

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Saydumarova Dilobar Nasirovna

*Fergana State University, Academic Lyceum, English language teacher,
dilyasaydumarova@gmail.com*

Abstract: *In today's era of globalization one of the most fundamental power in retaining the cultural diversity is language. Every single student without prioritizing his own cultural identity should be aware of the in time hundred traditions and culture of the country whose language they are learning. Thereby, harmony among diverse nations others culture will be observed in the far off future.*

To understand the importance of culture we need to know to what extent cultural background knowledge influences language learning and teaching, and how can we take advantage of that influence. To account for roles culture plays in language learning and teaching, it is necessary to demonstrate the functions it may perform in the components of language learning and teaching, such as listening, speaking, reading and translating.

Admittedly it is not an easy task to teach culture. A foreign culture and one's own culture should be placed together in order for learners to understand a foreign culture. Learners' interaction with native speakers or text will require them to construct their own meanings rather than having educators simply transfer information about people and their culture, and therefore non-native speakers should have opportunities to make their own meanings and to reflect on both the target culture and their own.

There are many opinions about what techniques should be used in the classroom in order to develop cultural awareness in learners. Literature and history have been found to be very effective for making learners sensitive to alternative cultural perspectives. This principle should ensure that learner's own culture is not dealt with as an abstract concept but the focus is put on learner's involvement in it. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their culture on the basis of their own experience. The fact that these analyses take place in English lessons and learners use techniques which they would use to explain their own culture to people from other cultures, make this different from culture teaching in other subjects.

Even though learners were born into the culture and are familiar with it, they need to require a more distant and general look on their culture together with some information in these analyses.

Moreover, textbooks also usually play a dominant role among materials used in the lessons. They serve as a rich source of topics, texts, visuals and language as well as help to form syllabus of the course.

Textbooks used in English lessons are primarily designed to facilitate foreign language learning but because of interrelation of language and culture, textbooks are expected to include some aspects of target language culture as well.

Furthermore, to become fluent in the second language, communicative competence is needed. It covers a cultural understanding of social behavior, routines and discourse nuances as well as society's norms and values.

There are indicated strategies that should be used in the classroom in order not to develop cultural awareness but also boost communicative skills in EFL classroom.

1. Cultural lessons and activities need to be planned as carefully as language activities and integrated into lesson plans.
2. Present cultural topics in conjunction with related thematic units and closely related grammatical content whenever possible.
3. Use a variety of techniques for teaching culture that involve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Do not limit cultural instruction to lecture or anecdotal formats.
4. Make a good use of textbook illustrations and photos. Use of realia.
5. Use cultural information when teaching vocabulary. Teach students about the connotative meaning of new words.
6. Use small-group techniques, such as discussions, brainstorming, and role-plays, for cultural instruction.
7. Avoid a "facts only" approach by including experimental and process learning wherever possible.
8. Use the target language whenever possible.
9. Test cultural understanding as carefully as language is tested

Often, the lack of materials at the instructor's disposal that are conducive for culture instruction causes a major problem when trying to teach culture in the classroom.

To overcome the former problem EFL teachers should look into disciplines such as history, religion, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology and to pull from these fields pieces of knowledge that can enhance the instruction within our classroom.

Conclusion

It's very clear from the above discussion that culture and language are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture'.

If any one of them is separated the other remains incomplete.

In EFL or ESL class room the students should be taught

English with the culture associated with it so that the students can acquire the target language with cultural background and correspond in real life situations. It is observed that many students, who have excellent academic performance in English subject,

sometimes, find it very difficult to correspond with native speakers or in real life situations.

This might be the result of learning English without proper awareness of its culture.

Therefore, the role of culture that it plays in teaching and learning of English as a foreign/ second language can't be avoided while designing course for EFL/ ESL students and in the class room situations.



As a teacher we should keep in mind the importance of culture and must have a prior knowledge of the cultural knowledge of the chapter or lesson as we are going to teach the students.

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