching, as well as factors involved in learners having access to the target culture, and to awareness of the potential consequences of the work of TESOL.

5.4.2.2 The ‘Context’ factors

These are factors that need to be analysed and understood in order to identify the cultural (as well as linguistic) learning needs in relation to the societal context and the place of English in that context.

The first factor is: Understanding of the place and role of English in the social/political/economic cultural context and the dynamics associated with this (official policies, purposes for teaching and learning, ‘unofficial’ expectations), and attitudes towards it. This relates to whether English is the dominant language, a language of daily use or interaction, a language used for specific purposes or domains, or whether it is rather remote and rarely if ever used at all. Here Kachru’s schema (Kachru & Nelson 2001) is probably the most useful in the literature in terms
of providing some sort of broad classification that can be widely utilised and provides broad insights into factors that come into play at a societal level. However, even where distribution of this situation is likely to be uneven, socially and geographically, local variations need to be explored.

The second factor in this dimension is again familiar in terms of the needs based orientation of communicative language teaching. It is: *Understanding of the students in this context – their reasons for learning, their cultural background(s), the contexts in which they are likely to encounter and use English, the types of interactions and communication they will be involved in and the expectations that will apply.* This includes an appreciation of the attitudes of learners to their learning of English, which can include a number of motivational factors and attitudes, reflecting broader attitudes towards English in that social context, which interact with the individuality of different learners.

An understanding of such factors is necessary in order to be able to identify cultural and linguistic learning needs and contexts in which the learners may be involved in using English. This takes into account not only the learners’ circumstances (age, stage of schooling, prior learning,) but also the institutional context of their learning, the reasons they are learning the language.

The third factor, *Teacher understanding of self in this context*, takes account of the discussions in the literature on the efficacy and identities of teachers of ESOL in different contexts (Alptekin & Alptekin 1984, Cook 1999, Phillipson 1992, Lazarton 2003, Duff & Uchida 1996, Rampton 1990). In general, it is likely that teachers who have a heritage as native speakers of Inner circle varieties of English have an ability to model the norms of an Inner circle variety of English, as well as a deep level of intuition about cultural dimensions of the language and of variation within the variety of English they are familiar with. However, they have not struggled with the task of consciously learning English as an additional language, nor may they necessarily have insight into how others see their culture. They may see their (English based) ways of being and doing as ‘natural’, and struggle with, or perhaps not notice, what it is that their learners find difficult or strange. Teachers whose affiliation with English
lies in learning it as an additional language, and who have had similar experiences of learning English as their students, may well have considerable insights into and empathy with their students as they confront the task of developing proficiency in English. However, the depth of their intuition and insight in to the subtleties of the language use of speakers of the ‘native speaker’ varieties from the Inner circle and the relevant English-speaking culture may be limited by the extent to which they have had the experience of lengthy immersion in an English speaking community. There are many characteristics of teachers in relation to what they can offer in terms of models of the language and culture, and in terms of their insights into the task their students are confronting. The salient point is that teachers need to understand their own capacities and limitations in terms of their ability to provide insight into subtleties and variety within the relevant culture of English, and their ability to relate to their students’ circumstances. They need to understand what they can easily provide, and where they may need to seek supplementary sources of input, or models of the cultures of English relevant to the context in which they are teaching.

The next factor in this dimension is *Ways in which the culture of English is or can be accessed*. This relates partly to the place of English within the society. In some contexts such as the Inner circle ‘ESL’ contexts, it is all pervasive, and the predominant language of daily interaction, schooling, the media, government and business. In others countries, such as in Expanding circle. EFL contexts, it may only be accessible in language teaching texts books, texts produced for specific audiences (such as English language newspapers read mainly by expatriates or visitors to the country) or in certain domains, such as tourism and business, or certain forms of media (for instance movies, made and set in English speaking countries, which may be dubbed in a local language, with the English sound track obliterated, or popular music aimed at a youth market). The significance for the teaching context lies in what aspects of the culture of English students may have ready access to. This in turn has significance for the techniques that may be used for teaching culture.

The final factor in this dimension is *The nature of the dynamics of language change, development, and the pressures influencing this*. In order to better understand and identify the needs of learners and issues relevant to teaching the culture of English,
the dynamics of the context need to be understood. This relates to the nature of changes in relation to the use of English, such as in an Inner circle context, the nature of changes in what is considered appropriate in formal or informal contexts, or the use of vocabulary items in new ways associated with generational change, or trends in the popular culture of the society. In an Outer circle context, this may relate to the attitudes towards incorporation of words from other local languages or code shifting, while in an Expanding circle context it may be the increasing use of English in particular areas of business, or changes in the varieties of English that are encountered or preferred. An awareness of these factors will enable language teaching to be well informed, and the teaching of culture to be mindful of the ways in which English is used, the purposes for using it, and the expectations that apply to its use, which is locally informed, and not dependent on some abstract or idealised ‘standard’.

These factors, of course are not isolated, but are mutually related. The accessibility of a culture of English is related to the place of English in the society, the nature of TESOL teaching is related to this context, learners’ attitudes are shaped by their circumstances and needs, the nature of the capacities of the teachers are related to the other factors involved in the societal and educational context, and so on.

5.4.3 Understanding of what is being taught: The relevant cultures of English

This dimension identifies what is taught as the culture of English in any given context of TESOL. This builds on the discussion in Chapter 4, around the point that the nature of what culture of English is taught will depend on the social context of the teaching.

5.4.3.1 The ‘Cultures of English’ dimension

This dimension is an identification or conceptualisation of the culture(s) of English that are used in, and relevant for, the context of teaching. This is based on an acceptance that there is a wide variety of Englishes spoken around the world, which have corresponding cultures (the Varieties principle). That is not to say that there are not degrees of mutual intelligibility, and common bases between different varieties. Nor is it to deny that when speakers of different varieties interact, allowances are made for the characteristics of different varieties, nor that there is, especially in
writing, a more formal standardised ‘international’ variety of English, mainly
associated with formal communication, that shows minimal traces of origin in a
particular variety. It also includes the possibility that the relevant culture of English
may be associated with the use of English for a particular purpose that transcends
national cultures to some extent (such as described by Swales 1990).

The factors in this dimension help define what is to be taught in this context.

5.4.3.2 The ‘Cultures of English’ factors

The first factor in this dimension is the Variety or varieties of English that are
prevalent in this context, and the expectations that relate to what is seen as
‘acceptable’ use of English, the presence and use of different varieties, and the
degrees of tolerance accorded to varietal variation. There are many potential
situations in this respect. The following description of the nature of the varieties of
English present in Inner, Outer and Expanding circle contexts illustrates something of
the range of possibilities within this factor.

In Inner circle contexts, it is likely that a single national variety, such as Standard
Australian English, is seen as valued, if not preferred, in many contexts such as
education, government, business and the media. But within these contexts there is
likely to be awareness of other Inner Circle varieties of English (such as British
English, Irish English, North American English and so on) which are present either in
numbers of people for whom these are the native varieties (and who make varying
degrees of adjustment in order to be able to operate in the Australian cultural context).
There are also immigrant second language learners whose English reflects to varying
degrees their origins as native speakers of a language other than English. There are
also varying degrees of regional and socially based variation within the language and
culture of that context. What is seen as desirable (or in some contexts mandated)
proficiency involves being able to interact efficiently, with credibility, across a very
wide range of social contexts, with some sensitivity to the nature and extent of
variation, with awareness of the range of varieties utilised and encountered in this
context. In Inner circle contexts, it is likely that many learners, especially those who
begin learning at an early age go further in terms of moving into a language and
culture in ways that resemble native speakers of English in that context. However, they may to varying degrees retain overt characteristics of their home language and cultural affiliation.

In Outer Circle contexts this variety is likely to be the nativised variety of English (such as ‘Singaporean’, ‘Nigerian’ or ‘Indian English’) that is widely spoken and which may even be a native and dominant language for some. These varieties have characteristic of the other dominant local languages in a range of aspects such as phonology, semantics and vocabulary (including the use of words borrowed from other local languages), idioms, to some extent syntax and the conventions associated with the use of a range of texts. In addition, some Inner circle varieties can also be encountered in such contexts. In Expanding Circle contexts, such as Vietnam, the situation is likely to be quite different. In this context, ‘English’ is seen more as a standardised international language (and less as a particular variety), although one native speaker variety (in this case British English\(^2\)) may be seen as a more desirable ‘target of learning’ than another variety (such as ‘American English’). Such varieties of English are evident in English speaking visitors to the country, or in speakers of other languages who visit the country. These visitors may be using English in the context of tourism, business and trade, or aspects of government involving international cooperation, aid or trade. Yet the vast majority of speakers of English in Vietnam are Vietnamese who have developed varying degrees of proficiency in English. Their English can be characterised as a variety of English that can be described as ‘Vietnamese English’. This is a legitimate variety of English, which is marked by certain influences unique to its location in Vietnam. Most significant among these are the phonological patterns of Vietnamese. In addition there are patterns of pragmatics, cultural values and perceptions (value of politeness, of hospitality, of the importance of friendliness, indirectness in expressing disagreement or contradiction, directness in matters to do with certain aspects of personal

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\(^2\) Even the use of such national labels for varieties of English is not unproblematic. There is indeed very considerable variety within such entities, and a more prestigious variety reflecting middle class and educated norms (‘RP’ BBC English are what is meant by such terms), rather than say a regional
information, of respecting social status and so on) which are derived from Vietnamese culture, but which characterise English use in Vietnam. Most significantly, however, is that the vast majority of interactions using English are between Vietnamese speakers of English, and other users of English. These speakers of English may be native speakers of any variety of English, or they may be bi- or multi-lingual, with English as one of a number of languages. Vietnamese users of English set the tone of English use in Vietnam, and non-Vietnamese users of English are expected to make the adaptation to their use of English in this context. For their part, the Vietnamese learners, even while they may express a preference for British English, also need receptive skills in a more ‘generic’ variety of English, in which the more noticeable features of the varieties of native-speaker English (accent, colloquial terminology or more obscure cultural references) are moderated by speakers who have a consciousness that aspects of their usual use of English may present difficulties to their Vietnamese interlocutors. Nonetheless, the Vietnamese learners of English will need to be competent in comprehending speakers of different native speakers varieties of English, with varying accents, lexicons, and to some degree pragmatics, as well as speakers of other languages who use English as a ‘lingua franca’ in Vietnam. In other words, having some degree of skill in using many varieties of English, without the in-depth intimacy (or accent) of a native speaker of an Inner circle variety of English.

An understanding of the characteristics of the cultures that accompany such varieties of English is going to lead to a more realistic goal of learning than a generalised ‘native speaker’ ideal. The analysis of the context of most relevance to learners may also need to be mindful of the potential and likelihood of learners moving into different contexts, such as when students in an Outer or Expanding circle context move to an Inner circle context to further their education or training.

The second factor in this dimension relates to Variation of expectations and practices in different spheres in which English is used. This acknowledges that English is used variety, such as that of Yorkshire, or Cornwall. In Vietnam for many years, ‘British English’ rather than other varieties have been seen as desirable at a policy level.
in different spheres of life with different expectations in relation to the qualities and characteristics of English used. So expectations in an interaction between friends or casual acquaintances, or strangers, are going to be different to those in more formal contexts such as classrooms and assessment tasks, law courts, government offices, public debate, news and information media directed at different audiences. This factor requires analysis in relation to the ranges of expectations learners may be exposed to; where, by whom and so on. This relates both to more formal situations and more personal interactions.

The third factor is the *Social, regional, gender, generational and other socially-based variations in cultural practices associated with English*, which refers to the need for learners to develop understandings of the nature of internal variations within the relevant culture of English.

The final factor in this dimension is *the ways in which the culture(s) of English interact with the cultures of other languages*. Even Inner circle societies exhibit greater cultural diversity as the presence of immigrant and indigenous groups influence the nature of the prevailing cultures of English in these societies. The influence of other cultures is more marked in Outer and Expanding circle contexts. Such understanding is an essential component of the learning of the relevant culture(s) of English.

The factors in this section involve identification of the general nature of the cultures of English to be taught in the particular context. They also enable a finer analysis of the particular sub cultures or the way the language and culture is realised in particular domains of life, and so inform a more finely tuned identification of the target culture for particular students. This is the basis for the development of a cultural curriculum.

### 5.4.4 Culture in the curriculum

#### 5.4.4.1 The ‘Culture in the curriculum’ dimension

This dimension relates to how the culture of English is ‘operationalised’ or ‘packaged’ for teaching purposes, especially in relation to course design and syllabus
development. This builds on notions of the identification of the culture of English as the object of teaching, and moves into the issues related to how the teaching of a culture can be planned or designed. It deals with how the designated ‘target’ culture is presented to and encountered by learners.

In part, this dimension is influenced by and interacts with general theory and approaches to language curriculum design, but in keeping with the general thrust of this framework, it focuses primarily on issues of how culture can be incorporated into the English language curriculum.

5.4.4.2 The ‘Culture in the curriculum’ factors

The most fundamental factor in this dimension is The ways in which language and culture are interconnected and affect and reflect each other. This factor can be labelled as ‘Connections between language and culture at different levels’. The significance of this factor lies in two areas. The first is that there is a close interconnection between linguistic and cultural phenomena, and that both need to be incorporated into the language curriculum, as was discussed in Chapter 4. The second area of significance lies in the different levels of interconnection that can be identified. Crozet & Liddicoat’s (1999) conception of the points of connection, discussed in Section 4.3, provides a practical basis for this, in that teachers can map levels of connection between different levels of language and different levels of culture.

The second factor in this dimension is The extent to which there is culture general and culture specific content. This was also discussed in Chapter 4. The balance between these may reflect differences in context, including the place of English in the society, and the nature of the learners. For learners in an Inner circle context, there is likely to be considerable emphasis on culture-specific content (although the value of culture general learning should not be underemphasized). In an Outer circle context, greater emphasis on culture-general learning may be more appropriate, although some culture-specific learning will also be beneficial.

A third factor in curriculum design and specification is Developing skills as cultural observers and interpreters, to signal that this is an area that should not be overlooked.
in planning the cultural dimensions of language curricula. The rationale for this factor lies in the vastness and fuzzy nature of the phenomenon of ‘culture’. Just as a language is too large to be completely taught and learned in any teaching program, so too (or perhaps much more so) is a ‘culture’. This parallels the notion of ‘learning-how-to-learn’ as a dimension of language curriculum (see Scarino et al. 1988, Vale et al. 1991). The application of this to cultural learning involves the idea that one aspect of teaching culture is the development of skills and attitudes that can help learners to be self-directed and motivated in learning about the culture in their encounters with it. This involves some guidance and direction in looking for information that may be useful in helping to understand a culture, engendering an attitude that both encourages the formation of hypotheses about the culture while alerting them to the dangers of overgeneralisation and the need to balance cultural explanations within the consideration of idiosyncratic factors and other more random and contextual factors to give a tentativeness to conclusions.

The fourth factor in this dimension is the Identification of cultural learning goals relevant to the learning context and the level of linguistic proficiency (and age of learners). Over a decade ago, Stern (1991) considered factors that needed to be taken into consideration, such as the stage of learning, the target language proficiency levels of the learners and their ages. Taking these characteristics into account, together with factors in the ‘Context’ and ‘Culture of English’ dimensions, the process of identifying targets and goals for cultural learning can be identified, with reference to Crozet’s & Liddicoat’s scheme (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999) to ensure that cultural goals cover an appropriate balance for the learners and the circumstances in which they are learning.

This leads to the next factor in this dimension, Identification of significant cultural content, and a planned sequence of provision of input (related to other content). This is the core activity of curriculum and syllabus design: identifying what is to be taught and learned and how culture is to be related to the other linguistic (and other non-linguistic) content of a course. This is a challenging factor, given the difficulties of structuring the learning of two complex, multidimensional phenomena, language and culture. Given the number of components of language and culture that need to be
managed, this will be a complex process that can be planned with a consciousness of both the ways in which language and culture interact, and with exploration of metaphors such as Byram’s notion of a cultural curriculum as beginning at the edges of a jigsaw and working inwards.

The next factor has to do with the nature of the learners’ encounter with the cultural content of the curriculum. This can be labelled *What is encountered explicitly or implicitly, and to what extent the content is encountered experientially, and to what extent it is analysed in some way by learners, teachers and/or teaching resources.* This is a significant factor due again to the nature of cultural phenomena and the guiding principles of this framework. These are that, as mentioned above, cultural phenomena are so vast and in some sense indescribable, that one way for students to encounter them is through some sort of immersion experience. In an Inner circle context the learners and their classrooms may well be immersed in the target culture with it immediately evident in many ways. In Expanding circle contexts there may be an element of ‘immersion’ in an interaction with a native speaker, or viewing of a segment of a movie. From such encounters learners can evoke some sense of the ‘flavour’ of the target culture, including aspects of the interaction that are impossible to describe and analyse in any way. Such experiential contact with the target culture is important for extensive learning, and to avoid the certainty that can be implied when cultural factors are made explicit. Nonetheless, as discussed when considering the Explicitness principle, it is also necessary to explicitly explore either what students notice about the target culture, what learning materials might present, or which the teacher or syllabus designer may see as significant cultural input for the learners.

The final factor in this dimension is *Assessment practices which acknowledge cultural dimensions of language learning and use.* This acknowledges assessment as a significant part of curriculum, on which culture impinges. The salient points in relation to assessment are that if cultural learning is acknowledged as a significant part of language learning, then it needs to be included in assessment practices and criteria, but in ways which are appropriate to the nature of the content (given the ‘fuzziness principle’, and the ‘language-culture connection’ principle, which are described in Section 5.4.7 below). A further cultural dimension to be considered may
be the extent to which the cultural assumptions involved in assessment tasks and practices impinge on the reliability and validity of assessment practices. These factors provide some basis for the development of a cultural curriculum. These include areas in which it is possible to identify goals and the type of learning that needs to take place, as indicated in the overall goals of cultural learning identified in Section 5.2. While there is little guidance in the literature as to how a cultural curriculum can be developed, the cultural dimensions of language identified as relevant to the learners needs, and the most obvious points of difference between the home and target cultures, seem like promising starting points. There are significant issues in this domain, such as the development of valid and reliable procedures and criteria for assessing cultural learning, especially in relation to the subjective dimension of cultural learning, that is, the development of a sense of identity as a bilingual user of English.

Having considered what is to be taught, the next dimension involves how culture is taught and learned. There is, to some degree, an interactive relationship between these dimensions.

5.4.5 The methodological options

5.4.5.1 The ‘Methodology’ dimension.

This dimension deals with ways in which aspects of culture can be taught and learned in TESOL classrooms. This constitutes the how of teaching a culture of English. However, there is an interaction between the curriculum dimension and the methodological dimension, as the nature of what is selected for presentation may well influence how it is presented.

5.4.5.2 The ‘Methodology’ Factors

Within this dimension there are three significant factors. All of these factors relate to the classroom techniques and procedures that classroom teachers, or resource writers, may utilise in order to facilitate and enhance cultural learning within the language classroom.
The first factor is *The nature of the goals of cultural learning activities*. This involves the extent to which a technique focuses on the development of cultural awareness, fluency or identity, and the nature of the emphases given to each of these areas of cultural learning. This helps identify the extent to which learners are being informed, learning to act or reflecting on the extent and nature of themselves as cultural learners in different classroom activities.

The second factor, *the nature of cultural input*, requires teachers to be aware of the nature of the sources of input, and the extent to which they are based on the first hand experience and observations of learners, and the extent to which input has been constructed for learners by the teacher or a resource, or the balance of both types of input. As the discussion of the nature of cultural input in Chapter 4 illustrated, the nature of available input is of contextually-dependent, and there are certain potential advantages and disadvantages of each type of input.

The third factor involves an understanding of *the nature of the focus* of learning activities. The possibilities of moving from a cultural to a linguistic focus, a linguistic to a cultural focus, or adopting an exclusively cultural focus, were also discussed in Chapter 4. A consciousness of the nature of the focus of learning activities will assist teachers to make effective connections between language and culture.

The fourth factor in this dimension is *the nature of Intercultural exploration*. Awareness of this factor will assist teachers in ensuring that learners have opportunities to make appropriate comparison and contrasts between their home culture(s) and the culture of English they are learning, and have opportunities to reflect on their growth as a bilingual user of English.

The fifth factor *Is cultural teaching provided by a framework, or a judicious selection of a variety of techniques?* This relates to whether a teacher chooses to, or is able to, work within some systematic framework. A systematic framework is an explicit procedure, or sequence of steps or stages that is claimed to be applicable to all parts of teaching, such as that offered by Fantini (1997), Cangarajah (1999) or Barraja-
Rohan & Pritchard (1997). The alternative to such a systematic approach is a choice of a variety of strategies and techniques for teaching cultural phenomena, drawn from the wide variety of such techniques and strategies described or advocated in the literature.

The final factor in this dimension \textit{Which techniques have greatest effect in this context?} relates to the impact of different techniques in different contexts. This is part of the usual thinking process of teachers in relation to their teaching of linguistic phenomena, and here involves transfer of that to cultural phenomena. Identification of this as a factor in the framework indicates the need for teachers to explore different techniques with their students, and the need for some research driven data that may provide insights and guidance.

The factors in this dimension assist teachers to be aware of the nature of the ways in which they teach culture and assist cultural learning, and identify areas for them to explore and reflect on in endeavouring to find more effective ways of assisting cultural learning. The use of a systematic approach such as this has two advantages: first, it provides a set of goals and rationales that enable teachers to identify outcomes capable of assessment in each of the three areas of cultural learning; secondly, it provides a systematic basis by which teachers can evaluate the extent of learning and the efficacy of their teaching.

\textit{5.4.6 Professional practice}

\textit{5.4.6.1 The ‘Professional practice’ dimension}

This dimension relates to the ways teachers of ESOL understand and explore the nature of their work, particularly with reference to the implications of the teaching of a culture of English to their students. This involves the way they reflect on their work, their explorations of their work, and the ways in which they relate their work to their ethical standards and frameworks. This dimension refers to teachers as individuals, or collectively as members of a professional group in a school or institution, and collectively across a broader professional group. This dimension involves constant
exploration of the work in other dimensions, and evaluation of the overall impact of teaching the cultural dimensions of the language to groups of learners.

5.4.6.2 The ‘Professional development’ factors

The first factor is based on the general notion of *Learning as a transformative activity: how are learners supported and challenged as they develop, acquire or move into a ‘Third place’?* This acknowledges that language learning is learning that changes people. As well as equipping them with new skills in relation to communicating in the new language, learning a language provides insights into the social and cultural practices of a different group of people, and in relation to the cultural learning involved, a new way of looking at the world, at relationships between people, and of enacting or living out relationships. In learning that is effective, a new sense of identity is created, which may relate not only to an affiliation with speakers of the new language, but also a new sense of what it means to be a member of the cultural group of the native language. This can transcend a sense of affiliation with first and second linguistic and cultural groups and create the ‘Third place’ discussed by Kramsch (1993).

The second factor in this dimension relates to *What is ethical practice for teachers in their role in the transformations of their learners?* In these areas the teacher is an agent of change, and takes on other roles as a representer, and representative of the cultural group of English speakers, as well as a more neutral linguistic and cultural informant. Teachers select what to present and how to present it, and so are representing others, as well as informing their students. They are also socially situated in the ways they do this. The ethical considerations involved and implied in such roles need to be considered. Teachers need to explore the extent to which their practices are consistent with their own value system, and the value systems adopted by professional bodies (for example ACTA 2004).

The next factor *Critical reflection on the implications of practices* is informed by the Critical literature which points out that the consequences of the ‘common sense’ practices of TESOL have the potential to contradict the value systems of the TESOL profession (for example, Benesch 1992). Critical reflection on the implications of
practices is necessary, in order to guard against or mitigate what teachers, their professional bodies, or learners, may regard as potentially harmful consequences of learning of a culture of English. This reflection needs to be on a macro scale, that is, it involves examining the impact of English language teaching on a society wide scale, and on the more focused scale, looking at the consequences of TESOL for particular learners, or groups of learners and the groups they are affiliated with.

The final factor in this dimension is a question about the ways that learners internalise their learning of a culture of English. This is presented as *How do learners appropriate English and make it theirs, i.e. develop identity as English speaking?* This is both a general question, and one that relates to how particular learners in specific contexts develop a sense of themselves as users of English in the relevant context. The question relates not only to the techniques that teachers might use to facilitate this outcome, but to the need for an exploration by teachers of what it means to be a bilingual user of English in the specified context, in order that teachers be better informed about the outcomes as well as the processes of their cultural teaching. The factors in this dimension go beyond the usual teachers’ reflection on and evaluation of their teaching, to increase sensitivity to the personal and social impacts of their work, as raised in Critical theory. This should be informed by an understanding of the tensions involved in helping someone to move into a new cultural system, and respecting the cultural system and background of learners and the communities they belong to.

Having considered each of the dimensions of the framework, it is now time to consider the principles that inform it.

### 5.4.7 The underlying principles

A set of ten principles forms the foundation for the framework. There are ways in which these principles interact and overlap. The principles have been derived from a variety of explorations in the literature, which represent significant understandings about culture that teachers need to constantly bear in mind. These principles guide teachers in their work in planning and implementing the teaching of culture in TESOL. These principles are elaborated in the following sections.
5.4.7.1 The ‘socially situated’ principle

This principle states that ‘The nature of cultural learning depends on the context of your learning, and on the learner’s own starting point’. This is informed by the literature on the place of culture in English Language teaching and the attributes of teachers with different types of affiliation with English reviewed in Chapter 3. It is also strongly related to the ‘context’ dimension already discussed in Section 5.4.1. The statement of this principle identifies the goal of cultural learning as a culture of English that is related to the social context and histories of particular learners, rather than an idealised abstraction that may bear little relevance to the learning needs of students. It also acknowledges that bilingualism is not merely a psycholinguistic phenomenon, but is socially framed, as was discussed in Chapter 4.

5.4.7.2 The ‘language-culture connection’ principle

This principle refers to the constant and symbiotic relationship between language and culture, where each gives realisation to the other. It is based on the conceptualisation of culture as a semiotic system that interacts with language in order to enable communication in particular contexts. This leads to two sub principles:

1. Culture is all those phenomena beyond the linguistic code that enable and influence communication, These connections can be related to different levels of linguistic phenomena, and they can be explored through more general explorations of the nature of culture. Language use depends on cultural insight, and the patterns of the culture are also sustained and developed through changing patterns of language use.

2. In language teaching, it is necessary and useful to provide insight into culture across its different points of connection between language and culture

5.4.7.3 The ‘multidimensional’ principle

This principle is based on the concise understanding of the nature of culture presented in Section 4.3 of Chapter 4. The main points made there were that: a cultural system includes many dimensions, including knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, values, beliefs, behaviours, practices, artefacts and symbols, and understandings about human
beings, their social and physical environment and their interactions between each
other. To some extent, a culture is a feature of the psychology of the individual, to
some extent it is a characteristics of the way of life of a larger group of people, and to
some extent it is the nature of the practices and interactions of these people, who may
grouped in a number of ways, including, but not restricted to, national or linguistic
affiliation. In teaching a culture of English, it is important to be mindful of the
multiplicity of dimensions and phenomena in which learning needs to take place, and
to avoid treating culture as limited to only some of these dimensions.

5.4.7.4 The ‘fuzziness’ principle

This principle is based on the understanding that representations or descriptions of
cultures are actually constructed generalisations about the complex patterns of a
group of people and its members. This understanding draws on the recognition within
the Conventional perspective literature about variety within cultures, and the critiques
from the Post structuralist perspective indicating a danger that traditional conceptions
of culture have the potential to produce overgeneralisation about cultures and
‘essentialisation’ of members of cultural groups, as discussed in Chapter 3. However,
the validity and power of culture as an explanatory concept derived from the
traditional perspective is also accepted. Given their constructed and dynamic and
evolving nature, and the extent to which diversities exist within cultures, teaching of
culture needs to be mindful that cultures are generalised descriptions of tendencies,
rather than firm entities. Teachers need to be tentative and circumspect in the ways
that they present and talk about culture, to ensure that they convey this ‘fuzziness’ to
learners, rather than ‘essentialising’ a culture and the people who are members of the
cultural group.

5.4.7.5 The ‘relativity’ principle

This principle is derived from an understanding of semiotic systems, which is evident
in the early work in linguistic theory on the arbitrariness of linguistic signs of (de
Saussure 1983: 56) and further developed in systemic-functional linguistics (for
example in Halliday 1987). This is that the meaning of a cultural sign lies not within
itself, but in its position in relation to alternative signs. Systemic functionalist
linguistics argues that meaning is derived from the choice of certain linguistic options, which have meaning because those using the language understand the distinctions in meaning and expectations related to the situation. So a polite form (for example, ‘Could you pass the sauce, please?’) is acknowledged as polite because it can be related to possible options which are less polite (for example ‘Give me the sauce!’) or excessively polite or obsequious (for example, ‘Would you kindly be able to pass the sauce, please?’ which of course, could also be considered as rudeness based on sarcasm, depending on the context and features like intonation). The ability to fully interpret and produce meaning in such instances lies in knowledge of a range of the options, rather than only an appropriate form. Therefore, if learners are to understand cultural signs (of whatever nature) they need to have knowledge of a range of signs and their significance, rather than knowledge of only the conventional or expected cultural signs or behaviour in a particular situation. In short, cultural meaning is derived from a knowledge of the other possibilities (and, in a sense, impossibilities) within a culture, and how to interpret the choices that are made of behaving or acting in a particular way rather than others.

The second aspect of this principle lies in relation to how outsiders to a culture perceive that culture, relative to their own culture(s). When observing or operating in a new culture, reactions are initially framed by the ‘settings’ of the first culture. This effect can be quite profound, and extend into highly proficient participation in the target culture (Paulston 1978). This is a basis for the contrastive principle as a basis for teaching culture (see below), but also means that teachers and learners need to be aware that their perceptions of the new culture are likely to be affected by the ‘settings’ of their first culture.

5.4.7.6 The ‘access’ principle

This principle holds that in order to develop competence in interacting within a culture, a learner needs to have access to it in some way. It is the parallel of the notion that ‘input’ is necessary for language acquisition. This principle is supported in the literature from those perspectives that say cultural teaching is important. This cultural input can come in a variety of ways. These include living within the culture, either on an extended or short term basis, or mixing with members of the cultural group (which
could vary from limited contact with individuals, or contact within a group of people from the target culture). Aspects of a culture may be represented through literary means, such as novels, movies, poetry, stories, music and so on. It may be encountered through reference books that seek to explicitly inform about a culture (as in tourist guide books, books for people preparing to living in a particular society, or even an anthropological text).

The issue for TESOL is that the nature of the access a learner has to a culture is likely to either limit the extent of learning and/or shape the type of learning that takes place. Much of the ‘flavour’ of a culture can be perceived in a real way through some in country experience, or even in interaction within groups of members of that culture. Learning about a culture by reading or being told about it can be helpful. But each mode of access also has potential pitfalls. Some long term residents, visitors or ‘outsiders’ fail to notice, or misinterpret what they encounter, which may be significant things for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, a ‘feel’ for the culture and its members can be conveyed through such ‘immersion’ experiences. Conscious learning can present significant learning and understanding, but this can mask subtleties, make things appear more fixed, provide only ‘limited coverage’. TESOL teachers may not have control over the nature of the access learners have to the target culture.

5.4.7.7 The ‘explicit attention and exploration’ principle

This principle is based on the agreement in different parts of the literature that in order to learn about the culture of a language, learners need to attend to what they encounter about a culture, and explore its nature, significance and implications. The principle holds that learning about a culture requires some explicit attention to cultural phenomena, and exploration of the nature of the phenomena, and how different phenomena relate to each other.

This principle builds on the previous principle in stating that as well as having access to the target culture, learners need to explicitly attend to and explore dimensions of the culture. This is in order to ensure noticing, and to acquire a degree and depth of understanding. However, as the Multidimensional principle states, a culture is so extensive that not everything can be attended to in such a way. And there will be
many aspect of culture that learners may experience, which is learned in a more holistic, intuitive way. Cultural learning therefore is likely to be partly inductive learning, and partly deductive learning. The balance between these depends on the nature of the access learners have to the target culture.

5.4.7.8 The ‘contrastive’ principle

This principle is based on the extensive consensus in the literature that a new culture is best understood through comparison with another culture a learner is familiar with, usually the home culture of the learner. Initially, the ‘other’ culture is usually interpreted in terms of the learners’ first culture. Comparison between the home culture is also a means of enabling students to understand the nature of the cultural ‘border crossing’ they will do as bilingual users of English and their mother tongue and other languages they speak. This has implications for course design and methodology.

5.4.7.9 The ‘internalisation and appropriation’ principle

This principle draws partly on the understanding of the need for the development of fluency in language use, and applies the same concept to the notion of operating or ‘being’ in a relatively new and unfamiliar cultural environment. It also draws on insights provided by Canagarajah’s study of learners of English in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah 1999). This study illustrated how learners of English took on and ‘appropriated’ English in ways that were meaningful and useful for them, rather than adopting norms based on generalisations about Inner circle native speakers. In any context, the development of a bilingual identity as a user of English will reflect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the learner, and the nature of their English bilingualism will reflect their social context. In short, learners need to internalise the new culture, to become ‘fluent’ at operating within it. But they will not be doing this as ‘natives’ of the culture: they will operate with their own version of the culture, which will reflect their first culture heritage, and their idiosyncratic characteristics and attitudes towards the new culture.
5.4.7.10 The ‘teacher reflection’ principle

This principle is based on the widely accepted notion that teachers need to be constantly reflecting on their work as part of an on-going process of self evaluation, in order to enhance and improve their practice, especially in relation to their teaching of culture. But bearing in mind the critiques of aspects of TESOL in the critical literature, they need to be particularly mindful of the need to be alert to the consequences of their teaching that may be harmful in terms of their own value systems and the value system of the profession they work in. This includes exploring the ‘hidden’ consequences of their teaching. It involves an awareness that teaching culture is fraught with tensions, dilemmas and even dangers. Primary among these is the tension between acculturation and respect for cultural diversity. Culture is part of identity, and learning another culture is a transformative process, involving issues related to a person’s sense of who and what they are. Teachers need to be constantly reflecting on and exploring the intended and unintended consequences of their culture teaching.

5.5 Escaping the culture conundrum

The framework represents more than a taxonomy of many concepts that emerge from the different perspective in the literature. It relates these to the decisions that teachers need to make in managing and enacting their teaching of a culture of English. It involves addition of cultural concepts to the linguistic concepts usually considered by teachers of ESOL.

Such a framework is necessary given the failure of the TESOL literature to adequately conceptualise the teaching of culture and to provide a conceptual basis for the practical concerns of teachers in their teaching of culture. The complexity of the concepts and the complexity of the literature require clarification if teachers are to find some way of more systematically addressing culture in their teaching of English. This framework has the potential to provide a bridge between the concepts and techniques presented in the literature, and the problems teachers need to resolve in developing more systematic and conscious approaches to the teaching of culture. It is a means of resolving the problem of operationalising the complex, interconnected and
abstract concepts related to culture and language, and finding practical ways of dealing with culture in TESOL course design and classroom teaching.

In the context of the original plan for this research, this framework provides the foundation for the second phase of the research. This was the investigation of professional development products and procedures that assist teachers in finding ways out of the culture conundrum. However, the time required to make this exploration and complete the conceptualisation was extensive. There was insufficient time for the completion of the second phase of the research. This would have required the writing of a program, the organisation of a professional development program, the collection and analysis of data about the program, and evaluation of the findings. The depth of the culture conundrum meant that the investigation intended to resolve it could not take the form that was originally planned.

The investigation produced a framework with potential as a means of escaping the culture conundrum. However, in the form it is presented here it is another piece of conceptualisation added to the literature on culture within TESOL. While a fully documented application of the framework is beyond the scope of the present study, there is scope to at least test its capacity to assist in understanding and shaping TESOL practice in at least two different contexts. This will enable evaluation of the extent to which it can assist in the resolution of the culture conundrum. While time and resource constraints prevent evaluation in practice, an evaluation can be made by testing its usefulness against samples of some widely used teaching materials in two different TESOL contexts.

This evaluation will form the first part of Chapter 6.