1 The significance of negotiation

Michael P. Breen and Andrew Littlejohn

In this chapter, we explore the origins, rationale and nature of negotiated work in a language classroom, setting the scene for the practical accounts which follow. We will principally be concerned therefore with three sets of questions:

1. What is negotiation? Which particular form of negotiation is the focus of this book?
2. What are the justifications for negotiating with students in a language class? What is the rationale for negotiation?
3. Which classroom decisions may be negotiable? How does negotiation relate to a process syllabus?

Although these issues are related to one another, we will explore them in turn in the three sections that follow. As we shall see, the broader concept of 'negotiation' is rather like a river, arising from a variety of small streams and gathering its own momentum eventually to pour in quite different directions over a flood plain. Its theoretical sources are diverse. As it has attracted greater interest in terms of its relevance to research and practice, it has become more defined and differentiated so that it no longer has a single meaning. As this book focuses upon only one of these meanings, it is important to clarify from the outset what we intend by the term and how it is implemented in practice by the contributors to this collection. Building on this initial definition, we will then elaborate upon negotiation in the classroom in more detail by tracing some of the influences that have shaped it and by enumerating the main principles underlying its role in language pedagogy in particular. Finally, we will address certain practical implications for classroom decision-making by describing the relationship between negotiation and a process syllabus in the context of a language course or curriculum. In this chapter, therefore, the focus is upon the theory or philosophy of negotiation as a preliminary to teachers' accounts of its practical application in Chapters 2 to 17. In Chapter 18, we will draw theory and practice together in deducing what may be learned from both.

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Forms of negotiation

Negotiation typifies and generates the ways we communicate through written or spoken texts. We can distinguish three kinds of negotiation in terms of the main purposes they serve in particular contexts of communication. We may call these personal, interactive and procedural negotiation. All three involve a struggle for meaning and all three entail the reduction of our uncertainty during learning or communication – both psychological uncertainty and, to differing extents, social or inter-personal uncertainty. All three are related and can co-occur.

Personal negotiation

Personal negotiation is primarily a psychological process because it engages such mental capacities as discriminating, analysing and synthe-sising, memorising or recalling, and so on. When we interpret meaning from what we read or hear, negotiation occurs between the potential meanings of the written or spoken text and those meanings which we ourselves can attribute to that text from our previous knowledge and experience (Widdowson, 1978). For example, we are all familiar with the experience of 'gaining' more meaning than we had given previously to a novel or a poem when we read it a second time and with our inclination to superimpose our own interpretations upon items in a news broadcast. Such interpretative negotiation is likely to result in different meanings being derived from the same text by different people. Similarly, when we express meaning in what we write or say, we have to negotiate between what we intend to mean and our knowledge of the forms of expression which the rules and conventions of writing and speaking will allow. In certain situations, we are well aware of the frustrations of struggling for the right word or form of expression, whilst we are likely to be most conscious of this mental negotiation when we are trying to write something which we want to make very clear.

Negotiation in this sense therefore refers to the unobservable and complex mental processing that occurs in our search for understanding and our efforts to be understood. This kind of negotiation underlies all the negotiating we do. Meaning is made in our heads, although, of course, the meanings we interpret and express are likely to have been learned in previous social activities and can be regarded as having their roots in the cultural and social worlds which we inhabit. The second two kinds of negotiation are motivated by this mental process and, in turn, serve to influence it in an ongoing way. If we seek meaning through language, personal negotiation is unavoidable whilst interactive

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and procedural negotiation are always optional and located in overt social activity.

Interactive negotiation

The original use of the term 'negotiation' in the sense we refer to it here derives from researchers investigating the nature of conversational interaction (Garfinkel, 1967). Here the negotiation is overtly social and occurs when people use language either to indicate their understanding or their failure to understand (or , indeed, believe) what another person has said, or in order to modify and restructure their language to make things clearer so that they will be understood. The significance of this for language learning was originally recognised by Evelyn Hatch when she explored how learning might actually *derive* from the kinds of interaction in which learners may be involved (Hatch, 1978). This radical departure from the accepted view that the capacity to communicate was an outcome of the necessary *prior and explicit* learning of the forms of language coincided with Krashen's influential argument that language acquisition primarily depends upon the provision to learners of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981; 1985).

In representing a synthesis of Hatch's assertion of the importance of conversation and Krashen's assertion of the centrality of appropriate input, M. Long identified the interactive process as pivotal for language acquisition. He elaborated upon the interaction in which a listener requests clarification of someone else's message and the speaker subsequently repeats, simplifies or elaborates upon the original message as the location in which teachers and learners seek and create comprehensible input (M. Long, 1981). He was encouraged in this view by his and others' discovery that this kind of modified interaction occurred more frequently when native speakers communicated with non-native speakers and even more frequently when non-native speakers communicated with each other, particularly in language learning tasks. Debates on the relative contributions of input and interaction have characterised much of second language acquisition (SLA) research since the mid-1970s. Long and other researchers who acknowledged the centrality of conversational interaction in SLA later adopted the term 'negotiation' to describe it and, more recently, specified it as 'negotiation for meaning' (for a review of this work, see Pica, 1994). Interactive negotiation, therefore, occurs in an ongoing and usually spontaneous way within immediate social activity. From the perspective of language acquisition research, however, it also has a psycholinguistic purpose in that it is seen as a facilitative means for generating comprehensible input.

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Procedural negotiation

The primary function of personal and interactive negotiation is to uncover and share meaning. Like interactive negotiation, whilst it is also overt and social in nature, the primary focus of procedural negotiation is less upon meaning than upon reaching agreement. Although both understanding and sharing meaning are entailed in the process, these are subordinate to the main aim of procedural negotiation. This kind of negotiation is exemplified by discussions between people who are likely to have different interests or different points of view but who seek to reach agreement on a matter, solve a shared problem or establish ways of working that are acceptable to them. This view of negotiation is probably the interpretation that is used most in everyday usage, and it is regularly used to refer to what diplomats, or trade unions and employers do when differences between various parties arise.

Its relevance to language learning arises because, for many people, such learning occurs in the social context of a classroom. Here, the primary function of procedural negotiation is managing teaching and learning as a group experience. There are certain key decisions which have to be made within this process. These include: who will work with whom, in what ways, with what resources and for how long, upon what subject matter or problem, and for what purposes. In other words, decisions have to be made with regard to the purposes of the work, its particular focus or content, and the ways in which it will be undertaken in the classroom group. In addition, we need to know the extent to which the actual decisions made have been appropriate in enabling the achievement of the chosen objectives. Outcomes from the process have to be evaluated in some way. Conventionally, it is assumed that it is the role of the teacher to make these decisions, both covertly as part of planning and classroom management and through overt instructions to students at key moments in a lesson. As we see in the next part of this chapter, there are several justifications for raising such decisions to the level of overt negotiation *with* students. However, one major justification echoes what we identified as the motivations for both personal and interactive negotiation: reaching and sharing understanding.

We can exemplify this motive in classroom language learning with reference to the common situation of a teacher having to lead students through a pre-designed syllabus which entails specific learning objectives. The teacher has to mediate between the requirements of the syllabus and the different learning agendas of the students in the class. These diverse personal agendas are shaped by the students' prior knowledge and experience, including their earlier experiences of classroom learning. Learning agendas comprise the learners' own learning

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priorities, their changing learning needs, their different preferred strategies and styles of learning, the different value and functions they give to the language classroom and the people in it, and so on. Such agendas inevitably generate a wide range of interpretations – some of which are unconscious – of the objectives of learning and appropriate content. Similarly, there are a range of preferred ways of learning and differences in how people think they should work in a classroom setting. However, the teacher often has to navigate all the students through a set syllabus towards specific objectives. To achieve this, and responding to emerging learner needs and difficulties, the teacher is the person who most often makes decisions of the kind we identified earlier. The result is the *actual* syllabus of the classroom which is an unfolding compromise between the original pre-designed syllabus and the individual teacher's alertness to those aspects of learner agendas that may be revealed during classroom work.

The teacher's interpretation of a syllabus and reasons for classroom decisions are usually covert. Similarly, learners' own unfolding interpretations of what is done in the classroom and how it relates to their own learning agendas are rarely the focus of overt consideration. Just as the compromise syllabus is essentially the teacher's creation, so it is also differentially interpreted by the students, and it is unlikely to accommodate the more opaque aspects of the diverse language learning agendas of the classroom group. The result is likely to be a lack of harmony between the different versions of syllabuses in the class that, in turn, has the potential to inhibit, disrupt or delay the learning process.

A major purpose of procedural negotiation in the classroom is, therefore, to reach a shared understanding at appropriate moments in classroom work of both the requirements that may be implicit in, for example, an external syllabus or the teacher's experientially informed view of efficient ways of working and the different learning agendas in the class. Through this ongoing process of explicit accommodation, a collective language curriculum of the classroom group can be gradually evolved. Procedural negotiation in the language classroom comprises overt and shared decision-making through which alternative assumptions and interpretations are made clear, the range of achievements and difficulties in the work are identified, and preferences and alternatives in ways of working can be revealed and chosen so that the teaching–learning process within a class can be as effective as possible. *It is this kind of procedural negotiation and the practical experiences of it that is the focus of this book and which defines the nature of a process syllabus.*

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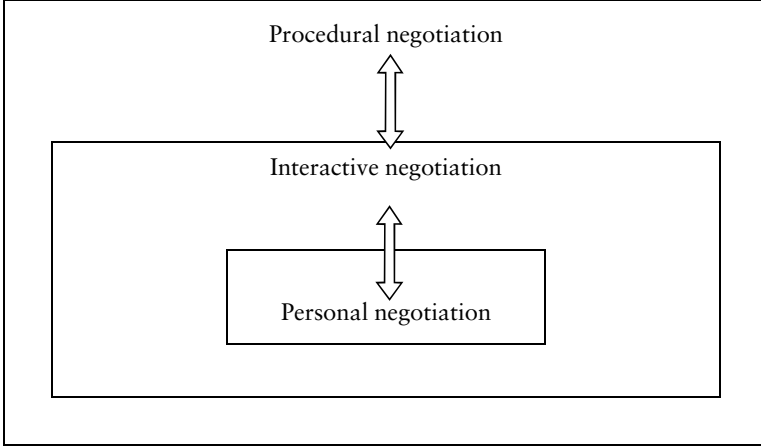
Figure 1.1   Relationship between three kinds of negotiation

Negotiation and language learning

Although we have emphasised the potential contribution of procedural negotiation to the language classroom, all three forms of negotiation which we have identified are highly relevant for language learning. Learners must engage in personal negotiation as a psychological process in order to learn to interpret and express meaning in a new language. If given appropriate scope to occur, interactive negotiation (sharing, checking and clarifying meanings) and procedural negotiation (reaching agreement on decisions) will be part of the communicative and social activity of a language class. Also, and importantly, all three are related. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the relationship is one of interactivity and entailment. Procedural negotiation entails interactive negotiation for meaning; the search for agreement in decisions requires the resolution of failures to understand or the struggle to be clear. Interactive negotiation is motivated by the wish to interpret personally what is said or express a particular point of view. We can also describe the process in reverse, where the personal struggle to express meaning, for example, is likely to entail noticing when one is not understood and the consequent effort to reformulate or elaborate on one's meaning. Such interactive work will occur in an ongoing and spontaneous way while seeking agreement in relation to a decision about classroom work.

A major significance of procedural negotiation for the language classroom is that it calls upon and activates both personal and interactive negotiation while, in turn, contributing to their scope and quality

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during learning. All three are mutually supportive processes for developing the capacity to communicate in a new language.

In identifying procedural negotiation of classroom decisions as the particular focus of this book, we have so far emphasised two of its purposes. First, when language learning is undertaken in a classroom group, negotiation is a means for developing a harmonious relationship between three teaching–learning agendas: any external requirements upon the learning in terms of pre-specified knowledge and capabilities, individual learning agendas and the evolving collective curriculum of the group. Second, procedural negotiation entails and engages personal and interactive negotiation as processes for the expression of meanings and the sharing of understandings. All three kinds of negotiation underlie and refine a person's use of language. When we consider the learning of a language, we readily recognise that personal and interactive negotiation are essential. A central argument here is that one of the major purposes of procedural negotiation in a language class is to intensify opportunities for the enactment of personal and interactive negotiation. There are, however, additional and deeper justifications for negotiated decision-making of this kind which we explore in the next section.

The rationale for negotiation

In this section, we present a number of key principles on which negotiation in the language classroom rests. These principles have a long history and express a range of motivations for negotiation with students in classroom settings. We begin, however, with a brief account of influences from theory, research and practice that have shaped them.

The roots of the concept of negotiation in learning

It is not too grandiose a claim to suggest that the direct engagement of students in their learning through democratic decision-making has its roots in the Enlightenment and classical liberalism. The original concept of liberalism, becoming enacted in the gradual spread of democratic forms of government subsequent to the French Revolution, has since been colonised and thereby distorted by state and corporate capitalism – as has the word 'democracy' which, in our own times, is often appealed to on behalf of policies and actions of the powerful that are the least democratic. However, the principles of classical liberalism informed what Bertrand Russell identified as 'the humanist conception' of social development in the first part of the twentieth century. Both Russell in Europe and John Dewey in the USA explored the

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relationships between an emergent democratic society and an educational enterprise that might give rise to democratic citizenship.

Russell saw education as a means for asserting values over domination and compliance and, crucially, as a means for developing a wise and creative citizenry of a free community to replace the more inegalitarian and dehumanising features of the industrial revolution (B. Russell, 1926). Dewey, writing on education mainly in the years of the Great Depression of the 1930s coincident with the rise of dictatorships in Europe, asserted a humanist conception of education in the context of what he saw as a real struggle for genuine democracy. The expansion of corporate industrial power represented to him, an evolved form of feudal and elitist social structure that classical liberalism had sought to replace. He saw education in the twentieth century as the means towards freedom and independence in thought and action within a co-operative venture towards common goals for the good of the majority rather than a plutocratic minority. And he believed that the educational process should encourage open-mindedness, wholehearted involvement and, significantly, a sense of responsibility to oneself and the wider community (Dewey, 1933; 1938).

The wellspring of these proposals within a humanist conception of education, virtually choked by the horrendous divisions of the Second World War and the subsequent 'Cold War' between western interests and those of state communism, later came to the surface in two distinct streams of theory and research. The first emerged in the work of psychologists who asserted a perspective on human beings as more active agents in their own learning than behaviourism had allowed. The second, coinciding with the significant cultural innovations of the 1960s, emerged in the critical assessments of dominant models of western education by a large number of writers. These streams of influence touched upon or anticipated significant developments in linguistics which were to have a later impact upon both research in second language learning and upon language pedagogy.

The innovations in the psychology of learning were exemplified by the work of George Kelly, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers in the 1950s and 1960s. Kelly based his influential notions regarding how we conceptualise our world through personal constructs on the view that all learning is analogous to scientific investigation and the construction of empirically or, more precisely, experientially informed theories (Kelly, 1955). A central idea in his view was that we learn, not by forming habits of behaviour or accumulating wisdom as it is presented to us, but when confronted with discontinuity, puzzles or paradoxes. We best learn at moments when we *must* reduce our own uncertainty. Maslow and Rogers, reflecting a strong focus on the individual that exemplified

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western psychology, somewhat misleadingly interpreted humanism primarily in terms of a 'person-centred' agenda for 'self-actualisation' through education. In most thoroughly exploring the facilitative role of the teacher within such an agenda, Rogers directly addressed the power and control relations that he saw as existing in 'conventional' education (Rogers, 1969). He envisioned teachers as providing the 'psychological climate' in which learners are able to take responsible control over their own learning. Although identifying power and control as located in interpersonal relations, he did not extend his vision to broader political and social action. This wider perspective would arise later from other sources, mainly European. However, Rogers, like Maslow, argued for a reduction of emphasis upon content-based and fixed-learning outcomes in favour of opening up a space for learners' diversity in learning needs and objectives through a focus upon the process or experience of learning which could be seen as generative and of life-long value. These 'humanistic' perspectives were carried through in certain new directions in language teaching in the 1970s, particularly in the USA exemplified by Moskovitz (1978) and the innovations described by Stevick (1976; 1990). However, as we shall see, another critic of the behaviourist constructs of human learning was to have a significant, though perhaps indirect, impact upon second language teaching.

Meantime, of even more long-term significance for the roots of procedural negotiation in the classroom, and coincident with the growing civil-rights movement, more overtly critical perspectives on the inequalities and divisiveness of contemporary American education were being identified in the work of Holt (1964), Kohl (1968) and Kozol (1967), among others. Their demands for school reform were expressed in terms of the urgent need for more socially inclusive and explicitly democratic forms of pedagogy and curricula (Postman and Weingartner, 1969). Dewey's original agenda was being rewritten at a time when his predictions about the underlying inequalities of American society were being more widely acknowledged.

Educators outside the USA were, meantime, widening this debate. Ivan Illich (1971) asserted that conventional schooling had gone beyond redemption not least because it served the interests of power and wealth in its construction of compliant consuming citizens. Like Russell before him, Illich asserted the need for a return to 'vernacular values' and he identified these as being rooted in community endeavour that was typified by authentic democracy. Paulo Freire's work, primarily in adult literacy in Latin America, similarly located emancipatory education within local cultural action and proposed worthwhile learning as essentially an outcome of social collaboration (Freire, 1970; 1972). Recently, Freire's ideas in particular have been taken up most directly in

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relation to language teaching through Auerbach's proposals concerning a participatory pedagogy (Auerbach, 1990; 1995; see also Wolfe-Quintero, Chapter 17 of this volume).

In Britain, echoing Russell's and Dewey's liberal democratic agenda for the schooling of young people with an emphasis upon collaborative responsibility rather than competition, and choice rather than coercion, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a range of practical initiatives within mainstream, state schooling. These included the Plowden Committee's learning-centred agenda for primary education (Plowden, 1967) and the establishment of the first comprehensive high schools intended to replace the binary division between grammar schools (which selected their intake on the basis of seeming academic potential) and secondary schools (for all other students). Both these initiatives attracted strong resistance at the time and ever since from more conservative circles. Coincident with such innovation was a growing interest in less conservative circles in alternative forms of schooling, perhaps most notably in A. S. Neill's Summerhill in which he had transformed liberal views of education into practice thirty years previously, at a time when Russell's and Dewey's ideas were still relatively new (Neill, 1937; 1962; Hennings, 1972).

More liberal directions in practice coincided with critical explorations in theory. Detailed analyses of the transmission of knowledge in schooling in terms of an asymmetry of power and its implications for control in the teaching–learning process were undertaken by a number of British sociologists of education (for example, Bernstein, 1967; Young, 1971). In terms of curriculum innovation, the tenor of this debate in Britain was, perhaps, most accessibly articulated in Lawrence Stenhouse's work (Stenhouse, 1975). In the same climate of critical evaluation, and echoing Bernstein's ideas regarding access to, and control of, knowledge, Douglas Barnes and his co-writers challenged prevailing transmission modes of education with specific reference to the language used in schools and classrooms (Barnes *et al.*, 1969). This remarkable critique initiated a focus among educators upon language across the whole curriculum and anticipated Britten's assertion of the need to see students as active communicating participants rather than quiet spectators in schooling, and Barnes' exploration of small group processes as a means for genuinely interpretative learning. Later advocates of direct student participation through their negotiation of aspects of curriculum, particularly aspects relating to language and literacy, have often cited the work of these authors as highly influential (see, for example, Boomer *et al.*, 1992).

This remarkable upsurge of ideas and action of the 1960s and 1970s flows more recently into the assertively critical work on education in

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feminist writing and within what we may identify with a post-modern perspective. It is within these that European tributaries of theory and research on emancipatory forms of education begin to dominate the landscape, although the writings of Giroux (1981) and Apple (1986), both North American, perhaps most directly explore implications for teaching and learning in the coming time. Such writers, echoing some of the critics of the limitations of education in the 1960s and 1970s, share the view that pedagogy based upon genuine dialogue both between teachers and taught and also between students is a crucial process characterising emancipatory educational practices. This concern with the contrast between emancipatory and oppressive pedagogies exemplifies European post-modern critiques of contemporary society which derive much of their evidence from theory and research on discourse (amongst others, see Fairclough, 1989). A particular critical stance in our own language teaching profession which identifies coercion and colonisation through certain language education practices has been taken up by a number of writers (see, for example, contributors to Tollefson, 1995). Of course, the post-modern critique of what is seen as the oppressive role of conventional education in our present society goes much further than a humanist or liberal stance, actually questioning the Enlightenment reliance upon 'rationality' and the plausibility of a classical liberalism agenda. What, though, of the more direct impact of this evolution of thinking upon the teaching of language? The twin influences of the 'humanistic conception' of Russell and Dewey and a recognition of the essentially social nature of the learning process – expressed through the critique of its failure to be genuinely democratic in meeting the needs of different groups of learners – can also be traced in certain key developments in views of language learning and teaching since the 1970s.

Chomsky shared with 'humanistic' psychologists a critical disdain for the limitations of behaviourist views of learning but from the perspective of Cartesian and, thereby, Enlightenment thinking, whilst also signalling radical directions for linguistics (Chomsky, 1968). He asserted that he had little to say about language teaching, but his views on the untutored nature of language acquisition and our underlying competence of language knowledge have had lasting effects upon theory and research in our field. Debates about what is innate and what is or is not teachable have dominated second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research to the present time, while the notion of competence, coinciding with the remarkable emergence of sociolinguistic research in the early 1970s, indirectly shaped possibly the most significant shift in our views about language pedagogy in recent years. In what follows, we briefly trace each of these two developments.

Chomsky's assertion, supported by child language research in the 1970s, that a child acquires his or her first language largely without overt teaching by caretakers was extrapolated as part of the first substantial theory of SLA in terms of Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning and, especially, the primacy of the former. For Krashen, the crucial condition for acquisition to take place was the provision to the learner of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981; 1985). To date, the significance he attributed to the primacy of the meaning of a new language as the crucible for acquisition remains largely unquestioned in mainstream SLA research except in the matter of how learners might best develop it. Building upon the growth of later studies in first language acquisition which identified interaction between caretakers and young children as the arena for language development, Long launched a research agenda for SLA – currently identified as a 'social interactionist' perspective – which sees interactive negotiation as the means for the creation and uptake of comprehensible input (M. Long, 1981). From such a perspective, the process of language acquisition is extended beyond the mere interaction between input data and the learner's mind to overt negotiation for meaning within social relationships.

The presently influential social interactionist research in SLA also identifies the seminal work of Evelyn Hatch as a formative influence. Through her analysis of the discourse of caretakers and language learners, Hatch revealed that the kinds of conversation in which they participated provided highly appropriate scaffolding for the learning of new linguistic forms (Hatch, 1978; 1992). This concept of scaffolding derives, of course, from the work of Vygotsky who explicitly located learning both *within* social activity and *as* social activity (Vygotsky, 1962). A central process in Vygotsky's account of learning is the scaffolding during a shared activity provided by social interaction between a learner who is not yet capable of independently achieving something and a person who is already knowledgeable and capable. As Hatch revealed when examining caretaker interaction with young learners, caretaker contributions to the flow of conversation, elaboration or reformulation of learner utterances, and input of appropriate vocabulary at certain moments all enabled young learners to contribute to the conversation and to express and understand new meanings. For Vygotsky, the potential for development through social interaction with someone more capable is greater than that which a learner can achieve independently; the difference being referred to as the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1962).

In terms of current directions in the psychology of education, it is significant that the work of Vygotsky is seemingly being rediscovered,

not least in the language-teaching profession. His ideas are currently seen to inform a 'sociocultural' perspective on language teaching which partly echoes humanist psychological views of the learner as an *active agent* in the process (Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf and Appel, 1994). However, following the ideas of Leont'ev, one of Vygotsky's successors, sociocultural theory identifies agency as social action and places it within particular contexts or 'activity'. 'Activity' is used in a special sense by sociocultural theorists to refer to the inter-personal nature or inter-subjectivity of collaborative action, the specific settings of colla-borative action, and how actions are actually carried out in those settings (Leont'ev, 1981; Donato and McCormick, 1994).

Turning from views on how language is acquired to Chomsky's concept of underlying competence, the almost simultaneous emergence and expansion of sociolinguistic research enabled Dell Hymes to challenge the apparent narrow mentalism of Chomsky's formulation of underlying linguistic knowledge and to extend it in terms of our knowl-edge of appropriate *use* of language in social situations (Hymes, 1971). It is fair to suggest that Hymes' notion of communicative competence provided one of the key theoretical reference points for the most significant development in language teaching from the late 1970s onwards. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) reflected a sea change which initially extended our view of the aims and content of language courses. The focus shifted to language use and specifically in terms of notions or frameworks of meaning and, in particular, commu-nicative functions within discourse (Widdowson, 1978). Language learning therefore came to be seen as the development of a range of competencies for use in addition to linguistic knowledge (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Largely because of the significant impetus provided by functionally based pedagogic frameworks of language developed at that time by the Council of Europe, debates about the distinctiveness of CLT centred upon what should be the aims and subject matter of language teaching. Innovations in the design of content syllabuses therefore tended to dominate early formulations; defining language use upstaged discus-sions of how teaching might contribute to its actual development. Perhaps inevitably, this initial narrow focus prefaced the subsequent fragmentation of what the profession intended by the term 'commu-nicative language teaching' so that there are now different lines of development emerging from it. For some proponents of CLT, a primary concern with communicative objectives and content persists, as in certain special-purpose course designs or in a concern with authenticity of classroom texts. For others, *how* the capacity to use language is acquired is the more significant issue. Informed by developments in

second language acquisition research, various 'task-based' approaches to language teaching may be seen to exemplify this concern (Long and Crookes, 1992). Similarly, 'learner-centred' syllabus design, minimally in terms of the analysis of learner needs or more overtly involving degrees of negotiation with learners, appears to reflect a stronger focus on learning than upon the content to be learned (Nunan, 1988b; Tudor, 1996).

Just prior to these two developments and in direct response to the initial preoccupation within the CLT movement with appropriately communicative syllabuses, Breen and Candlin proposed a broader *curriculum* framework for CLT. This articulation of a broader view of the possibilities of CLT was influenced by developments in how socio-linguists were investigating and describing language use, by the critiques of prevailing transmission modes of education, and by emerging strands within second language acquisition research at that time (Breen and Candlin, 1980). Defining CLT in curriculum terms enabled language content and classroom methodology to be seen as inextricably related and a specifically communicative perspective on the teaching–learning *process* in the classroom could therefore be explored. A central tenet derived from this perspective was that teachers and students should have the opportunity to undertake procedural negotiation in relation to the curriculum on which they are working as a facilitative and authentic environment for the personal and interactive negotiation processes which current research was identifying as underlying the use and learning of language. Given the preoccupation in the early 1980s with what should serve as appropriate communicative syllabuses (Brumfit, 1984), both writers further explored the implications of negotiation for syllabus design in particular.

Candlin argued that any pre-designed syllabus was rendered redundant from the moment teacher and students began working and that the only genuine syllabus would be a retrospective account of what the work had covered and what had been achieved from it (Candlin, 1984). Breen formulated the concept of a process syllabus in order to locate the conventional content syllabus more explicitly *within* and as *mediated by* the teaching–learning process. In addition, a process syllabus was proposed as a reference point for teachers who wished to engage students explicitly in evolving the actual curriculum of the classroom. The place of such procedural negotiation within the framework of a process syllabus is the focus of the third section of this chapter (see pp. 29ff.). First we need to summarise the theoretical and research motivations for negotiation in the language classroom to which we have so far referred.

The principles underlying negotiation in the language classroom

This necessarily brief historical account of some of the main theoretical and empirical roots of procedural negotiation in language teaching has identified four major perspectives. First, a view of learning contextualised in a wider society in which student responsibility and co-operation during learning can be seen as expressing and enabling participation as a citizen in democratic processes. Second, a view of learning as emancipatory, in contrast to 'conventional' education which may be socially divisive and requiring compliance to the hegemony of a dominating minority. Third, a view of learning as located in social and cultural action wherein what is learned and how it is learned are collaboratively shaped. Finally, a view of the learner as an active agent of his or her learning in which the interpretation and control of knowledge is an attribute of the learner rather than as someone positioned as a mere recipient of selected and transmitted knowledge previously determined as appropriate by others.

In addition to these four perspectives on learning and the learner, our historical overview also identified certain key developments in language pedagogy. Second language research identifies interactive negotiation for meaning within discourse as the crucible for acquisition. A basic tenet of communicative language teaching is that the student is learning to become a member of a new speech community through the development of communicative competence. Personal and interactive negotiation for meaning underlie such competence. Given that many learners learn a language in a classroom group, it has been argued from the perspective of communicative language teaching that opportunities for overt negotiation about the classroom curriculum provide a springboard for the other forms of negotiation and for authentic language use about matters that are of immediate significance to learners.

The principles underlying the use of negotiation in the language classroom can therefore be derived from these four perspectives on learning and the learner and from these more specific proposals within second language research and pedagogy. Given that such perspectives and proposals often flow into one another, even from diverse tributaries of thinking and research, the principles we deduce inevitably overlap. However, six key principles can be identified as follows:

- Negotiation is a means for responsible membership of the classroom community.
- Negotiation can construct and reflect learning as an emancipatory process.

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- Negotiation can activate the social and cultural resources of the classroom group.
- Negotiation enables learners to exercise their active agency in learning.
- Negotiation can enrich classroom discourse as a resource for language learning.
- Negotiation can inform and extend a teacher's pedagogic strategies.

In the following sections, we briefly elaborate upon each of these principles in turn.

Negotiation is a means for responsible membership of the classroom community

If we are to learn anything from the history of the twentieth century, it seems clear that mere compliance and consumption in line with the hegemony of the powerful and wealthy actually undermine the rights and security of many people. The coming time appears to need, perhaps more than ever before, people who are self reliant and flexible in their working lives, socially responsible rather than merely self-seeking and collaborative rather than competitive in their dealings with other people. Genuine liberty as exercised through democratic processes depends on informed, questioning citizens who are capable of choosing and discarding and who can think issues through and take responsibility for their decisions and, crucially, be responsible for the impact of such decisions on others.

Any classroom, in its social composition, is a microcosm of the wider society in which it is located. For it to function, a classroom community realises its own values and priorities through either implicitly or explicitly accepted procedures and routines. In this way, a classroom culture can be more or less democratic in the original meaning of this term. The more explicitly ways of working are agreed, the more likely a collaborative approach to achieving shared goals can be fostered. Inevitable tensions between the priorities of the individual in relation to the group are more likely to be worked through and resolved. Additionally, the class of learners is more likely to see itself as a learning community with mutual responsibilities. This may perhaps be seen as a large agenda for the language classroom. However, if we accept that learning a language in a group is inherently a social process with the likely purpose of becoming a member of another community of speakers, we may see that the concept of community endeavour may not be inappropriate.

As a number of feminist and post-modern thinkers in education have argued, our present social and political conditions signal an urgent need

for classroom pedagogies that enable learners to uncover the relationship of knowledge to power and vested interests. In this sense, learning a language might be seen as either the taking on of a potentially oppressed identity (see, amongst others, Tollefson, 1995) or as a means of access to greater personal adaptability and influence. It has the potential to provide the student with cultural and intellectual resources and, thereby, the practical means and strategies to seek further knowledge and to challenge structures in society that operate in an oppressive way. Learning a language can also facilitate understanding of cultural diversity and provide access to such diversity as a resource. The recognition and maintenance of cultural diversity is both a means towards and an attribute of genuine democracy. As Nancy Lester put it, negotiation in the classroom, in its microcosmic way, can serve as 'a process through which our beliefs about and our enactments in the social, political, and cultural spheres might be transformed' (Lester, 1992: 214). Perhaps the most obvious enactment of these spheres in the classroom – though not the only one – can be seen in the conventional institutional roles of the teacher and the learners. Negotiation between teacher and learners and among learners necessarily entails different ways of enacting these roles. In this way, it may support learners' capabilities to participate in a responsible and self-empowering manner in the world beyond the classroom and, crucially, as a member of a new speech community and culture.

Negotiation can construct and reflect learning as an emancipatory process

A pedagogy that does not directly call upon students' capacities to make decisions conveys to them that either they are not allowed to or that they are incapable of doing so; or it may convey that the more overt struggle to interpret and plan is not part of 'proper' learning. In classrooms that require conformity to externally determined decisions mediated through the teacher and/or to those of the teacher, students have to try to make sense of the curriculum covertly as best they can or withdraw into surviving as an individual not wishing to appear out of place. Learning becomes, at best, a lonely guessing game or, at worst, simply oppressive.

The potential for emancipation can be identified in a learner's stance as a citizen in the wider society and as a seeker of new knowledge and capabilities in *any* context. Additionally, as we have argued, entering a language community as a new member has emancipatory potential. When a person enters a classroom he or she may or may not be enabled to exercise autonomy, the active expression of emancipation.

Autonomous action is typified by thinking and acting according to one's own principles rather than habitually conforming to someone else's. It can, thereby, express the relationship to oneself as a learner. In the context of a transmissive classroom, the learner is most often obliged to 'exercise' this autonomy by conforming to the ways knowledge, teaching and learning have been defined previously by others. Autonomy becomes enacted as overtly passive and individualist. A classroom based upon negotiated knowledge and procedures allows the learner to exercise autonomy on an equal footing with others in the group and as a contribution to the good of the learning community.

Negotiation within the classroom therefore promotes a learner's power of learning and interdependency in learning when appropriate. However, negotiation entails freedom with discipline. It does *not* mean 'anything goes'. Collaborative decision-making requires the constant balancing of an individual agenda with everyone else's. It also requires the constant balancing of particular goals, be they negotiable or not, with personal purposes and preferences for learning. In the classroom group, genuine autonomy has to be exercised in an interdependent way. Autonomous learning within a group also requires opportunities for critical self-reflection in relation to the learning and ongoing group reflection at appropriate moments so that outcomes from shared decisions can be traced. Classroom negotiation entails evaluation of outcomes from activities and how they were undertaken as a pivotal moment for such reflection. The exercise of emancipatory learning in a classroom can therefore be identified as the shared task of evolving and adapting the curriculum according to emerging needs, difficulties and achievements. Through this, learners construct and reconstruct their own learning both as individuals and as a group, and this kind of social action can also contribute to a learner's self-directed learning beyond the classroom and into the wider community.

Negotiation can activate the social and cultural resources of the classroom group

The knowledge constructed in a classroom, because it evolves through a collective process – through the texts, the classroom discourse and the social practices of the group – is greater than any single individual could create, including the teacher. If the social process is *explicitly* directed at the negotiation of alternative understandings and proposals rather than subjected to 'approved' understandings or the understanding of a single person, the learning can entail a sense of ownership rather than mere reproduction. As a group, teacher and learners work towards new understandings; what is learned, being investigated and shaped through

a shared process becomes knowledge that is diverse, dynamic and open to new possibilities.

In the classroom, language input through different media and student output are, most often, channelled through social interaction. In this way, the language made available to be learned is constructed within classroom discourse. In addition to shaping what can be learned, the interpersonal processes of the class also shape how the teaching and learning is actually undertaken. Explicit negotiation about such issues enables exploration and trying out of alternative interpretations as well as uses of the new language and alternative ways of working. The latter can provide opportunities for the individual to extend a repertoire of learning strategies in addition to discovering and refining ways of learning in a group that may have life-long relevance. In this way, participating in negotiation in the language class can contribute towards the disembedding of language learning from the more commonly constrained and relatively predictable discourse of the classroom. It can anticipate and provide the foundations for the student's participation through the new language in *other* discourse contexts beyond the classroom.

Learning a language can be seen as a personal means towards broader cultural engagement and identity. It can entail the taking on of cross-cultural membership and, through negotiation, the classroom culture can be seen as a crucible for this. Just as it is a microcosm of the wider society, a classroom is multicultural in terms of the different voices and perspectives on the new language, on learning and on most things in the world! Language pedagogy that explicitly calls upon these can be a means for the inclusion of, and access to, diverse ways of seeing and meaning. David Stern was one of the few language-teaching theorists and researchers to recognise the importance and potential of what he termed the 'cultural syllabus' for language learning (Stern, 1992), whilst Kramsch has taken this idea further to assert the value of cultural investigation as being an integral part of language learning (Kramsch, 1993). Negotiation can facilitate such endeavours by giving space to the multicultural resources that any classroom group inherently contributes, most obviously in a class of students from different cultural backgrounds. However, if we can also regard the different experiences, knowledges and capabilities of the members of *any* class of students as resources on which to draw explicitly, then this valuing of diversity and alternatives in thinking and ways of working can encourage an openness and flexibility in students' approaches to the learning. And negotiation can contribute to such perceptions and approaches to language learning in particular by repositioning the 'curriculum as cultural conversation' (Onore and Lubetsky, 1992: 259).

Negotiation enables learners to exercise their active agency in learning

Much of the research on language classrooms reveals that many learners are placed in a responsive and seemingly passive role (Chaudron, 1988; van Lier, 1988, Breen, 1998). In such circumstances, learners are positioned like children who may seek to conform to a teacher's expectations and may even underachieve in order to do this. This passive conformity can be misinterpreted by the teacher as a lack of sufficient background knowledge, an unformed learning agenda or a lack of the capacity to participate in decision-making. However, all learners bring prior knowledge and capability to learning and further understanding is sought on the basis of what is already known and not merely given. Negotiation provides a context in which opportunities exist for learners to articulate and, thereby, refine their prior understandings, purposes and intentions as reference points for new learning. All learning also requires intention and decision and, as the humanist psychologists discovered, learners work harder if they can explore and articulate their own ideas, ask their own questions and seek their own answers. Psychologists such as Kelly, Maslow and Vygotsky (see previous section) all identified deeper learning as a gradual quest. Learners need time and space to think things through and to talk, read, write and act themselves into new understandings. They need to confront willingly the risk of the problematic and to identify uncertainties. They also need a sense of continuity and progress and this requires ongoing reflection at appropriate moments. None of these requirements are likely to be attained by a learner without support and feedback from others and negotiating new understandings, uncertainties and evaluative reflections with a group of other people who are sharing the learning experience can clearly provide such support.

Being an active agent of one's own learning in a classroom entails optimising the collective resources of a gathering of people, including a teacher who probably has greater experience of helping people to learn than others in the room. Agency in learning in such circumstances also involves contributing as much as one gains so that a group of learners engaged in shared decision-making can also entail mutual support. From this perspective, negotiation is not strictly a characteristic of what is commonly referred to as 'learner-centred' language pedagogy. Negotiation is *classroom-group* centred, serving a collective teaching–learning process and, thereby, individuals located as members of a group.

In addition to being a stimulus for personal and interactive negotiation for meaning, negotiation is also a means for individual agency in

the shaping of the classroom curriculum. It is a process during which the individual and the group *together* map out the routes for learning and the alternative ways in which the journey can be undertaken. Comparing his perceptions of conventional educational processes with those in which negotiation occurred, Garth Boomer adopted a similar metaphor for how we might regard the individual's experience of learning:

> Compare the knowledge of certain terrain in the case of a tourist who has been driven through in a tourist bus with traditional blurbs as opposed to that of an adventurer (under guidance) who has, with map and compass, travelled the same territory and had the opportunity to talk it over with fellow travellers ...   (Boomer, 1992: 286)

Negotiation can enrich classroom discourse as a resource for language learning.

As we have seen, current second language acquisition research appears to provide a number of motivations for procedural negotiation in the classroom. Research on the discourse of language classrooms suggests that opportunities for direct learner participation in it are significantly constrained (Chaudron, 1988; van Lier, 1988). The research suggests that the mainly silent, individual struggle to make sense predominates because most interaction appears to be channelled through the teacher. Greatest emphasis appears to be placed upon personal negotiation by the individual whilst opportunities for interactive negotiation during certain learning tasks may be relatively rare. In these circumstances, learners are most often obliged to navigate language lessons as best they can in order to relate their learning agendas to the overt classroom routines and procedures (Breen, 1998). Such pragmatic compliance is more likely to hide rather than reveal to other learners and to the teacher what is being achieved or what is being misunderstood by any individual. In any learning context, teachers' theories, aims and intentions need to be made clear to learners. However, a key function of procedural negotiation is for learners to reveal *their* theories, aims and intentions as resources for the teacher and each other and, thereby, contribute to the inclusiveness and accessibility of the classroom discourse itself.

Interactive negotiation for meaning is regarded by second language researchers as the catalyst for language acquisition. Procedural negotiation provides an authentic arena for it. In addition, overt negotiation that potentially calls upon the contributions of everyone in the group

diversifies the input, extends opportunities for learner output, and allows the exercise of judgements of appropriacy and accuracy in relation to the language made available for learning. Being able to make such judgements is not only facilitative of further learning but is also a crucial component of communicative competence in any language.

Perhaps one of the issues which led to the fragmentation of Communicative Language Teaching in recent years has been disagreement among practitioners about the explicit teaching of formal aspects of the language as exemplified by conventional structural syllabuses. Such a focus on the forms of language is argued to be inappropriate in CLT because it entails teacher and learner work upon language as a decontextualised object rather than as the means for sharing meaning within genuine communication. More recently, such a focus on forms has been distinguished from the appropriate focus on *form* at moments when there is an incidental shift of attention to specific aspects of the language which are causing problems in understanding or expressing meaning (Doughty and Williams, 1998). However, if one of the purposes of negotiation is to accommodate the diverse learning agendas within a class, there is likely to be a need to focus on the workings of language which may be occasionally an agreed focus on forms and, at other times, a spontaneous focus on form. The crucial issue here is that *learners'* overtly expressed need for different kinds of metalinguistic work or spontaneous discovery of problems in relation to specific features of the language – *plus* the teacher's recognition of these – determine timing and focus of metalinguistic work and not, as in a structural approach, a pre-determined syllabus of grammar, pronunciation or lexis assumed in advance to be useful for learners.

Negotiation about the conventions of language and its use locates the study of grammar, for example, within the learning purpose of anticipating and solving often unpredictable problems in understanding and expressing meaning through speech or writing. Clearly, a major advantage of negotiation is that it enables the revealing and more precise specification of such problems. Explicit metalinguistic information – such as rules and conventions governing language use or frameworks for structuring different genres – is most useful at moments:

- when it is most needed *by the learner* or when confronting a problem in communication which requires such knowledge;
- when 'noticing the gap' between target forms in written or spoken input and their own output;
- when seeing it as a short cut in making aspects of the language more manageable for them; or
- when the learner simply has a particular interest in such information.

Negotiation allows for the identification of such needs and for a selection process of the most apposite metalinguistic content and how it may be worked upon.

Negotiation can inform and extend a teacher's pedagogic strategies

Clearly, the teacher is at the centre of the negotiation process. Many teachers are obliged to mediate for their students a language syllabus or curriculum over the design of which they had little or no control. However, whether more or less autonomous in the range of decisions they can make, classroom regimes to which teachers significantly contribute are a microcosm of the kind of society which they value. How learners are expected to work in the classroom is more profound in what this conveys to them about learning a language than the syllabus or curriculum the teacher is mediating. Seeing learner diversity in knowledge, and ways of working as resources to be explicitly called upon during the classroom process, may appear to take more time and may release to the surface unexpected learner difficulties. Through this, however, learners' different contributions to their own learning are foregrounded as valid and shareable resources while difficulties can be worked upon in a more direct and collective way rather than being smoothed over to become a source of continued learner confusion or dissatisfaction. In essence, negotiated decision-making can more overtly locate responsibility for learning in a classroom with the class as a working group including the teacher rather than with the teacher alone.

In the context of negotiation – even negotiation about one or two aspects of the classroom curriculum – the teacher has the opportunity to act as a role model for active learning. The teacher can welcome learners' alternative interpretations and proposals as equal but also identify them as open to the group's judgements, selection and agreement. The teacher can encourage learners' own gradual explicitness and greater precision in the identification of preferred learning purposes, content, ways of working and ways of evaluating outcomes so that such preferences become available for everyone as reference points and alternatives for action.

Procedural negotiation entails that the teacher also has the right to negotiate, and how she or he exercises this right also serves as a model for learner engagement in it. The teacher knows the potential and limits of negotiation in the particular classroom setting and the wider educational and cultural context in which it is located. She or he has to be explicit about what seems non-negotiable whilst seeking feasible opportunities for sharing decisions. In this way, negotiation becomes a solution

to the puzzles and difficulties grounded in the daily work of the particular class. It is not an approach, method or technique, but a way of taking decisions and acting in a classroom seen as a dynamic communal resource. It is an alternative open to teachers who believe that there is a need for a decision-making process in the classroom that can engage the responsibilities of the learners for their own learning through the exercise of interdependency in a genuine cultural investigation.

Negotiation is emancipatory for the teacher also. It is sharing the weighty burden of managing other people's discovery of a language directly with the people concerned. It enables opportunities for teacher reflection on the more transparent learning process in the class and upon one's own practice in contributing to the management of learning. Negotiated decision-making does not imply abdication but a shift in self-definition as a language teacher which, in turn, can release adaptability in role. Particularly in its early stages, the teacher is pivotal in the negotiation process. The teacher does not give up his or her status as highly experienced and authoritative in the matter of the language and how learners can work upon it (Underhill, 1989). Nor does it imply power-sharing of the kind in which everyone is reduced to the same levels of opportunity or grey conformity to a group norm. The expressions of individuality and difference are crucial contributions to collectively formed and agreed plans, not least because they generate worthwhile alternatives for consideration. Negotiation entails a dialectic between the various 'power-holders' and 'power-subjects' in any gathering of people. And the teacher or the more confident or proficient learners are never, in fact, the only bearers of power in terms of potentially contributory knowledge, experiences and levels of awareness that are involved in learning a language. This dialectic or 'curriculum as conversation' has the potential to free up the teacher to rely on the learning group to help in a methodical way in creating a specific and ongoing language curriculum as an enriching teaching–learning experience.

Just as shared decision-making requires more classroom time initially, which is likely to be made up later on in terms of the scope and quality of the learning, experience at enabling this kind of conversation also grows over time. The teacher has to define with learners moments of closure and agreement whilst recognising that any one step opens up other possibilities. The teacher has to remind learners, quite often in the early stages, what has previously been agreed and to exploit the key phase of evaluation as the opportunity to enable greater precision in future decision-making against realistic objectives. History is often against the innovative educator, and a teacher who begins to share decisions about some or many aspects of the teaching–learning process

in a language class also has to be a pragmatist. However, she or he may discover that the time and energy devoted to procedural negotiation generates levels of interactive and personal negotiation that have deeper and longer term effects upon the learning of the language, not least the greater capacity of learners to negotiate through the new language in other situations long after the course has been completed. If we accept that learners discover a great deal about language learning in a class-room from the stance of the teacher, if the teacher launches an exploration of different ideas and perspectives on the what and how of language learning in the class, this can model to learners the inherent potentials of language knowledge and, crucially, adaptability in its acquisition and use.

Classroom decision-making and negotiation: conceptualising a process syllabus

So far we have identified procedural negotiation as a means for a teacher and students to share decision-making in relation to the unfolding language curriculum of the group. On the basis of a tradition of theory and research, we have also described principles that motivate such negotiation. The final question that we address in this chapter refers to the potential focus of negotiation: Which classroom decisions are open to negotiation?

Just as a conventional syllabus provides a framework for the potential content for teaching, the concept of a process syllabus was originally proposed in order to provide a framework for decision-making during teaching and learning in a classroom setting. It distinguishes itself from conventional, content syllabuses by identifying classroom decisions as potentials for negotiation whereby teacher and students together can evolve and work through the *actual* curriculum of the classroom group. As a framework, a process syllabus identifies:

1. the range of decisions that can be open to negotiation;
2. the steps in a negotiation cycle; and
3. the elements or levels in the classroom curriculum to which the negotiation cycle can be applied.

We explore each of these components of a process syllabus in turn and describe two concepts – the negotiation cycle and the curriculum pyramid – which may help to map out and guide the nature and extent of negotiation undertaken by a classroom group.

The range of decisions open to negotiation

Negotiation can potentially occur in relation to any and all decisions that need to be made in the ongoing creation of the language curriculum of a particular class or group of learners. As we suggested in the first section of this chapter, procedural negotiation can be the means for teacher and students to reach agreement in four key decision-making areas that, in turn, generate such a curriculum. Decisions have to be made in relation to:

- the purposes of their work together;
- the content or subject matter of their work;
- their various ways of working together;
- their preferred means of evaluation of the efficiency and quality of the work and its outcomes so that new directions in the work can be identified.

These four areas of decision-making can be expressed in terms of questions the answers to which may be negotiated by teacher and students together. These questions are illustrated in Table 1.1. Two important characteristics of decision-making become clearer when we consider them as questions. First, as Table 1.1 indicates, each major question is generic in the sense that it can be further specified in terms of contributory questions that may need to be addressed through negotiation. Second, any single decision reached can affect and influence other decisions that have to be made.

As we shall see in the chapters that follow, negotiation between a teacher and students and between the students themselves can be devoted to *any one* of these or similar questions. Not only may negotiation be selective among the range of decisions, it may occur only at certain points depending on the circumstances of each classroom group. Indeed, it would be highly unusual and inefficient for a class-room group to seek negotiated agreement on all of the major questions in every lesson, even if this was feasible. A language lesson is rarely a discrete event although it may follow its own micro-sequence focusing upon a single topic or aspect of language, punctuated by class, group or individual work, involving a particular way of working, and con-cluding, perhaps, with some form of evaluation and feedback. However, classroom work is most often based on a macro-sequence of related lessons. Content in terms of a topic or specific uses of language may take up a series of lessons and may be recycled. Participation may shift appropriately from whole group, to small group and individual work and back again on a particular set of tasks or larger activity over time. Additionally, assessment of achievements or evaluation of the whole

Table 1.1 *The range of decisions open to negotiation*

Purposes: Why are we learning the language?
What immediate and long term learning need(s) should be focused upon? What should we aim to know and be able to do? What very specific aims might we have? etc.

Content: What should be the focus of our work?
What aspects of the language? What topics, themes, or specific uses of the language? What skills, strategies or competencies when using or learning the language? What puzzle(s), problem(s) or focus for investigation should be addressed? etc.

Ways of working: How should the learning work be carried out?
With what resources? What types of texts or materials would be most appropriate? How long should it take? How will the time available be organised? What working procedure or set of instructions should be followed? Who will work with whom? (the teacher with the class, a group or an individual?; the students in groups, in pairs or alone?). What can best be done in class and what best outside class? What support or guidance may be needed, what form should it take, and who should provide it?

Evaluation: How well has the learning proceeded?
What should be the outcomes from the work? Have the purposes been achieved? Of the intended outcomes, what has not been learned and what has been learned in addition to these? How should outcomes be assessed and against which criteria? What will happen with the assessment? etc.

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process may come only at the end of a number of lessons when the sequence is completed. Lessons form a kind of narrative, and negotiation seen as part of a cycle is the means for teacher and students to initiate such a narrative together and for revealing their interpretations of it as it unfolds as the basis for future decisions.

The negotiation cycle

Figure 1.2 illustrates the negotiation cycle within a process syllabus indicating three important steps in the cycle. At Step 1, teacher and students identify and address those decisions from the full range which may appear to be most appropriate and feasible for them to negotiate in the context in which they work, or the most urgent, or even ones that both teacher and students find problematic in some way and about which negotiation seems to them necessary. As the chapters in this book

Negotiated decisions

Step 1

| Purposes
Why?
The aims of
classroom work | Contents
What?
The focus of
classroom
work, for
example
language areas,
topics, skills,
learning
strategies | Ways of working
How?
What resources
will be used?
When and how
long will
something be
done? Who will
work with who?
How much
guidance will
be available? | Evaluation
How well?
What should
be the
outcomes?
How will they
be assessed?
What will
happen with
with the
assessment? |

Step 2

Action(s)

Undertaken on the basis of the negotiated decisions at Step 1; for example: tasks chosen and completed, plans made, evaluation procedures worked out

Step 3

Evaluation

- of learning outcomes: achievements and difficulties
- of the process itself in relation to outcomes: appropriateness of purposes, contents, ways of working, evaluation and action taken at Step 2
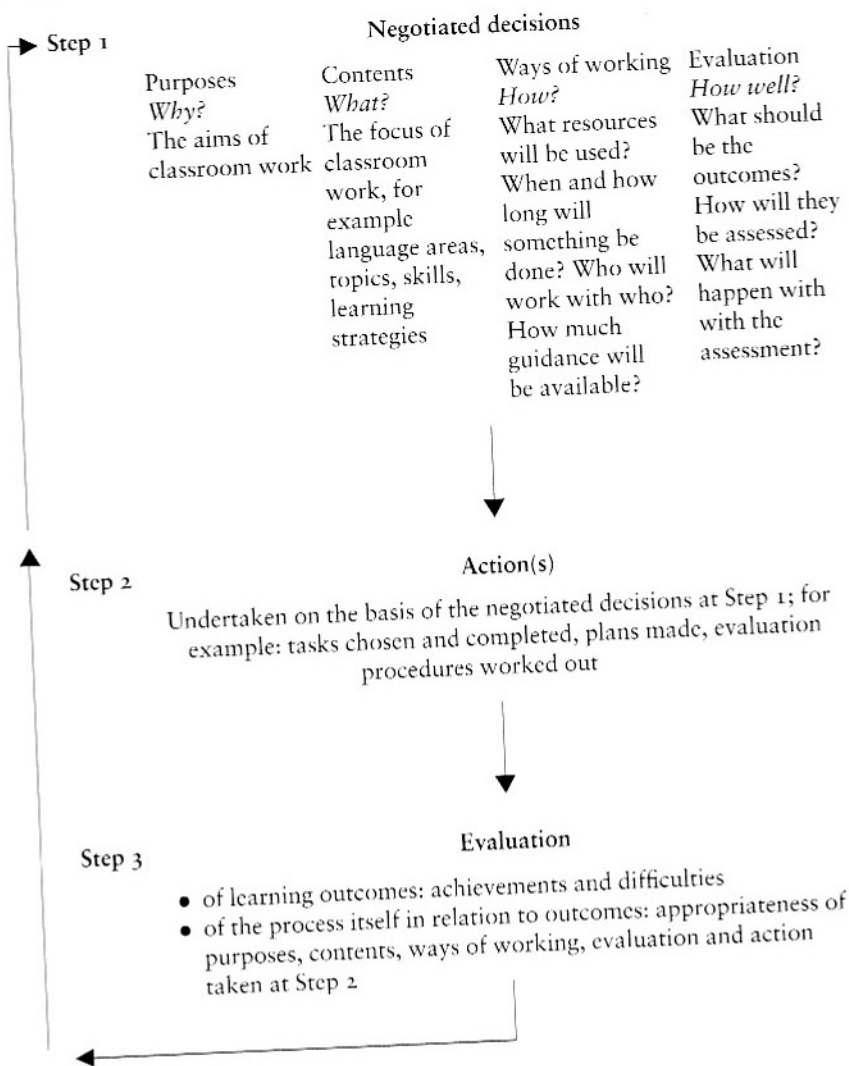
Figure 1.2   The negotiation cycle

illustrate, teachers and students have different reasons for the particular decisions which they choose to negotiate.

Step 2 in the cycle is the resulting action or actions in terms of what is done on the basis of decisions made. We can briefly illustrate such 'actions' by giving examples of what might occur as a result of a negotiated decision within each of the four areas of decision-making.

Implementing decisions made in relation to their Purposes, students might collect and display the short-term and long-term language-learning aims of all class members, or analyse a test or exam that has to be taken at the end of the course in order to plan and map out future work upon unfamiliar aspects, etc. In relation to the Contents of the work, the group may choose to work on a common topic or different topics, undertake tasks that focus on form or use of the language, or they may work on specific problems they have identified, or find out about specific learning strategies that members of the group have found helpful. Implementing decisions made concerning their Ways of Working, students may investigate specific resources beyond the classroom, or agree a particular schedule for an activity and who would be responsible for which parts of it, or specify that a particular task will be a whole class undertaking with the teacher, or something completed in sub-groups, or even partly undertaken by individual students but with a view to sharing outcomes. Concerning Evaluation, students may identify particular criteria for success, choose or design an appropriate test or diagnostic task, or create portfolios of their work and write an evaluative report identifying their strengths and weaknesses, etc., etc.

These few examples of actions resulting from negotiated decisions at Step 1 are merely illustrative and it may be that a classroom group will either implement a decision within only one of the decision-making areas or act upon a set of decisions initially negotiated across all four areas.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of a process syllabus is that it pivots upon the evaluation of an agreed action or set of actions. Identifying learner reflection as a key contributory factor in learning, Step 3 of the cycle involves the classroom group in evaluation of:

1. outcomes in terms of both what is learned and what has proved problematic; and
2. the appropriateness or otherwise of the actual process which they have followed in terms of initial decisions made and subsequent actions undertaken.

A key criterion of appropriateness here is the extent to which initially planned or agreed learning purposes have been achieved. This reflective phase is, of course, unlikely to occur in every lesson or session but more likely at the completion of a large activity made up of a sequence of tasks or after a related sequence of lessons. However, the phase is critical in the whole process because it generates essential information for teacher and students for the next cycle of decision-making.

The curriculum pyramid: levels of application of the negotiation cycle

Negotiation is never undertaken in a vacuum; it is *about* something. As we have seen, it addresses particular decisions at Step 1 in the cycle. However, even these decisions must refer to things that already exist and to the experiences both teacher and students already have concerning language learning in the classroom. The most likely situation is when a teacher and students may be obliged to follow a particular curriculum, or a pre-designed syllabus, or prescribed materials, or an external test that every student must take at the end of the course. Similarly, teacher and students are likely to be familiar with particular ways of working in the classroom; particular methodologies, roles and responsibilities. In such circumstances, any of these things may act as reference points for the negotiation cycle so that what they appear to imply for classroom work can be made explicit and open to adaptation in ways that the teacher and students regard as directly beneficial. Here the cycle itself serves to evolve the actual curriculum which would include the group's aims, content, ways of working or evaluation procedures which are amalgams of what they see as prescribed or required and what they regard as their own priorities and preferences.

In some situations, a particular curriculum, syllabus, materials or test may not be prescribed or the teacher and the learners may feel less constrained by previous ways of working in the classroom. In these circumstances, the negotiation cycle more directly *generates* the classroom curriculum as the work unfolds. However, such circumstances may be unusual and the identification of different levels of focus for the negotiation cycle within a process syllabus assumes that teacher and students very often negotiate between what may be pre-existing or prescribed and their more immediate priorities and preferences. As part of its framework, therefore, a process syllabus identifies different reference points for the negotiation cycle in terms of levels in a curriculum pyramid. Figure 1.3 illustrates these levels on which the cycle may focus at appropriate times.

A feature of each level in the curriculum pyramid is that the higher ones are contained within the levels below and, therefore, negotiation about an appropriate sequence of tasks, for instance, might either follow from or lead to negotiation, perhaps at another time, about an appropriate single task within the sequence. Alternatively teacher and student may choose to focus their negotiation only on one particular level. A second feature of each level in the pyramid is that it may entail *its own* Purposes, Contents, Ways of Working and Evaluation; these are
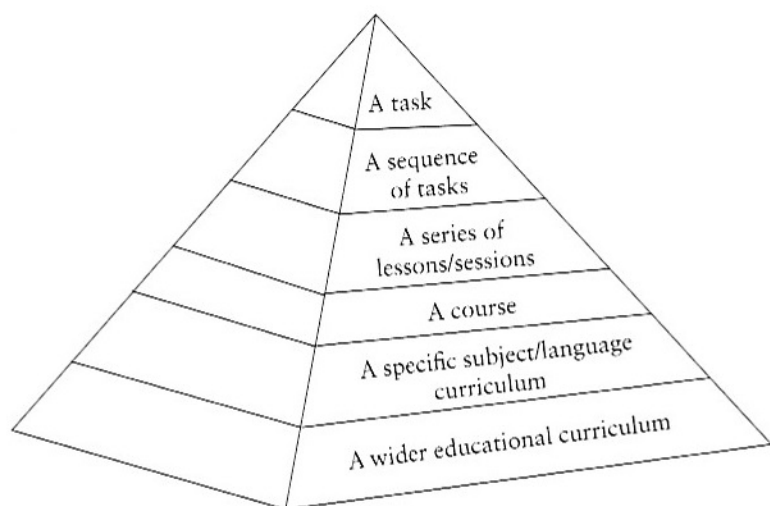
Figure 1.3   The curriculum pyramid: levels of focus for the negotiation cycle

elements that we have identified as open to negotiated decisions at Step
1. A pre-designed task or a course in pre-designed materials, for
example, entail the designer's decisions in each of these areas and these
would serve as the reference points for negotiated decisions in the
classroom.

As Figure 1.3 indicates, the smallest unit on which the cycle focuses is
at the level of Task. A task can be seen as the most immediate location
of learning work and as a specific social event in the classroom. Of the
levels below Task, and therefore entailing it, a Sequence of Tasks, a
Series of Lessons/Classroom Sessions and a full Course can be seen also
as simultaneous learning and social events but requiring increasing
periods of time. The broadest levels of focus for the negotiation cycle
are a specific language or subject curriculum – the latter in an immersion
programme or in teacher education, for instance – and an all embracing
educational curriculum at the institution or state level. Table 1.2 offers
brief definitions and examples of each level in the pyramid. As the
definitions and examples suggest, the levels of the pyramid cannot be
absolutely distinct; each level overlaps to some extent with those above
or below it.

Table 1.2   *Levels of the curriculum pyramid*

Level	Definition	Example
A task	Any single structured/planned classroom undertaking which directly *serves* (is directly related to) the teaching–learning of the foreign language. It has its own objective(s), content, working procedure, and implicit or explicit criteria for success in its accomplishment.	A listening comprehension task, an information gap task or a brainstorming task.
A sequence of tasks	A number of tasks which together form a coherent whole or are related parts within a single larger activity.	A 'unit' on a particular topic or language area, which contains a number of different tasks (for example, listening, reading, discussing, practising, etc.).
A series of lessons/ sessions	Several sequences of tasks which form a clear 'series' (related one to the other in some way), and which are undertaken over a number of lessons/sessions.	Work covered during 'this month', progressively covering a series of topics/language areas/ skills, etc. in an organised way so that there is continuity.
A course	One or more coherent series of lessons/sessions plus other work/sessions included within a specified period of time.	Several series of lessons/sessions, each covering a number of topics as the 'core' of the course, plus other work/sessions such as guest talks, visits, games, drama, which may be optional or additional to the envisaged 'core', but which together form the work done carried out during the course.
A specific language/ subject curriculum	A specified set of aims and content (language or other), working procedures, evaluation procedures and criteria which the course is intended to address.	Specifications concerning the aims of a course, what it covers (for example, topics, skill areas, grammar, vocabulary, cognitive development, learning strategies or other subject matter, etc.), how the teacher and students will work (task types, grouping, etc.) and evaluation (what will be evaluated, how and by whom).

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| A wider educational curriculum | The institutional and social context in which the course is placed: the relationship of the specific language/subject curriculum to the curriculum of other courses (weighting, links, common principles of approach, cross-curricular links, etc.). | Relationship between the teaching–learning of a foreign language and the teaching–learning of other subjects in a school curriculum or professional development programme and other college studies. |

Note: Potentially, the levels 'task', 'sequence of tasks', 'series of lessons' and 'course' can overlap. A 'course', for example, may consist of only one 'series of lessons'. Similarly, a 'series of lessons' may have only one sequence of tasks or major activity (such as a simulation, run over several sessions).

A process syllabus in practice

To summarise so far, we have stated that a process syllabus provides a particular answer to the question: Which classroom decisions are open to negotiation? It offers a framework for decision-making for evolving the curriculum of a particular classroom group by proposing the range of decisions open to negotiation, the steps in a negotiation cycle and the levels in a curriculum to which the cycle can be applied. Figure 1.4 summarises the framework we have described.

As the chapters that follow reveal, when a process syllabus is applied in practice in a particular teaching situation, there is not one process syllabus or even a typical process syllabus, but a range of different teacher–student applications of the framework. At Step 1 in the cycle, teacher and students may select one or other of the four main areas of decision-making for negotiation and may focus on only one decision within any of the four. At Step 2, the action chosen through negotiation may be singular and completed relatively quickly within a single lesson or short period of time. At Step 3, joint evaluation may focus either on learning outcomes or on the appropriateness of earlier decisions and actions rather than both subsequent to a chosen action. Minimally, the three steps of the cycle might be applied to only one of the levels of the curriculum pyramid. On the other hand, a fully implemented process syllabus would involve negotiation on all four areas of decision-making at Step 1, appropriate chosen actions at Step 2, and evaluation of both outcomes and the process at Step 3. It would also entail applying this cycle to all levels of the curriculum pyramid. Whilst such a process syllabus could possibly emerge within a classroom group working together over a good period of time, such a maximum implementation
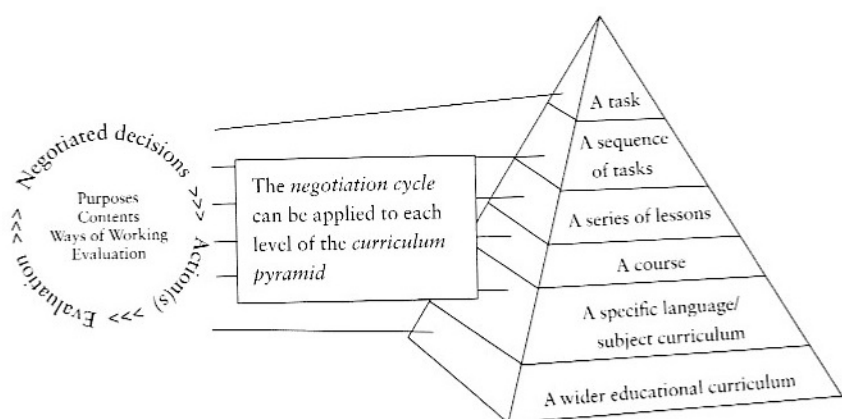
Figure 1.4   A process syllabus

may be unusual. In practice, it may be more a matter of negotiation *within* the full range of decisions to be made, different degrees of explicitness or distinctiveness in the steps taken in the cycle, and specific selections of the levels addressed in the curriculum pyramid. Although even the minimal implementation of a process syllabus entails the practices that we have identified, as a framework offered for negotiated decision-making, it is open to diverse practical interpretations by teachers and to the diverse contributions of the students who participate in such decision-making.

In this chapter, we have defined negotiation in relation to classroom decision-making, we have identified the theoretical and research roots that have motivated it, and we have concluded by describing a process syllabus as a framework for use in a language classroom. It is time we explored negotiation and process syllabuses in practice. Each of the teachers' accounts in Chapters 2 to 17 illustrates the practicalities of negotiated decision-making with different types and levels of students in different teaching situations. Each chapter also illustrates the application of a process syllabus with a negotiation cycle applied at different levels of the curriculum pyramid and with respect to different curriculum decisions. In the final chapter, Chapter 18 we relate the process syllabus framework we have here described more closely to each of the teachers' accounts in order to provide an overall picture of the different negotiation practices which were undertaken.