

Running head: CULTURE TEACHING: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

The Role of Culture in Second or Foreign Language Teaching:
Moving Beyond the Classroom Experience

Marilyn Fleet

977 Como Crescent

Orleans, Ontario

K4A 3Z6

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Abstract

Second Language (L2) and Foreign Language (FL) curricula have a cultural component intricately woven into the fabric of the language syllabus. To teach language, one must also teach the culture inherent in the language, including the verbal as well as the non-verbal aspects. A review of the literature will show that studying the target culture does not only impact language learners while the language is being acquired, but also has an impact on students after the language lessons have ceased. A careful analysis will demonstrate that teaching the target culture to language students will foster in these students what Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) term “sociocultural competence” or what Sellami (2000) calls “intercultural competence”. In our dynamic, multicultural world, the ability of L2 or FL students to empathize, tolerate, and appreciate the cultures of other peoples is ideal. This ability or competence will be shown to extend beyond the four classroom walls after the acquisition of language has been accomplished. The role of the teacher in developing this new competence will be established. Strategies that teachers may use to better incorporate culture in their language teaching will be presented.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	p. 5
II.	Definitions of Culture	p. 6
III.	Rationale for Culture Teaching	p. 6
	A. Language and Culture are Interconnected	p. 6
	B. Increasing Communicative Competence	p. 7
	C. Other Benefits to Students	p. 9
	1. More Authentic Language Learning	p. 9
	2. Motivates Students to Learn Languages	p. 9
	D. To Dispel Myths	p. 9
	E. Instilling an Intercultural Competence	p. 11
IV.	When to Teach Culture	p. 12
V.	How to Teach Culture	p. 12
	A. The Role of The Teacher	p. 13
	B. Strategies for Teachers	p. 14
	1. Use of Various Materials	p. 14
	2. The Internet as a Resource	p. 14
	3. Virtual Realia	p. 15
	4. Reformulation	p. 15
	5. Research	p. 16
	6. Selling Differing Cultural Views	p. 16
	7. Personalizing Cultural Content	p. 16

8. Presentation of Cultural Misunderstandings	p. 16
9. Cultural Presentations	p. 16
10. The Learning Cycle	p. 17
C. Verbal and Non-verbal Components	p. 17
VI. Studies Supporting the Development of Intercultural or Sociocultural Competence	p. 19
A. Surfing to Cross-Cultural Awareness: Using Internet- Mediated Projects to Explore Cultural Stereotypes (Abrams)	p. 19
B. Sociocultural Strategies for a Dialogue of Cultures (Savignon and Sysoyev)	p. 20
C. Promoting Openness toward Culture Learning: Ethnographic Interviews for Students of Spanish (Bateman)	p. 22
VII. Conclusion	p. 25
VIII. References	p. 27

The Role of Culture in Second or Foreign Language Teaching:
Moving Beyond the Classroom Experience

Introduction

The debate over the role of culture in language classrooms has included several relevant questions. When should teachers teach culture? How should culture be taught? Why is it necessary for students to learn about the target culture at all? Some language theorists believe that culture and language cannot be taught in isolation of each other. As Hendon (1980) states, “Culture should be taught when we have students to teach” (p.193). Peck (1998) expresses a similar view; that culture has to be taught from day one of language teaching and must not cease. If students are too young to have yet mastered the language skills, culture may be taught in the mother tongue with which students are familiar (Hendon, 1980). The message by these language theorists is a simple one—regardless of the language skill of the learner, the teaching of culture needs to take place. The literature suggests that culture and language be taught simultaneously.

To answer the question of how to teach culture, many language syllabi include a section on culture to better assist teachers who wish to incorporate cultural components into their language lessons. These syllabi often explain why culture teaching is necessary and important for Second Language (L2) or Foreign Language (FL) students. They will often address the non-verbal as well as the verbal components of language and how these may be incorporated into language lessons by teachers.

As already stated, many language theorists believe that language cannot be taught without culture and vice versa. What may not be so apparent to language teachers and their students are the implications that culture teaching can have on students in the future.

For the present day L2 or FL teacher, affecting student attitudes to reflect positive views towards foreign cultures is a necessary and attainable objective.

Definitions of Culture

A working definition of culture needs to be determined as the term *culture* itself can be confusing or very broad. Culture has been, and continues to be, defined in many ways. Peck (1998) has described culture as, “the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people” (p.1) and “as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings” (p.10). It is defined by Sysoyev as, “a system of symbols, meanings, and norms passed from one generation to the next, which differentiates groups of people united by certain characteristics such as origin, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic class, or political views (Sysoyev as cited in Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002, p.513). Hammerly (1982) stated very simply that culture is, “the total way of life of a people” (p.513). It is this latter definition which will be used for the purpose of this paper.

Rationale for Culture Teaching

Language and Culture are Interconnected

The relevance of teaching culture with language is based on the belief that language and culture are interconnected (Cruz, Bonissone & Baff, 1995; Heileman & Kaplan, 1985; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Peck, 1998; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Sellami, 2000; Singhal, 1997; Stern, 1983; Thanasoulas, 2001). The predominant view is that culture cannot be taught without language and similarly, that language cannot be taught without culture. In Peck’s (1998) words, “Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete” (p.1), or it is what

Sellami (2000) refers to as “a lifeless endeavour” (p.4). According to Lessard-Clouston (1997) language teaching is culture teaching.

The Ontario Curriculum French as a Second Language Document produced by the Ministry of Education (2001) expresses the aim of both Extended French and French Immersion programs as “[providing] students with an understanding of the cultures of French-speaking societies by integrating cultural study into daily language instruction” (p. 3). It recognizes, as do other French as a Second Language syllabi, that a cultural component is essential to L2 or FL instruction. Another such document is the Orientation document for Atlantic Canada Core French Curriculum produced by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education in affiliation with the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (n.d.). It outlines the rationale behind teaching culture in the Core French Curriculum in the Atlantic Provinces. It states that, “On the basis of their experiences in the Core French curriculum, students should be able to demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of francophone cultures, while comparing them with their own culture, as well as an appreciation and understanding of Canada’s multicultural reality” (p.10).

Increasing Communicative Competence

It is posited that teaching culture as part of the language syllabus is instrumental in enhancing communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1979; Hammerly, 1982; Savignon, 2002; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Stern, 1983). Peterson and Coltrane (2003) assert that “in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behaviour” (p.2) or else students will learn only utterances and not the cultural appropriateness connected to these utterances (Hendon, 1980). Hendon’s (1980) belief is that unless culture is a central focus in language teaching, students will not communicate to “the fullest extent” (p.198).

Canale and Swain's (1979) and Canale's (1983) communicative competence model is comprised of four competency areas: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is concerned with mastering the verbal as well as the non-verbal aspects of a language and encompasses vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and other language rules. Sociolinguistic competence deals with the appropriateness of utterances and takes into account the appropriateness of what is said, as well as the context in which the utterance would be deemed appropriate. Discourse competence is the ability of language students to create unified texts, either spoken or written, in which grammatical forms and meanings allow for the creation of different genres, such as a personal letter, a speech, or a narrative, to name a few. Lastly, strategic competence is the use of communication strategies that are called into play when a breakdown in communication between interlocutors occurs, allowing one of the speakers to compensate for the communication breakdown by relying on such elements as facial expression, gestures, paraphrase and other verbal or non-verbal cues.

For Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983), the main goal of this communicative competence is to provide students with meaningful interactions in authentic or real life situations with native or native-like speakers of the target language. Along with this approach to language teaching, Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983) maintain that it is also necessary to teach about the target culture in social studies classes so that students are not only taught how to meet their communicative goals, but are also taught, "the sociocultural knowledge of the second language group that is necessary in drawing inferences about the social meanings or values of utterances"

(Canale & Swain, 1979, p.28). A similar view is expressed by Stern (1983) who suggests a multidimensional curriculum approach to teaching languages. In this approach, “both a cultural and a communicative syllabus become essentials in language teaching as much as a more formal approach” (p. 123).

Other Benefits to Students

More Authentic Language Learning. Culture teaching has many benefits for language students. It allows students to “feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign peoples and not just hear their language” (Peck, 1998, p.3). The language learning experience becomes more real, more purposeful and more authentic for learners when they are taught the cultural contexts of the language itself (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

Motivates Students to Learn Languages. Teaching about the target culture when teaching the target language piques the interest of students and acts as a motivator (Hammerly, 1982; Hendon, 1980). Shumin (1997) reinforces this view by promoting the use of what she calls *cultural-awareness: oral activities* which she says will serve to motivate students.

To Dispel Myths

Culture teaching also helps to dispel myths or debunk stereotypes associated with the target culture peoples (Hammerly, 1982). Teachers can ensure that the posters and realia that cover the classroom walls are representative of variations in the target culture and do not reflect stereotypical representations only. For example, if the only depictions of the French male are beret-wearing, coffee-sipping, moustache-sporting men sitting at an open-air café and delicately nibbling a croissant, the stereotype that this is a typical Frenchman would be reinforced. The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for

Collaboration in Basic Education's (WNCP) Spanish Language and Culture (Six-Year Junior/Senior High School Program Implementation Manual, published by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (2004) and encompassing the western and northern Canadian provinces, states that teaching students and allowing them to reflect about stereotypes associated with the Spanish culture will make students more aware of what culture is. Simply eating the food that one would eat in a Spanish restaurant or learning about cultural celebrations of various Spanish-speaking countries are not enough to cause students to reject differences between the Spanish culture and their own. In the authors' view, reflection and discussion are crucial to the growth of an intercultural competence in students enrolled in language classes. This opinion is echoed by Savignon (2002) who believes that "just knowing about the culture...will not suffice" (p.10). Similarly, Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) ascertain that the notion of creating cross-cultural acceptance and understanding merely through teaching language is not supported by research.

The goal for students enrolled in elementary Spanish classes in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta is that, "Ideally, they will come to understand the concept of culture and the phenomena (e.g. ethnocentrism, empathy, stereotyping, exoticism, discrimination, culture shock) that are characteristic of the relationship with other cultures" (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004, p.42). In developing this intercultural competence, Savignon (2002) asserts that cultural sensitivity, along with the cultural awareness, is necessary.

Instilling an Intercultural Competence

Enrolment in a L2 or FL class does not automatically guarantee that students will come to appreciate or be tolerant of the target culture (Bateman, 2002; Lessard-Clouston, 1997), although for language teachers, one of the goals of language instruction is to instil a cultural awareness and acceptance in students (Bateman, 2002). However, if language students are taught about the target culture while simultaneously acquiring the language, the potential exists to affect students' perceptions and attitudes toward the target language speakers and their culture in a positive way (Bateman, 2002; Kramsch, 1996; Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Sellami, 2000). Bateman (2002) calls this "the most compelling reason for culture learning" (p.3).

Language teachers believe that culture teaching has value (Thanasoulas, 2001). It has long been the view of language theorists and researchers that a cultural component is essential in creating a complete and comprehensive language syllabus (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1979; Cruz, et. al, 1995; Peck, 1998; Savignon, 2002; Stern, 1983). For example, Stern's (1983) multidimensional curriculum has a distinct and separate *cultural syllabus* which has as its basic tenet, "the acquisition of cultural awareness, understanding, knowledge, and to a certain extent, cultural 'proficiency'" (p.127). As a result of Stern's work, Canada's National Core French Study was written in which the central aim of the cultural syllabus was to give students, "the opportunity to complete their schooling with the knowledge and skills necessary to function competently in Canada's sociolinguistic context" (Leblanc, 1990). It is believed that language students will acquire the cultural tools necessary to function in the target culture outside of school or in the "real" world.

When to Teach Culture

The age at which intercultural competence or culture teaching should occur has previously been considered. Learning about culture should take place at an early age (Hammerly, 1982; Hendon, 1980; Peck, 1998; Sellami, 2000). Hammerly (1982) suggests that culture teaching “should take place in the second language program from the first day of class” (p.517). Culture can be taught at the start of a language program even if it has to be taught in the first language or L1 to start (Hendon, 1980). To accomplish this, Sellami (2002) proposes a three-stage approach where the primary stage of culture teaching occurs at the beginner level. At this level, language learners are merely introduced to cultural facts and are just becoming acquainted with the target culture. From there, learners progress through to the second stage which is suitable for students who have an intermediate level of language ability. Here, students begin to compare their own culture with that of the target culture and “attempts at understanding, empathy, appreciation and acceptance of the other are still in their embryo stage” (Sellami, 2002, p.10). The final stage is appropriate for the advanced language student as it involves a more in depth contact with the target culture and the aims of the previous second stage (as stated above) are finally being accomplished.

How to Teach Culture

The teaching of culture is best approached by creating an open and tolerant atmosphere within the school and classroom community itself, where all cultures representative of the school or classroom community- such as English Canadian, French Canadian, Chinese and Hispanic for example- are all shown to be valued and appreciated. Celebrating cultures of all types establishes a cultural awareness and acceptance of all

students in the L2 or FL classroom, regardless of their race or colour. This is especially important for students who are a minority in the classroom, such as a Spanish-speaking immigrant student who is currently enrolled in a French Immersion class in Canada for example. A minority student whose culture is not accepted or is outright rejected by others in the classroom does not feel valued and is subject to a lesser degree of academic success while in school (Cruz, et. al, 1995). Moreover, this student is also likely to have difficulty adapting to society in general (Ibid.). Similarly, as expressed by Clark (1990), “Competent teachers understand that positive self-concept and positive identification with one’s culture is the basis for academic success” (p.7).

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers are urged to present cultural facts in a manner which does not value the target culture over that of the students’ native culture (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Kristmanson (2000) echoes these views by noting that language teachers have the daunting task of creating a positive atmosphere and attitude towards the target language and culture, while at the same time in no way compromising the integrity and importance of the first language or culture of the language students. Clark (1990) states that, “[teachers] must possess the skills necessary to validate the culture of their students and help them develop a positive sense of self” (p.7).

The teacher is often the only language model that students encounter in their language study in school. For this reason, the language teacher has a significant and central role to play in aiding students in acquiring both a linguistic and cultural competence in a L2 or FL. The teacher is not only expected to be knowledgeable about the language conventions he or she is teaching; the language teacher is also responsible

for understanding and imparting knowledge to students about the target culture associated with the target language, and any variations in culture which may exist. In Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence, he suggests that it is the responsibility of the teacher to develop in students a *critical culture awareness* or what he also terms *savoir s'engager*. Clark (1990) posits that helping teachers develop language proficiency and cultural sensitivity are two goals that are a must in teacher training programs. Acheson (n.d.) states a similar view that teachers need to know not only what aspects of culture to teach but how to teach them as well. Further, Acheson states that "culture should be not only broadened and deepened but also lengthened within the curriculum" (p.45). This is an immense task for the current L2 or FL teacher who, as Kramsch (1983) states, needs to be familiar with how "native speakers think and react" (p.445).

Strategies for Teachers

Use of Various Materials. In teaching language and culture to students there are several strategies of which teachers may avail. Cullen and Sato (2000) encourage an approach encompassing materials which are tactile, visual or audio-based in order to touch on many of the various learning styles of students. They suggest the use of newspapers, songs, videos and stories to name a few.

The Internet as a Resource. The use of the internet to bring current and authentic cultural elements from around the world and into the hands of students within a matter of minutes is another useful strategy that L2 or FL teachers already employ (Singhal, 1997). For Hackett (1996) the usefulness of the internet to language teachers can be summed up by the following statements about internet resources; that they "provide a direct, immediate link to the target culture" or can serve as "a multimedia mirror on the target

culture” (p.3). Moreover, the internet can permit language teachers and students to engage in synchronous or asynchronous communication with native speakers worldwide, and is a very valuable tool enabling students to participate directly in the target culture through interaction with native speakers (Singhal, 1997). As useful a resource as it is, users need also be aware of the pitfalls of using this tool in the language classroom (Ibid.).

Virtual Realia. Smith (1997) advocates the use of other realia which he postulates “can enhance linguistic and cultural comprehensibility, which are both prerequisites for real language learning” (p.1). He defines Virtual Realia as “(in language teaching) digitized objects and items from the target culture which are brought into the classroom as examples or aids and used to stimulate spoken or written language production” (Ibid.). He encourages the use of Virtual Realia as a means to increase student interest and motivation in learning about language and culture. The internet, he says, can be used by anyone as a means of class instruction. He further describes the benefits of incorporating Virtual Realia into language lessons by asserting that it:

Reveals the similarities and differences between native and target cultures as well as raises (multi-) cultural awareness. Virtual Realia can improve the quality and availability of culturally-based, authentic ...materials. It was designed with the belief that studying a foreign language is a means to a greater end—*communicating* meaningfully with another culture and its people (Smith, 1997, p.4).

Reformulation. Cullen and Sato (2000) describe the activity of reformulation, explaining what one has read or heard to a partner in one’s own words, as a useful

technique that teachers can have their students engage in. The authors believe it is useful in learning culture as well as language.

Research. Cullen and Sato (2000) also advocate having teachers involve students in research, especially university students, as they feel this activity can lead to “long-term interest in the target-culture” (p.4).

Selling Differing Cultural Views. Another strategy outlined by Cullen and Sato (2000) involves teachers “selling” differing cultural views to their students, by contrasting such cultural phenomena as “attractive vs. shocking, similarities vs. differences...city life vs. country life, stated beliefs vs. actual behaviour” (Ibid.).

Personalizing Cultural Content. The importance of personalizing cultural content so that students are given the opportunity to talk about themselves is another useful technique that Cullen and Sato (2000) believe can help “lead students to a better cultural understanding” (Ibid.).

Presentation of Cultural Misunderstandings. Shumin (1997) suggests presenting situations in the classroom involving cultural misunderstandings, which in real life would cause one or more of the interlocutors to become confused, angry or even offended. By having students role play in this way and having a discussion follow, it is Shumin’s (1997) belief that students will be prompted to think about how native speakers would behave and see the situation, which in turn will “gradually sharpen students’ cultural awareness” (p.9).

Cultural Presentations. The WNCP’s Spanish Language and Culture (Six-Year Program) document (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004) explains how teachers may employ cultural presentations whereby students are involved in a group

assignment to portray one aspect of Spanish culture. The goal of this activity is to encourage students to think critically, be creative, select important information to share with the class, and to gain a better understanding of the target culture. A plethora of examples is provided to help teachers encourage students to plan a cultural presentation based on their own particular learning styles. A few of the examples include making maps of a specific Spanish-speaking region, cooking a traditional Spanish meal, sewing a traditional costume that would be worn in a Spanish-speaking country, and learning to play a Spanish folk song (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004).

The Learning Cycle. Another strategy outlined in the above noted document is the implementation of The Learning Cycle. It is described as “a sequence of lessons designed to have students engage in exploratory investigations, construct meaning out of their findings, propose tentative explanations and solutions, and relate Spanish language and culture concepts to their own lives” (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004, p.90). Its aim is to “promote empathy and understanding for people of other cultures” (Ibid.).

Verbal and Non-verbal Components

Regardless of how teachers choose to implement culture into their language lessons, one aspect of language which should not be left untreated is the non-verbal component such as gestures and facial expressions. These are believed to affect “the intercultural communication process” (Cruz et al., 1995, p.3). According to Shumin (1997), “ignorance of the nonverbal message often leads to misunderstanding” (p.3). Learning the gestures which are culturally acceptable in the target language adds to the authenticity

of the language experience and can make the language elements more interesting and meaningful to students (Peck, 1998).

One way in which teachers may accomplish this task is through engaging students in role-play activities whereby students learn the gestures in advance and practice them in a group situation. Through role-play, students are able to put themselves in the shoes of a native speaker, reacting as that person would linguistically and non-verbally to the situation that he or she finds himself in (Hendon, 1980) while at the same time developing empathy for the person being represented in the role-play (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004).

Peck (1998) also suggests showing foreign films to students at the beginning of the school year in order to focus on body movements only as a means of introducing the concept of gesture. The teaching of gestures and allowing students to practice them will better enable students to handle a real-life situation outside of the classroom when a potential breakdown in communication occurs. If language students are not equipped to handle linguistically all of the realities of the language they are studying in school; perhaps they are at a beginner or intermediate level in terms of language ability; then the ability to comprehend culturally appropriate gestures of the person with whom they are engaging in conversation, and likewise their ability to read facial expressions, can aid the language student to still comprehend the situation even if some of the language being spoken is out of his or her reach at that particular moment. It is through this type of interaction that language learners “will learn to communicate verbally and non-verbally as their language store and language skills develop” (Shumin, 1997, p.6). This is, as

previously explained, what Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983) refer to as, strategic competence.

Studies Supporting the Development of Intercultural or Sociocultural Competence

The following studies support the ability of teachers to affect and foster an intercultural competence in language students by teaching them about culture and by engaging students in activities to further enhance the development of an awareness, tolerance, appreciation and empathy for the target culture peoples.

Surfing to Cross-Cultural Awareness: Using Internet-Mediated Projects to Explore Cultural Stereotypes (Abrams)

In this study completed by Abrams (2002) sixty-eight intermediate German university students were involved in an internet-mediated cultural portfolio to determine what their stereotypical views of German, Austrian and Swiss cultures are. Two groups acted as the control group and two groups served as the treatment group. All students completed the assignment in pairs or groups of three over the course of a fifteen-week semester and it counted for ten percent of their final course grade. However, not all students who participated in the cultural project volunteered their results to the researcher, therefore, only the data from those students who volunteered their work was used. Students completed the cultural portfolio in English as opposed to German, which the researcher and the university instructors involved deemed appropriate.

The project for the control groups and the treatment groups partly consisted of a preproject and postproject questionnaire. Prior to completing the cultural portfolio project, the preproject questionnaire revealed that both the treatment and control group students had written similar responses regarding their prior understanding of culture. The

control group completed a somewhat traditional research assignment by choosing a topic related to German-speaking countries which they would research using the internet, books and interviews with German-speakers, followed by a class presentation of their research findings. The treatment group, however, was involved in a more elaborate assignment, consisting of several subcomponents. These included feedback from a Germany-based internet discussion group on American stereotypes that the treatment group then used as the basis of discussion with their university instructors, a brainstorming session on how the American media portrays German-speaking countries, and research in groups based on the stereotypes discovered in the brainstorming session. From there, the treatment group posted questions in an online discussion forum to native German-speakers and synthesized their results to present in an oral presentation.

The control groups and the treatment groups took notes on the class presentations and wrote their reflections before submitting their own research project and handed all of the work in at the same time. The postproject questionnaire, as mentioned, was completed by both groups. However, the results shown by the control groups varied greatly from the results of the treatment groups. Both groups developed differing definitions of culture. Question three of the postproject questionnaire (What Have You Learned From Your Culture Project?) yielded the most significant results, indicating that “learners developed more cross-cultural awareness through the experimental than the treatment portfolios” (Abrams, 2002, p.150).

Sociocultural Strategies for a Dialogue of Cultures (Savignon and Sysoyev)

Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) conducted research into the benefits of explicit teaching of sociocultural strategies to language students. There were thirty, eleven male

students and nineteen female students, enrolled in Tambov Grammar School in Tambov, Russia. All participants were in their eleventh year of study and all were considered to be advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in their final year of study who planned to attend university. It was determined prior to the investigation that about ninety percent of the participants required English for what was deemed intercultural or international communication.

Their experiment consisted of strategy training in two parts. In each of the forty-five minute classes which occurred six times a week over a period of nine weeks, five to seven minutes of each class were dedicated to strategy training. The result was a total of fifty-four sessions. In Part One of the strategy training, the four strategies were taught in a sequential fashion and participants worked in pairs or groups of three to prepare the dialogues that would illustrate each strategy. In Part Two, the next four strategies were also taught sequentially and a variety of tasks could be chosen by students which involved them working alone, in pairs, or in groups of three. At the end of the nine weeks, a survey was completed anonymously by the students. The results, as interpreted by the researchers, indicate that there is a positive attitude associated with explicit strategy training as reported by the participants in the post instructional survey. The researchers felt that explicitly teaching sociocultural strategies in a communicative foreign language classroom is successful for several reasons. For instance, Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) state:

Problem-solving assignments (strategies 1-4) encouraged learner interaction in the L2 and prepared them for spontaneous use of their L2 in subsequent communication beyond the classroom. The training they

received in creating sociocultural portraits of a L2 context and the participants in intercultural communication (strategies 5-8) provided experience essential to the development of techniques for initiating and maintaining intercultural exchange in a spirit of peace and in a dialogue of cultures (p.520).

Another benefit of the strategy training was the ability of the participants to be diplomatic in exchanges which could potentially involve intercultural conflict. This ability, it was found, improved with practice.

Promoting Openness toward Culture Learning: Ethnographic Interviews for Students of Spanish (Bateman)

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) have included ethnographic studies as one of the strategies they feel is important for teaching language and culture. They suggest sending L2 or FL students out into their community to conduct interviews with speakers of the target culture, the results of which can be audio taped, videotaped or handwritten. The following study is an example of how ethnographic interviews can help L2 or FL students work towards defining their own intercultural competence.

Bateman (2002) advocates the use of an ethnographic interview which has no pre-planned agenda and one in which the interviewer formulates questions based on what the interviewee has said. An open-ended question can be used to start the interview but from there the interviewer reacts to what the interviewee says and formulates new questions as the conversation unfolds. This requires the interviewer to pay very close attention to the interviewee's responses in order to keep the conversation flowing.

Not only do ethnographic interviews bring language students into direct contact with native speakers of the target language, they also allow for opportunities to establish new friendships between the interviewee and the interviewer (Bateman, 2002). An added benefit, as Bateman points out, is that conducting ethnographic interviews can help language students learn about themselves and aspects of their own culture that they normally would have overlooked had they not be contrasted with those of another culture. Through conducting ethnographic interviews, language students, “learn that there are other ways of looking at the world besides their own, and begin to comprehend how they are seen by others” (Bateman, 2002, p.4).

Bateman’s study involved thirty-five participants, all undergraduate students of Spanish who were enrolled in their second year of Spanish studies. The study was conducted in the spring of 1998. Students completed a background questionnaire on the second day of classes to determine their demographics, previous study of Spanish and Likert-scale questions to elicit responses regarding the attitudes of the participants towards Spanish-speakers and the language. Similarly, a post questionnaire was conducted with Likert-scale items to help determine again what the attitudes of the participants were post-interview, as well as to see what students learned from the project and how they felt about participating in it.

During the first week of classes of the ten-week term, students were involved in pre-interview preparatory activities with their teacher such as reading and reacting to comments made by foreign visitors to the United States and writing a short assignment in which they recalled being isolated in a situation, by writing their feelings about the experience. In the second week of classes, students were introduced to interview

techniques and were allowed time to practice them. In the third week of classes, students found a native speaker of Spanish to interview and commenced the ethnographic interviews which lasted for the next five weeks. In the last two weeks of the course, the participants prepared a written report based on their interviews and presented the report to the class in an oral presentation.

The results, as based on the responses to the post questionnaire and the class presentations, were that the students were affected in a positive manner. Not only were they exposed to a native speaker of their target language, their attitudes towards the target culture, its peoples, their own culture and culture learning in general were all deemed to be positive. As Bateman (2002) sums up:

For many students the project had an affective impact...Results of attitude scales on the postquestionnaire pointed to an increase in understanding of and respect for Spanish speakers, and the students' responses to open-ended questions and their final reports suggested that many of them achieved a degree of empathy and understanding for the experiences of the interviewees (p.8).

Bateman's (2002) study was adapted from a previous study conducted by Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) which yielded similar findings. Both the qualitative and quantitative results of Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) showed a positive correlation between participating in ethnographic interviews and a positive effect on the attitudes of students towards Spanish speakers and towards learning the language itself. Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) therefore concluded that, "Ethnographic interviewing

techniques can help students be life-long culture learners and agents of cross-cultural change” (p.11).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore the relationship between language and culture and to explain why one cannot be taught without the other. A look at the why, when and how to teach culture questions were central to the focus of this paper. Culture is very broad. Therefore it was necessary to determine how culture teaching can be approached by current L2 and FL teachers. Practical strategies that language practitioners can employ and the benefits of using these strategies are essential to include in this discussion. It is also imperative to determine the benefits of teaching culture along with language and how this culture teaching can impact on language students’ abilities to be agents of world peace in an ever-changing, multicultural, global society, long after they have left the security and safety of the language classroom.

The teaching of culture can and does raise a cultural awareness, appreciation, and acceptance of other cultures, and has also been shown to increase an awareness of one’s own culture as well. By having language students put themselves in a position to act as a native speaker through role play or by having students interact directly with native speakers through participation in ethnographic interviews, language teachers are opening up doors for language students that otherwise remain closed without the introduction and exploration of the target culture. Establishing a tolerant classroom atmosphere in which all cultures are celebrated and explicitly teaching about the target culture enables language teachers to affect student attitudes towards the target language and culture in a positive way. The goal is to foster an intercultural competence that language students can

take with them when the language classes are over in order to be fully capable of handling all of the communicative challenges of speaking a L2 or a FL and of interacting with the target language peoples. A look at three studies and the results they yielded served to confirm that helping L2 and FL teachers foster intercultural competence in their students is an attainable and relevant objective.

References

- Abrams, Z.I. (2002). Surfing to cross-cultural awareness: Using internet-mediated projects to explore cultural stereotypes. In E. Spinelli (Ed.), *Foreign Language Annals* (pp.141-160). Yonkers, New York: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- Acheson, K. (n.d.). *Do our kids have an attitude? A closer look at foreign language classrooms in the United States*. Retrieved July 12, 2005 from <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwesl/gswpal/Kris.pdf>
- Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (n.d.). Orientation document for Atlantic Canada Core French Curriculum, Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education.
- Bateman, B.E. (2002). Promoting openness toward **culture** learning: Ethnographic interviews for students of Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86, 4, 510-524. Retrieved January 17, 2006 from Wilson Omnifile database.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Philadelphia, P.A.: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative pedagogy. In J.C. Richards & R.W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and Communication* (pp. 2-27). London, England: Longman
- Canale, M. & Swain, M., (1979). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1, 1-39.
- Clark, E. R. (1990). *The state of the art in research on teacher training models with special reference to bilingual education teachers*. Paper presented at the First Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues, OBEMLA. Abstract retrieved March 3, 2006 from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/symposia/first/state.htm>
- Cortazzi, M. & Jin, L. (1999). Cultural Mirrors: Materials and methods in the EFL classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp.196-219). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruz, G. I., Bonissone, P.R. & Baff, S. J. (1995). The Teaching of Culture in Bilingual Education Programs: Moving Beyond the Basics. *New York State Association for Bilingual Education Journal*, 10, 1-5. Retrieved July 25, 2003 from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/miscpubs/nysabe/vol10/nysabe101.htm>
- Cullen, B. & Sato, K. (2000). *Practical Techniques for Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom*. Retrieved July 23, 2003 from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Cullen-Culture.html>

- Damen, L. (1987). *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Hackett, L. (1996). The internet and e-mail: useful tools for foreign language teaching and learning. *ON-CALL*, 10, 1, 1-8. Retrieved July 20, 2002 from <http://www.cltr.uq.edu.au/oncall/hackett101.html>
- Hammerly, H. (1982). *Synthesis In Second Language Teaching: An Introduction to Linguistics*. Blaine, Washington: Second Language Publications.
- Heileman, L.K. & Kaplan, I.M. (1985). Proficiency in Practice: the Foreign Language Curriculum. In C.J. James (Ed.), *Foreign Language Proficiency in the Classroom and Beyond* (pp. 55-78). Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Company.
- Hendon, U.S. (1980). Introducing Culture in the High School Foreign Language Class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 13, 3, 191-199.
- Kramersch, C. (1983) Culture and Constructs: Communicating Attitudes and Values in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 16, 6, 437-445.
- Kramersch, C. (1996). The cultural component of language teaching. Retrieved January 16, 2006 from http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg-01-2/beitrag/kramersch2.htm
- Kramersch, C. (1998) *Language and Culture*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Kristmanson, P. (2000, May). Affect*: in the second language classroom: How to create an emotional climate. *REFLEXIONS*, 19 (2), 1-5. Retrieved July 1, 2002 from <http://www.caslt.org/research/affectp.htm>
- Leblanc, R. (1990). National Core French Study: a synthesis. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.
- Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997, May). Towards an understanding of culture in L2/FL education. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3, 5, 1-12. Retrieved January 16, 2006 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lessard-Clouston-Culture.html>
- Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (2004). *Spanish Language and Culture Six-Year Junior/Senior High School Program Implementation Manual*. Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education: Winnipeg, Manitoba. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, School Programs Division.
- Ministry of Education (2001). The Ontario Curriculum FSL-Extended French Grades 1-8; French Immersion Grades 1-8. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

- Peck, D. (1998). *Teaching Culture: Beyond Language*. Retrieved July 23, 2003 from <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1984/3/84.03.06.x.html>
- Peterson, E. & Coltrane, B. (2003, December). Culture in second language teaching. *CAL Digest*, 3, 9, 1-6. Retrieved January 22, 2006 from <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0309peterson.html>
- Robinson-Stuart, G. & Nocon, H. (1996). Second culture acquisition: Ethnography in the foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 80, 431-449. Retrieved February 1, 2006 from Wilson Omnifile database.
- Savignon, S.J. (2002). Communicative language teaching: Linguistic theory and classroom practice. In S.J.Savignon (Ed.), *Interpreting communicative language teaching: Contexts and concerns in teacher education* (pp. 1-27). New Haven: Yale University Press. Retrieved August 1, 2005 from http://www.yale.edu/yup/pdf/091567_front_1.pdf
- Savignon, S. and Sysoyev, P. V. (2002). Sociocultural strategies for a dialogue of cultures. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86, 4, 510-524. Retrieved January 17, 2006 Wilson Omnifile database.
- Sellami, A.B. (2000, March 14-18). *Teaching towards cultural awareness and intercultural competence: From What through How to Why culture is?* Paper presented at the Annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Abstract retrieved January 16, 2006 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/23/53/f8.pdf
- Shumin, K. (1997). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. *FORUM*, 35, 3, 1-11. Retrieved July 23, 2002 from <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol35/no3/p8.htm>
- Singhal, M. (1997). The internet and foreign language education: Benefits and challenges. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3, 6, 107. Retrieved February 4, 2006 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Singhal-Internet.html>
- Smith, B. (1997, July). Virtual Realia. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3, 7, 1-5. Retrieved July 7, 2002 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Smith-Realia.html>
- Stern, H.H. (1983). Toward a Multidimensional Foreign Language Curriculum. In R.G. Mead (Ed.), *Foreign Languages: Key Links in the Chain of Learning* (pp. 120-141). Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference.
- Thanasoulas, D. (2001). *The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Retrieved July 23, 2003 from http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue3_3/7-thanasoulas.html

