

To Be or Not to Be, That Is The Question: Should Culture Be Taught Simultaneously during L2 Teaching Classes or Not?

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Received: Dec. 12, 2012

Accepted: April 4, 2013

Published: May 1, 2013

doi:10.5296/jse.v3i2.2873

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jse.v3i2.2873>

Abstract

As the old saying goes, '*A new language is a new culture*'. That is, learning a new language is like discovering a new culture and a new world. So, Culture is willy-nilly an integral and inseparable elements of language courses and undoubtedly vital for communication, interpersonal interaction, and a crucial factor in the development of universal awareness, personal and international understanding. "The study of language cannot be divorced from the study of culture, and vice-versa (Seelye 1993)." However, owing to many impediments, *culture* is relatively ignored in L2 classes. Since we cannot simply assume that cognitive factors alone will account for the ensuing success of EFL learners, the process of effective and meaningful teaching an L2 embraces also cultural studies. Identically, culture plays an active role in inducing and rewarding EFL learners and will promote discovery learning, learner-centeredness and active learning through role playing, culture capsules, culture clusters, proverbs and so forth in L2 classes. This study attempts to illuminate the basic issues related to culture that obstruct EFL learners from the successful performing of culture aims by highlighting Objectives, Attitudes, Problems and Dangers.

Keywords: Culture, learner-centeredness, Culture capsules, Clusters, Universal awareness, L2 teaching

1. Introduction

According to the unanimity among all linguists, Language is simply a means of communication. It can be in different ways that is, verbal and non-verbal (e.g. in the form of spoken, written or even gesture and body movements) among all walks of life. Thus, as the actual use of language in general is related to social and cultural values, language is considered to be a social and cultural phenomenon. Since every culture has its own cultural norms for conversation, these norms differ from one culture to another. In other word, from one language, nation even person to another language, nation, person and conflict with other cultures' norms. Consequently, the problem/s which may occur during interaction between two interlocutors will be culturally (due to lack of knowing one another culture). Basically, communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other culture.

To solve the communication problems in the target language in the EFL/ESL classrooms the learners need to learn the target culture within the syllabus, and the teachers should be sensitive to the learner's fragility so as not to cause them to lose their motivation. That is to say, an analytic look at the native culture is as important as the learning of the target culture. On the other hand, problems that arise from the lack of cross-cultural awareness are not limited to the verbal side of communication. The paralinguistic aspects and appropriate manners of behavior are equally important factors in the communicatively competent learner's performance. The fact that culture-bound hand-signals, postures, mimics, and another ways of behavior can also cause miscommunication is neglected.

The National Center for Cultural Competence defines culture as an "integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, beliefs, values, customs, rituals, ethnic,... religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations" (Goode, Sockalingam, Brown, & Jones, 2000). This means that language is not only part of how we define culture, it also reflects culture. Thus, the culture associated with a language cannot be learned in a few lessons about celebrations, folk songs, or costumes of the area in which the language is spoken. Culture is a much broader concept that is inherently tied to many of the linguistic concepts taught in second/foreign language classes.

Krasner (1999), furthermore, believes that linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language. Language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behavior and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behaviors (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003).

Donahue and Parsons (1982) examined the use of *role-play* in ESL classrooms as a means of helping students to overcome cultural "fatigue"; role-play promotes the process of cross-cultural dialogue while providing opportunities for oral communication. Numerous other materials and techniques- readings, films, simulation games, "culture assimilators",

"culture capsules", and "culture games"- are available to language teachers to assist them in the process of acculturation in the classroom (Fantini 1997; Ramirez 1995; Levine et al. 1987; McGroarty & Galvan 1985; Kohls 1984).

Thus, Hadley (2003: 357) also considers that teachers and students alike seem to be saying that the study of culture, both as a topic in its own right and as it is embedded in language use, is an important aspect of language teaching that is oriented toward communicative proficiency. That is why; this study seeks to shed some light upon providing an effective and motivating climate for learners to foster their communicative competence through cultural learning in EFL/ESL language classes.

1.1 Definition of Terms

Language

Any particular system of human communication

Communication

The exchange of ideas, information, etc. between two or more persons

Culture

The total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behavior, social habits, etc. of the members of a particular society

Cross-culture

An exchange of ideas, information, etc. between people from different cultural background

Culture capsules

are generally prepared out of class by a student but presented during class time in 5 or 10 minutes. Essentially it is a brief description of some aspect of the target language culture

Culture clusters

is simply a group of three or more illustrated culture capsules on related themes/topics (about the target life) + one 30 minute classroom simulation/skit that integrates the information contained in the capsules (the teacher acts as narrator to guide the students).

Culture assimilators

Provides the student with 75 to 100 episodes of target cultural behavior. They consist of short (usually written) descriptions of an incident or situation where interaction takes place between at least one person from the target culture and persons from other cultures (usually the native culture of the students being taught).

Role play

Drama-like classroom activities in which students take the ROLES of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation

2. Literature Review

The classical languages, Latin and Greek, were studied so that learners could read and translate the works of literature in these languages. This principle was also acknowledged by Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which saw the main rationale for language learning in getting access to the so-called 'great works' (Kramsch 1996:4, see also Larsen-Freeman 2000:15). The aim of education in general was to educate people who were knowledgeable in history, literature and fine arts. Such people were said to possess culture.

Controversies exist around what kinds of content should be incorporated into a foreign or second language curriculum. Since the early 1970s, momentous changes have occurred in the field of foreign language teaching. The early 1970s witnessed the reform of structural methodologies such as the GTM and Audiolingualism, because it became important that "language was not to be studied but to be learned and spoken" (Byram, 1991, p. 13). After all the transitions from one approach to another, the widely-held belief was that it was essential to teach the target language through meaningful and culture-based content. In order to be successful in real life situations, this, in turn, would help the learners to employ the social rules of that target culture in learning its language.

A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language. The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (Brown 1994:164). The mutual relation between language and culture, i.e. the interaction of language and culture has long been a settled issue thanks to the writings of prominent philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1980; 1999), Saussure (1966), Foucault (1994), Dilthey (1989), Von Humboldt (1876), Adorno (1993), Davidson (1999), Quine (1980) and Chomsky (1968). These are the names first to come to mind when the issue is the relation between language and culture. Yet, the most striking linguists dealing with the issue of language and culture are Sapir (1962) and Whorf (1956). They are the scholars whose names are often used synonymously with the term "Linguistic Relativity" (Richards et al, 1992). The core of their theory is that:

- a) We perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in our native language,
- b) What is found in one language may not be found in another language due to cultural differences.

The dialectical connection between language and culture has always been a concern of L2 teachers and educators. Whether culture of the target language is to be incorporated into L2 teaching has been a subject of rapid change throughout language teaching history. In the course of time, the pendulum of ELT practitioners' opinion has swung against or for teaching culture in context of language teaching. For example, during the first decades of the 20th century researchers discussed the importance and possibilities of including cultural components into L2 curriculum (Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002); the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 70s marks a critical shift for teaching culture, for the paradigm shift from an approach based largely on form and structure to a plurality of

approaches causing an unintended side effect: the negligence of culture (Pulverness, 2003).

Recent studies focus on the seamless relationship between L2 teaching and target culture teaching, especially over the last decade with the writings of scholars such as Byram (1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b) and Kramsch (1988; 1993; 1996; 2001). People involved in language teaching have again begun to understand the intertwined relations between culture and language (Pulverness, 2003). It has been emphasized that without the study of culture, teaching L2 is inaccurate and incomplete. For L2 students, language study seems senseless if they know nothing about the people who speak the target language or the country in which the target language is spoken. Acquiring a new language means a lot more than the manipulation of syntax and lexicon. According to Bada (2000: 101), "the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers." In addition, nowadays the L2 culture is presented as an interdisciplinary core in many L2 curricula designs and textbooks (Sysoyev & Donelson, 2002).

McKay (2003) contends that culture influences language teaching in two ways: linguistic and pedagogical. Linguistically, it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of the language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. For example, while some textbooks provide examples from the target culture, some others use source culture materials.

Previously, we argued that ethnocentricity limits the self, hence individuals have to look at themselves from a different perspective to surmount such limitation; thus, culture classes are vital in enabling individuals to see themselves from a different point of view. Similarly, Pulverness (2004) stresses this point by stating that just as literature ostracizes the familiar object to the self. As argued above, most people are so ethnocentric that when they begin to study another language their restrictedness in their own culture prevents them from seeing the world via different ways of looking. Overcoming the limits of monocultural perspective and reaching the realm of different perspective could be facilitated by studying another culture. Some experts, however, approach the issue of teaching culture with some kind of reservation. Bada (2000) reminds us that awareness of cultural values and societal characteristics does not necessarily invite the learner to conform to such values, since they are there to "refine the self so that it can take a more universal and less egoistic form" (p.100). Besides, we are reminded of the fact that English language is the most studied language all over the world, whereby the language has gained a lingua franca status (Alptekin, 2002; Smith, 1976). Alptekin (2002) in his article, favoring an intercultural communicative competence rather than a native-like competence, asserts that since English is used by much of the world for instrumental reasons such as professional contacts, academic studies, and commercial pursuits, the conventions of the British politeness or American informality proves irrelevant.

2.1 Integrating Culture into EFL Language Class

For learners of a foreign language, mere fluency in the production of utterances in a new language without any awareness of their cultural implications or of their appropriate situational use, or the reading of texts without a realization of the values and assumptions underlying them are of little use even on a practical level, and certainly leave open to question the claims of language study to a legitimate place in a program of liberal education. Language is deeply embedded in culture and is the key to the cultural heritage of another people (Rivers 1993:315).

As Tomalin (2008) suggests, we need to create in our students' awareness and tolerance of other people's culture, greater awareness of their own culture and also to support the student's own ability to explain his or her own cultural viewpoint. In other words, cultural awareness is understood as a more general term which is superior to the term cultural studies. Based on Richards and Renandya (2002:210)'s study, culture plays an instrumental role in shaping speakers' *communicative competence*, which is related to the appropriate use of language. Generally, appropriateness is determined by each speech community. In other words, it is defined by the shared social and cultural conventions of a particular group of speakers. Therefore, it is essential to recognize different sets of culturally determined rules in communication. Just as Brown and Yule (1983, p.40), "a great number of cultural assumptions which would be normally presupposed, and not made explicit by native speakers, may need to be drawn explicitly to the attention of speakers from other cultures." Cultural learning illustrated by activities and strengthened through physical enactment will motivate students and this should not, however, become just another theatrical or abstract area of study.

Turkan & Çelik (2007) claim the main argument the authors attempt to articulate is clear by now that teaching culture should be integrated into the foreign language textbooks and classroom practices. Although language teaching materials may not include the target language culture and its teaching, it is the language teachers' responsibility to find practical solutions to this problem to integrate culture into their teaching in one way or another, and it would not be reasonable to assume that language learners will later be exposed to cultural material after they reach mastery of the linguistic features of the language.

The foremost and most important prerequisite for language teachers to incorporate cultural material into their teaching is to make them familiar with the culture of the language they are teaching. Often teachers lack the necessary knowledge of the target language culture and training in how to teach it, resulting in a state of insecurity to even approach culture. However, one should have the basic backdrop to be able to effectively help students accomplish the essential skills in language learning to rationalize and identify with the target language culture. This, unlike the widespread misconception, is not the denial of one's own culture or one's absorbing and accepting a foreign culture as ideal. On the contrary, this awareness serves as a safeguard against potential negative attitudes students may encounter when they learn about a new set of norms at odds with the ones of their own, and helps language learners to recognize and appreciate the differences between the two cultures for the benefit of successfully combining form and meaning in language learning.

The acquisition of cultural knowledge in language learning is defined as *intercultural competence*. Intercultural competence is the underlying knowledge successful language learners of English acquire through culturally and linguistically integrated English language instruction. Intercultural competence, as part of a broader foreign speaker competence, identifies the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures (Meyer, 1991). This appropriateness and flexibility imply an awareness of the cultural differences between one's own and the foreign culture. Intercultural competence includes the capacity of establishing one's self identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation and of helping other people to stabilize their self-identity. Subsequently, language teachers should adhere to clear goals and successful instructional strategies to put their cultural awareness into practice to establish an intercultural understanding in the classroom.

In light of the issues mentioned and emphasized here, the creative classroom teacher can come up with numerous ideas regarding how to integrate culture into the textbooks and classroom activities. Some of the strategies the authors would like to suggest are the utilization of movies, lectures from native speakers of the target culture, audio-taped interviews with native speakers, video-taped observations of the target language community, and authentic readings and realia. However, it should be noted that the potential activities and strategies are endless, and that each teacher should assess their own context to evaluate the effectiveness of any prospective activity, and should modify any activity or material at hand to fit their students' needs better.

By and large, using audiovisual stimuli brings sight, hearing, and kinesthetic participation into interplay, which gets students across the gulf of imagination into the "real experience" in the first place. Meanwhile, the task-oriented activities give students a purpose to talk. Ideally, the flexibility and adaptability of these activities are essential if the communicative needs of learners to be met. With the limited time available in class, it is necessary to follow open language experiences with more intensive structured situations, dialogues, and role-playing activities. These will give students both the chance and the confidence actually to use the language.

Foreign and second language teachers should identify key cultural items in every aspect of the language that they teach. Students can be successful in speaking a foreign/second language only if cultural issues are an inherent part of the curriculum.

Objectives

Learning culture is as universal and natural as learning language. A functional knowledge of both is necessary to interact and communicate with people in one's cultural environment. Children in their own native language absorb culture and acquire language while paying little conscious attention to either as they participate in daily activities. In second language, the ease or difficulty of entering into new culture and new language depends on the individual's capacity for accepting and learning new ways of doing and saying things.

Enculturation, the process of learning one's native culture, is essentially complete for those

normal individuals who are able to participate in the environment in which they were reared. *Acculturation*, in relation to the second language, is probably never complete for individuals who are not native to the culture. The learner's degree of acculturation ranges from information to insight, perception to identification, and awareness to interaction. The extent to which acculturation take place in second language depends on the learners and their objectives. Travelers and visitors spend some time in the culture primarily to satisfy some professional or personal interest.

Sojourners accommodate themselves in the second culture for a short time because their intended objective is to return to the native country. Refugees who are forced to leave their own country tend to prefer accommodation, survival and restricted assimilation. Immigrants desire acculturation and assimilation.

Steelye(1993: 29) formulates what he himself calls a supergoal for the teaching of culture: "All students will develop the cultural understanding, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture." It is obvious that classroom culture objective have to do with knowledge and awareness rather than acculturation and assimilation. In language classes in which intercultural understanding is one of the objectives, students become more aware of their own culture and more knowledgeable about the second language culture. They learn to recognize cultural patterns of behaviors and communication and to function within the parameters of those new expectations. They learn that a *culture shock* is a normal reaction, and they anticipate the ways to deal with new and uncomfortable situations. The hope is that they develop a greater tolerance for those whose values, attitudes, and beliefs are different from theirs and they will learn to manage alteration and development successfully in their lifetime. Taking the objectives of culture into consideration in language classes, the teacher should have realistic expectations i.e. few students will become bilingual or bicultural. Therefore, the processes for comprehending cultural similarities and differences should be stressed and dealt with carefully.

Seelye (1974) puts forward a number of goals for language teachers to set while teaching culture, which serves as a reference list in the process of selecting, collecting and compiling cultural materials. According to Seelye, teachers should first invoke interest and curiosity about the target culture. Secondly, they should ensure that their students recognize the fact that social factors like age, gender, social class, and ethnicity influence how people use the language. Thirdly, teachers should seek to present to their students the case that language use changes according to whether the particular situation entails an ordinary routine for people of the target culture or is an unusual and unexpected situation (i.e., emergency). Hence, students should be able to make sense of why people of the target culture choose to behave in certain ways in certain situations, and ultimately, acquire the skills to know the proper thing to say, at the appropriate time and place, and to the right people. However, students should avoid oversimplifications by carefully analyzing and assessing the generalizations about the target culture through utilizing a wide range of available sources, such as books and the media, authentic materials from the target culture, and personal experiences, if applicable.

Attitudes

One of the major difficulties to the successful implementation of objectives of culture in language classes revolves around attitudes. Society or the students' environment exerts a tremendous influence on their receptivity to the learning of cultural concepts. If the students are from a cosmopolitan society, and they are familiar with cultural difference, they will be more ready to study and benefit from cultural content. And if students are the products of a rather closed subculture, language teachers should take social factors into consideration while selecting culture objectives and content.

The teacher's attitude is a crucial factor in determining the extent to which cultural objectives are attained. If he expects all the students to love the second culture as much as he does, he is certain to be disappointed. If he attempts to indoctrinate the students with attitudes from the second culture, he will most probably be rejected by the majority of his students. And if the second culture attempts to curtail the student's own culture, he may arouse negative, counterproductive feelings. This does not imply that the teacher should not be enthusiastic about the second culture. That is to say, enthusiasm should be moderated by realities of the students' situation.

The students' attitude toward a second culture should be scrutinized in the classroom because exposure to it can be a disquieting experience for some students. The teacher should be sensitive to students' feelings and be prepared to take steps to ameliorate any negative reactions. Precautions should be taken not to threaten in any way the students' belief in their own cultural system. Given the appropriate cultural information, they will acquire a certain degree of comprehension of the people and their culture. Such information should develop in them a higher degree of sensitivity and incorporate those behavioral patterns and values that they deem desirable into their lives.

The first and the most important problem is how to provide the culture information needed. Many teachers are simply not equipped to teach culture even if they are familiar with the objectives, definitions, organization, and techniques of teaching culture. Language teachers need assistance in overcoming their lack of knowledge about the second culture. First, in the study of sociocultural system they need help from the experts who can identify for them the basic characteristics of the second culture. Second, they need assistance from publishers who can produce materials mostly to fulfill their requirements. Third, they need assistance from colleges and universities to provide the training they need to overcome their lack of expertise in culture.

The second major problem is how to devise ways of presenting culture in such a manner that the student can comprehend and relate to the information. How can a student in an isolated farming community relate to the European apartment dwellers? Culture content must be presented at a level and manner in which the students can see some relationships between the information and their background and experience.

The third problem is that of finding time during the class to include culture. Unfortunately, teachers are so involved in other areas of language that they normally ignore culture. But

undoubtedly, more time can be spent on culture without seriously weakening the students' language skills. So, the question arises: Can we take time in our classes for the teaching of cultural background in this way? Teaching for cultural understanding is fully integrated with the process of assimilation of syntax and vocabulary. Since language is so clearly interwoven with every aspect of culture, this approach is possible, but only when teachers are well informed and alert to cultural differences. Well-prepared teachers bring an awareness of cultural meaning into every aspect of their teaching, and their students absorb it in many small ways. This awareness becomes part of everyday language act in the classroom, as students ask themselves: How do we say it as a native speaker says it? How do we do it in the country where the language is spoken? What is the underlying significance? Through language use, students become conscious of correct levels of discourse and behavior; formulas of politeness and their relation to the temperament and the social attitudes of the people; appropriateness of response in specific situations. Gradually they begin to perceive the expectations within the society and to glimpse the values which are basic to the various forms of behavior. From the beginning, the teacher should orient the thinking of the students so that they will feel curious about such differences and become observant as they listen and read, applying what they have perceived in their active oral work.

As Hadley (2003:358) considers, another reason that teachers neglect the teaching of culture is that it involves dealing with student attitudes- "a somewhat threatening, hazy, and unquantifiable area" (Galloway 1985). Students often approach target-culture phenomena assuming that the new patterns of behavior can be understood within the framework of their own native culture. When cultural phenomena differ from what they expect, students often have ethnocentric views on it, react negatively, and characterize the target culture as "strange" or "weird".

Dangers

One of the dangers in teaching culture is that language teachers may make an attempt to teach culture when they do not have the knowledge or expertise to do so. Such attempt may do more harm than good. Another danger is the amount of work done in the first language in many classes in which the teachers stresses culture. Work done entirely in the first language obviously does not lead to second language communication skills. Anything they can do in the second language should be done in that language. Moreover, the content should be geared to their level and the linguistic level of the activities should become increasingly complex as the students progress in their studies. Another danger is that the culture content which is selected for the class may concentrate on the bizarre, esoteric and unusual characteristics of the culture. Additionally, in an attempting to fit complicated cultural systems into a simplified framework which is comprehensible to an early level student, we run the danger of imparting or reinforcing *stereotypes* of attitudes and behavior.

To sum up the discussion, in teaching fundamental aspects of culture in language classes, specific content will be necessary to develop the desired objectives of culture. The processes for comprehending similarities and differences among cultures should be emphasized in the class. But attitudes toward other cultures including students' environment, societal factors,

their receptivity to learning of cultural concepts, teachers and students' attitudes have to be carefully scrutinized. Teachers' lack of knowledge or expertise, inappropriate culture presentation, exclusion of class program and concentration on bizarre and esoteric characteristics of the culture will jeopardize teaching culture.

Principles

Hadley (2003:394) considers that cultural activities and objectives should be carefully organized and incorporated into lesson plans to enrich and inform the teaching content. Cultural information should be presented in a nonjudgmental fashion, in a way that does not place value or judgment on distinctions between the students' native culture and the culture explored in the classroom.

Laffayette (1978, 1988) feels that the most basic issue in cross-cultural education is the degree to which the study of language and culture are integrated. He makes several suggestions for achieving this type of integration:

1. Cultural lessons and activities need to be planned as carefully as Language activities and integrated into lesson plans.
2. Use cultural contexts for language-practice activities, including those that focus on particular grammatical forms.
3. Use a variety of techniques for teaching culture that involves speaking, listening, reading and writing.
4. Use probing questions to help students describe and analyze the cultural significance of photos and realia.
5. Use cultural information when teaching vocabulary.
6. Use small group techniques for cultural instruction.
7. Include experiential and process learning.
8. Use the target language to teach cultural content.
9. Test cultural understanding as carefully as language is tested.

Hadley (2003:360) notes that as students are introduced to the target culture, they need to learn to expect differences, and eventually to understand and appreciate their logic and meaning. Galloway (1992) points out that any assumption of cross-cultural similarity should be made with caution, as cultures may not share the same form/function relationships. She warns that the most "ominous potential for interpretational error arise[s] precisely from that which looks familiar" (p.92), and that facile comparisons that view the target culture through the native-culture lens should be avoided.

In order to help students construct a new frame of reference based in the target culture, Galloway recommends that students begin with an understanding of their own frame or reference, and then, with teacher guidance, explore the target culture through authentic texts

and materials. Even if one is committed to accept the challenges of teaching for cross-cultural understanding, one must still grapple with the problem of deciding what aspects of culture to teach that must go beyond the presentation of facts alone.

Lalande (1985a) does suggest that students should be exposed to various aspects of the target culture's intellectual achievements- both artistic and scientific- even in early phases of instruction. He also recommends that cultural information in textbooks be balanced in terms of gender-related issues, the socio-economic classes depicted, and representations of both rural and urban lifestyles.

Byrnes (1991) finds it difficult to stimulate the appropriate second-culture framework in a classroom where students are surrounded by their native culture. Since students will undoubtedly try to interpret target language texts through the use of their native-language cultural schemata, there is a danger that they will miss the way that the materials represent the reality of the foreign cultural context. She suggests two ways to alleviate the problem. First, teachers should begin with L2 texts about the target culture that are not too far removed from the reality of the native culture or from the learners' own cultural experience. Secondly, learners might begin by working with foreign language texts that deal with some familiar aspect of their own native culture. By reading a variety of texts on the same topic from different cultural perspectives, students can begin to discern how the cultural phenomenon may differ. The use of discovery procedures, in her view, should be the core of a program in which cross-cultural competence is the goal (Hadley 2003:383).

The author believes that students should not be expected to understand a second culture by inducing its characteristics through authentic materials alone. "In fact, one infrequently discussed liability of authentic material is that they assume no intercultural dialogue and can only be effective with the help of an interculturally sophisticated instructor" (Tedlock 1983: p. 26).

Rivers (1993:323-4), moreover, points out that students who have experienced a uniform culture often suffer from culture shock when confronted with different ways of thinking, acting and reacting. It is important to convey cultural concepts dispassionately and objectively, so students do not feel that the teacher considers everything in the new culture to be better or worse than in the students' native culture.

Rivers (1993: 324-5) noted that we must focus on both appropriate content and activities that enable students to assimilate that content. Activities should encourage them to go beyond facts, so that they begin to perceive and experience vicariously the deeper levels of the culture of the speakers of the language.

In the past, the commonest method of presenting culture material has been by exposition and explanation. Teachers have talked about the geographical environment, the history of people, their literary, artistic and scientific achievements, and even about small details of their everyday life. These cultural talks, sometimes, supported by the showing of films or slides, can occur as isolated, slightly irrelevant interpolations in the general language program, or they may be part of a carefully planned and developing series.

A cultural series usually begins at the elementary stage with discussion of the daily life of the peer group in other language community-their families, their relations with their friends, their festivals, dating and marriage customs, etc. At intermediate and advanced levels, attention may be drawn to geographical factors and their influence on daily living, transport, shopping, and the history of art, music and so forth. These presentations should be accompanied by visual illustration in the form of charts, diagrams, maps, and pictures with films and slides.

It takes students away from the fundamental task of language learning and communication. It provides much valuable background information for the real task penetrating the foreign culture. This kind has motivational value and reading in the native language about another country and another people provides an interesting out-of-class activity at a stage.

Strategies

The issue of making the topics about the target culture as interesting as possible is imperative. The first strategy to engage students' interest is selecting appealing aspects of the target culture to talk about. A sequenced presentation of all aspects of the culture, with reading, exposition, discussion, illustration by films, slides, maps and other visual means and personal research projects should be considered in language classes. Some useful strategies for presenting culture in the classroom are described in this section.

2.2 Authentic Material

Using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows; Web sites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials. Teachers can adapt their use of authentic materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. For example, even beginning language students can watch and listen to video clips taken from a television show in the target language and focus on such cultural conventions as greetings. The teacher might supply students with a detailed translation or give them a chart, diagram, or outline to complete while they listen to a dialogue or watch a video. After the class has viewed the relevant segments, the teacher can engage the students in discussion of the cultural norms represented in the segments and what these norms might say about the values of the culture. Discussion topics might include nonverbal behaviors (e.g., the physical distance between speakers, gestures, eye contact, societal roles, and how people in different social roles relate to each other). Students might describe the behaviors they observe and discuss which of them are similar to their native culture and which are not and determine strategies for effective communication in the target language (Peterson and Coltrane -2003).

2.2.1 Role Playing

After students have learned and acted out dialogues and culturally based dramatized situations that are carefully constructed and compatible with the age, proficiency level and interest of the students, they then role play the same situation using a culturally appropriate form of address. Other students observe the role play and try to identify the reason for the miscommunication.

2.2.2 Culture Capsules

A culture capsule is a short description, usually one or two paragraphs in length, of one minimal difference between home-culture and a target-culture custom, accompanied by illustrative photos, slides, or realia. The students are then responsible for finding information about the item in question, either by conducting research or by being given clues to investigate. They can either write a brief summary or make an oral presentation to the class about the cultural relevance of the item. Such activities can also serve as a foundation from which teachers can go on to discuss larger cultural, historical, and linguistic factors that tie in with the objects. Such contextualization is, in fact, important to the success of using culture capsules.

2.2.3 Culture cluster

Culture clusters consist of about three illustrated culture capsules that develop related topics plus one 30 minute simulation that integrates the information in the capsules and dramatize it through a skit or situational role-play (Seeley, 1984). Clusters refer to a small number of separate, ten-minute culture capsules into the class format. Some teachers use mimidramas or miniskits to teach culture.

2.2.4 Culture Assimilators

According to Seeley (1984) the culture assimilator is first envisioned as a programmed, out-of-class technique that would help individuals adjust to a new culture. It might consist of as many as 75 to 100 "critical incidents" or episodes that take place between a native and a member of the target culture in which some type of conflict or misinterpretation develops.

2.2.5 Culture Minidrama

A minidrama can be constructed from three to five episodes in which a cultural conflict or miscommunication occurs, as in culture assimilator. As each episode is experienced, students attempt to explain what the source of miscommunication is through class discussion, led by the teacher. After each episode, more cultural information is given.

2.2.6 Artifact Study

It is designed to help students discern the cultural significance of certain unfamiliar objects from the target culture. The activity involves giving description and forming hypotheses about the function of unknown object (Gallowy, 1985).

2.2.7 Proverbs

Language itself, proverbs, sayings, superstitions, metaphors, humor and sarcasm all provide interesting and provocative examples of the use of language and reflect the influence of culture on people's lives. Richmond (1987) points out that proverbs are a significant part of cultural expression that imply underlying ideas and allusions and can provide basic insights into the way of life of the people. It is also important to compare the target language proverbs to those found in the native language. Using proverbs as a way to explore culture also provides a way to analyze the stereotypes about and misperceptions of the culture.

2.2.8 Humor

Various language educators have advocated the use of cartoons and other forms of humor in language teaching and it should be included among the basic themes around which culture study should be based. Most students found humor to be hard to understand and one of the hardest things to grasp is that people in other cultures laugh in the special ways their cultures have taught them to laugh. (Morain 1991, p.397)

2.2.9 Literature

Culture study through literary texts may include popular fiction, folklore, ballads, or anything else that can illuminate the thought and life experience in the culture. Reading about the target language's culture could help these students come to terms with what they experience in the target-language country, and therefore, be better prepared for it.

Literary texts are often replete with cultural information and evoke memorable reactions for readers. Texts that are carefully selected for a given group of students, regarding their interests and level of proficiency, and with specific goals in mind can be very helpful in allowing students to acquire insight into a culture (Scott & Huntington, 2000).

2.2.10 Film

Film and television segments offer students an opportunity to witness behaviors that are not obvious in texts. Film is often one of the more current and comprehensive ways to encapsulate the look, feel, and rhythm of a culture. Film also connects students with language and cultural issues simultaneously (Stephens, 2001), such as depicting conversational timing or turn-taking in conversation. At least one study showed that students achieved significant gains in overall cultural knowledge after watching videos from the target culture in the classroom (Herron, Cole, Corrie, & Dubreil, 1999). Films will be selected which are representative of aspects of life in the culture that are in target language, preferably without subtitles.

3. Conclusion

In a meticulous view, we can say, 'Language and culture are indivisibly bound, interwoven, interrelated counterpart. That is, in a word, Language is used to convey meaning and meaning is determined by the culture. Otherwise, it will surely be, *'a flesh without any spirit.'* Hence, 'Communication is culture, and culture is communication.' Edward Hall (1990). In brief, if successful integration takes place in language classes, the EFL/ESL learners of English or any other languages will be able to act flexibly and sensibly along the lines of cultural norms that they encounter within the target language culture.

Pedagogical Implications

The structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world. They come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do. The understanding of these principles forms a set of foundation stones upon which to build curricular plans, lesson designs, and moment-by-moment techniques and activities in

language classes by teachers. Teachers' approach to language pedagogy is not just a set of static principles, set in stone. The language-culture connection is an important factor in the learning of a foreign/second language, potentially a keystone in one's approach to language teaching. The findings of this study can contribute to EFL/ESL teaching and learning.

These frameworks can serve as useful resources for curriculum planners, material writers, and classroom teachers as they plan cultural instruction. Incorporated in the curriculum, a culture class would prove to be a vital component of language learning and teaching, since as this study illustrates, it has a great deal to offer to the development of communicative competence as well as other skills in the instruction of any language. To develop cultural awareness alongside language awareness, materials need to provide more than a superficial acknowledgement of cultural identity and address more thoroughly the kind of cultural adjustment that underlies the experience of learning a foreign language. Teachers should be adequately trained in the teaching of culture and, therefore, have strategies for integrating culture study with language, or for creating a viable framework for organizing instruction around cultural themes.

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