

programs. Developing inappropriate materials causes students to lose their interest in the target culture. Material developers should consider the age and level of EFL learners in preparing materials.

The second problem is related to the way that culture is taught. In fact, teachers should have enough knowledge about the target culture and their students. The culture content selected for the classroom should match the age and level of learners in order to avoid teaching the unusual and bizarre aspects of the target culture. Furthermore, teachers should be knowledgeable enough about the target culture. Teachers Training Courses (TTC) are required in order to overcome the lack of knowledge and expertise in teaching culture.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

By way of conclusion the main premise of this paper is reiterated that the teaching of culture should become an integral part of the foreign language curriculum. The incorporation of culture into the EFL curriculum with a view to fostering cultural awareness and increasing cross-cultural tolerance seems important and necessary. Such a cultural awareness is necessary of students are to develop an understanding of the nature of the target culture as well as their own culture. Furthermore, it helps them to develop a greater tolerance for those whose values, attitudes, and beliefs are different from theirs. It is important for both EFL teachers and students to be aware of the manifestation of some sociocultural values or norms on people's speech and behavior.

As the culture of any community has many facets, it seems practically impossible to deal with all of them in EFL education. All the EFL teachers can do is to provide some pathways to enter into learning more about the target culture. The major responsibility of EFL teachers is to make learners receptive to the concept of learning on similarities among people and then move to a discussion of differences between cultures.

It should be noticed that there are two essential prerequisites for teaching culture in EFL classrooms. The first one is the development of appropriate and effective materials in which culture is integrated into the EFL curriculum. Materials developers should take into consideration the age and level of the learners for whom the materials are prepared. The second essential prerequisite is the training of more knowledgeable EFL teachers who have enough knowledge and expertise in teaching culture. It is important for EFL teachers to know their students and take their age and level into consideration. They can pick out the interesting aspects of the target culture and present them in a way that will engage students.

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Furthermore, it helps them to develop a greater tolerance for those whose values, attitudes, and beliefs are different from theirs. To put it in a nutshell, it provides learners with more awareness of their own culture and tolerance of other cultures.

Culture in the EFL Classroom

As the culture of any community has many facets, it seems practically impossible to deal with all of them in the EFL classroom. Language teachers should pick out the interesting aspects of the target culture and present them in a way that engage them in the process of learning. Using material that is too difficult or strange causes students to lose their interest in the target language. Teachers should not be disappointed that they cannot teach everything, rather be happy that they are able to raise learners' intercultural awareness. All that EFL teachers can do is to provide some pathways to enter into learning more about the target culture.

The major concerns in culture teaching is that "when", "what", and "how" students should learn about the target culture. In fact culture is enormous and consists of all the institutions and behaviors. Incorporating culture into the foreign language curriculum with a view to fostering cultural awareness and increasing cross-cultural tolerance has often been emphasized by EFL educators. However, one of the controversial issues in this regard has been the question of when teachers should introduce intercultural awareness in EFL programs. In earlier times it was assumed that teaching culture is only for advanced learners, but many scholars, as Chastain, consider culture as a fundamental feature of language and an integral part of language learning that should be presented at all levels.

It should be mentioned that the fundamental step in teaching culture is to make learners receptive to the concept of learning about cultures other than their own culture.

It is suggested to start by emphasizing similarities

among people and then move to a discussion of differences between cultures (Chastain, 1988). This allows them to have an understanding of their own culture as well as that of other cultures. Depending on the age and level of the learners this task can take different forms. For example young beginners or intermediate students should be given the opportunity to enjoy certain activities that are part of their own culture. According to Peck (1998, cited in Tanasoulas, 2001) beginning foreign students want to feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign people. Games, role play, newspapers, short stories, CDs, Internet and literature photographs and maps are some possible sources of information which can be used as materials for teaching culture. Finacchiaro (1973) lists a number of techniques which can be used in EFL classrooms. Some of the techniques suggested by him are:

- a. At the beginning levels, parts of the room may be labeled in the foreign language.
- b. A library corner should contain books and magazines in the foreign language at the reading and interest levels of the students.
- c. It is also informative to have books written by foreign speakers

It is suggested that for more advanced students, literary texts are an untapped resource of authentic language that learners can avail themselves of. Exposure to literary works can help them to expand their language awareness and develop their language competence. Of course literature can extend to cover the use of film, television and CDs in the EFL education for high level students.

Problems of Teaching Culture

Although the incorporation of culture in the EFL curriculum is both necessary and important, the problems to be solved are imposing. In most cases, uncertainty about which aspects of culture to teach, lack of time and practical techniques cause problems and difficulties for EFL educators. One of the most difficult problems is that of preparing materials in which culture is integrated into the EFL

this is clearly not the case. As Stern (1983) states, an anthropological and sociological view of language in connection with culture and society began to influence language teaching theory to a limited extent in the fifties and sixties. According to him, in the post-world war, the idea of a study of language combined with a study of culture and society was familiar enough to most theorists. They recognized that culture teaching had to be integrated with language teaching.

A review of language teaching methods reveals the fact that the role of cultural learning in the foreign language education has been the concern of many teachers and scholars. For example in Grammar Translation method the student's learning of a foreign language was limited to its literature and fine arts. As Larsen-Freeman (1985) notes, the fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language was to be able to read literature written in the foreign language. In the heyday of the audio lingual method in language teaching the importance of culture was emphasized not for the study of literature, but for language learning. In this method, culture was viewed as the everyday behavior and lifestyle of the target language speakers. In the 1970s, an emphasis on sociolinguistics resulted in greater emphasis on the role of culture in the EFL curriculum. Many language teaching methods, including Communicative Language Teaching used language-based realia, such as signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, and visual sources in their classrooms (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

As our understanding of language and communication has evolved, the importance of culture in EFL education has increased. This reality has been reflected in current methods of language learning and teaching. A review of language teaching methods (Mirhassani, 2003) reveals that in the 1960s and 70s; attempt was made to provide opportunities for rehearsal of real-life situations and communicative aspects of

language. EFL educators have taught about the culture of the target language whether or not they included it overtly in the curriculum.

The Purpose of Incorporating Culture into the EFL Curriculum

In the process of language learning, one aspect that emerges as a topic of discussion is the relationship between the knowledge of language and the knowledge of culture from which that language is originated. Most scholars focus on culture as an integral part of language learning. Brown (2000) states that language is part of a culture and culture is part of a language, and they are interwoven so that one cannot separate the two. Many scholars believe that language and culture are so closely interrelated that it seems unreasonable to talk about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in the language curriculum. According to Lessard-Clouston (1997), language teachers teach their students about culture whether or not they include it overtly in the curriculum.

There is little doubt that those learners who live, study, or work in English-Speaking communities have a much greater need to become aware of the sociocultural norms of the L2 community than do those who study English as a part of their EFL curriculum. In other words, EFL culture goals have to do with knowledge and awareness rather than acculturation and assimilation. Educators should always have in mind that teaching culture is a need to raise their students' awareness of their own culture. As Chastain (1988) believes, in EFL programs in which intercultural awareness and understanding is emphasized, learners become more aware of their own culture and more knowledgeable about the target culture. In fact, intercultural awareness is necessary if students are to develop an understanding of the nature of the target culture as well as their own culture. This intercultural awareness helps them in having a better understanding of the target language.

Introduction

The integration of language teaching with culture teaching dates back to the language teaching theory of the fifties and sixties (Stern, 1983). At that time, an anthropological and sociological view of language in connection with culture and society began to influence language teaching theory. From that time on, the contribution and integration of the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom has been considered important by most ESL and EFL language teachers. It is believed that teaching a foreign language is not limited to learning new vocabularies and syntactic structures. It should incorporate some cultural elements which are intertwined with language itself.

It is important for both language teachers and EFL students to be aware of the manifestation of some sociocultural values or norms on people's speech and behavior. Having an awareness of the foreign language cultural norms does not mean that learners have to become native-like; rather this cultural awareness allows language learners to make their own choices of what to say and how to say it (Hinkel, 2001). Although it seems impossible to deal with all aspects of culture in EFL education, many important aspects of teaching the second culture can be addressed in classroom instruction.

This paper is an attempt to investigate the place of culture in EFL education. Having discussed the importance of teaching culture, it addresses the questions of why, when, and how to teach culture in EFL situations. Furthermore, it focuses on two major problems in incorporating culture into EFL classrooms and presents some possible solutions to these problems.

What is Culture?

In language teaching and research on language the term culture has different definitions that deal with the forms of speech acts, rhetorical structure of texts, sociocultural behaviors and ways in which

knowledge is obtained and transmitted. It can refer to a way of life, a set of social practices, a system of beliefs, customs or habits, or a shared history. It can also refer to the literature, art, architecture, or history of a particular group of people. Taylor (1954, cited in Finocchiaro & Bonomo, 1973) defines culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, customs, and other habits acquired by man as a member of society. It seems difficult to give a clear-cut definition for culture. Scholars commonly distinguish between low culture i.e., culture with small c and high culture i.e., culture with Capital c (Chastain, 1988). In the first case culture refers to everything in human life including beliefs, values, and behaviors, and in the second case it refers to the best in human life restricted to the elites. It includes music, literature and art of a country.

Hinkel (2001) makes a distinction between visible culture and invisible culture. According to him, in second language teaching the term culture has been used to refer to different domains of people's lives. Some definitions can include the literature, art, the history of people or the styles of dress, customs, festivals and other traditions. These aspects can be considered the visible culture, as they are readily apparent to anyone and can be discussed and explained relatively easily. Another complex meaning of culture refers to sociocultural norms, world views, beliefs, assumptions and value systems that are found in all facets of language use. The term invisible culture applies to sociocultural beliefs and assumptions that most people are not even aware of them and cannot examine intellectually. He believes that in language teaching and learning, the crucial sociocultural principles that determine the norms of appropriate language use within the framework of the society represent the invisible culture.

The History of Culture Teaching

Although some EFL teachers seem to think that the presence of culture in current writings is relatively new, a review of literature shows that

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Incorporating Culture into the EFL Curriculum

چکیده

با نگاهی اجمالی به کتاب‌های انگلیسی تألیف شده در ایران می‌توان دریافت که در امر برنامه‌ریزی آموزش زبان انگلیسی، نقش فرهنگ نادیده گرفته شده است. بررسی رابطه‌ی میان زبان و فرهنگ، بیانگر این نکته است که موضوع تلفیق فرهنگ در آموزش زبان انگلیسی، به منظور پرورش آگاهی فرهنگی فراگیران زبان، امری مهم و ضروری است. البته داشتن آگاهی و بینش نسبت به معیارهای فرهنگی یک زبان خارجی، بدان معنا نیست که فراگیر زبان از نظر فرهنگی دقیقاً مشابه با سخن‌گویان بومی آن زبان شود، بلکه این آگاهی باید به ارتقای بینش او نسبت به فرهنگ خویشتن و اطلاع از فرهنگ زبان بیگانه بینجامد. واضح است که در تعیین هدف‌های آموزش فرهنگ و تدوین کتاب‌های درسی که به منظور فوق تهیه می‌شوند، بایستی به سن و سطح دانش فراگیران زبان نیز توجه شود.

این مقاله به بررسی جایگاه فرهنگ در امر آموزش زبان پرداخته است و سعی دارد نشان دهد، آموزش فرهنگ، بخشی جدایی‌ناپذیر از آموزش زبان انگلیسی است. به علاوه، سؤالاتی را پیرامون هدف آموزش فرهنگ، زمان مناسب ارائه‌ی اجزای متفاوت فرهنگ در آموزش زبان و نیز چگونگی تدریس فرهنگ، مورد بررسی قرار داده و بر دو شرط لازم برای آموزش فرهنگ، یعنی تدوین مطالب درسی مناسب و تعلیم معلمان مجرب و آگاه از فرهنگ خارجی، تأکید کرده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: فرهنگ، برنامه‌ریزی آموزشی، آگاهی فرهنگی.

Abstract

A cursory look at most EFL textbooks in Iran is ample to show that the role of culture, as an integral part of language learning, has often been overlooked in the development of EFL curriculum. A review of the relationship between language and culture reveals that the integration of culture into the EFL curriculum with a view to fostering cultural awareness seems important and necessary. Being aware of the foreign language cultural norms does not mean that EFL learners have to become native-like, rather such a cultural awareness allows them to develop an understanding of the nature of the target culture as well as their own culture. Certainly, the age and the level of learners should be considered in setting goals for culture teaching and developing materials for this purpose. This paper investigates the role of culture in EFL curricula, and attempts to show that culture teaching should become an integral part of EFL instruction. It addresses the question of why, when, and how to teach culture in EFL education. Furthermore, it focuses on appropriate materials and culturally knowledgeable teachers as the essential prerequisites for teaching culture in EFL education.

Key words: culture, EFL, curriculum development, cultural awareness.