Teaching Culture in the EFL/ESL Classroom

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Abstract

This article is intended to discuss prominent issues in teaching culture to second and foreign language students. The concepts of language and culture will be defined, respectively. Next, the characteristics and components of culture will be presented. In addition, commonly used terms in language and culture including enculturation, acculturation, cultural awareness, cross-cultural awareness, cultural identity, culture shock, and culture bump will be discussed, compared and contrasted. The relationship between language and culture will also be pointed out. Moreover, factors such as teachers, curricula, and textbooks that have an impact on the success and failure of teaching culture to second and foreign language students will be examined. Besides, various views on culture in language learning will be explored. The hidden assumptions of culture learning and teaching when language teachers embrace the bandwagon of communicative language teaching approach will be addressed. Additionally, techniques for teaching cultural awareness and ways to integrate culture learning into the foreign and second language classrooms will too be described. Furthermore, some practical guidelines on accounting for cultural issues for language classroom teachers will be indicated. The advantages and disadvantages of teaching culture in the language classroom will be mentioned. Finally, some discussion and conclusion will be made.

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Introduction

In this era of information and technology explosion, peoples in the world come into contact with one another more often and more easily than ever before. The need for mastering a foreign or second language besides one's own seems to dramatically grow. More people are learning languages for their personal and professional needs. Although the field of language teaching has done an excellent job to increasingly better accommodate the needs of language learners, the field may have to do even more and better to address the various needs of language learners. Specifically, cultural aspects of the language being learned must be taught concurrently with the linguistic aspects, which have traditionally been emphasized.

Teaching culture to foreign or second language students may not be a novel topic, as it has repeatedly been discussed by a whole host of authors such as Atkinson (1999), Blatchford (1986), Brown (1986), Brown (2007a), Brown and Eisterhold (2004), Brooks (1986), Damen (1987), Morgan and Cain (2000), Tang (1999), Tang (2006), Valdes (1986), to name but a few. However, after decades of development in language teaching, one might wonder if culture has increasingly become an important component in the language curriculum as well as in the training programs for language teachers. Likewise, it may not be clear if researchers and authors in language teaching are still interested in finding out effective methods to integrate culture in second and foreign language classrooms. To that end, this paper attempts to partially shed some light on this issue.

Before any discussion on the relationship between language and culture can be carried out, it is first necessary to discuss some common terms such as language, culture, enculturation,

acculturation, culture awareness, cross-cultural awareness, cultural identity, culture bump, and culture shock. An understanding of these basic terms will enable one to realize the importance of culture in language learning and teaching.

What is language?

Language has been around since human beings started to communicate with one another for their daily life needs. The term language is so familiar that few people would ever try to define it. It is superficially not hard to define it, but in fact to have a comprehensive definition of language is an extremely daunting task. Definitions for language run the gamut from very simple to extremely complex. Patrikis (1988) simply defined language as signs that convey meanings. Language is also "a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3). From a linguistic perspective, Sapir (1968), a renowned linguist, defined language as an entirely human and non-intrinsic method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. Generally speaking, language can be regarded as a system of verbal and nonverbal signs used to express meanings. Besides language, another closely related concept that is sometimes mentioned in the literature of language teaching is culture.

What is culture?

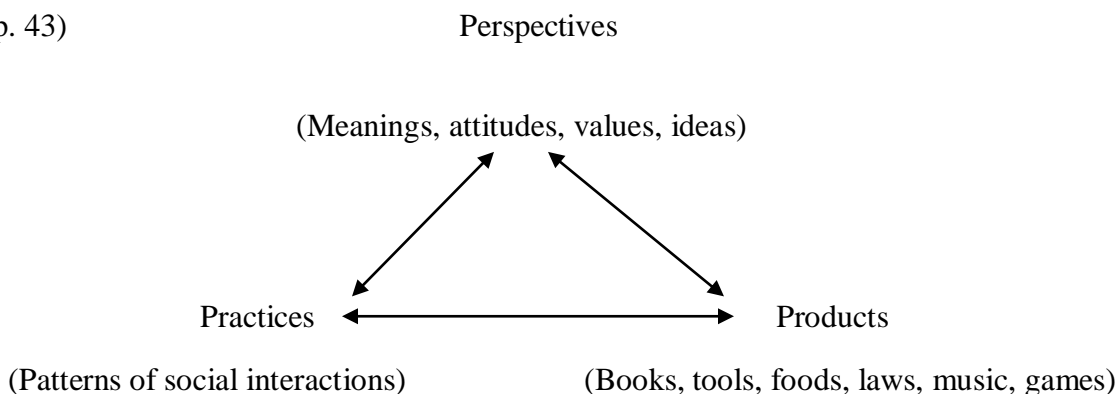One of the well-known definitions of culture is Goodenough's (1957).

> …a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves (p. 167).

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Brown (2007), however, defined culture as a way of life, as the context within which people exist, think, feel, and relate to others, as the "glue" (p. 188) that binds groups of people together. Moreover, culture, as Brown (2007) suggested, can also be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize a certain group of people in a given period of time. Sowden (2007) indicated that "culture tended to mean that body of social, artistic, and intellectual traditions associated historically with a particular social, ethnic or national group" (pp. 304-305). Additionally, Mead (1961) postulated that culture can be learned, whereas Fox (1999) noted that "culture is relative and changeable in space and time" (p. 90). Like language, culture may seem to be another concept that is not easy to define. In fact, Tang (2006) rightly observed that despite the continued efforts in various disciplinary fields to find a definition for the term culture, at the present time there is no single definition that satisfies everyone.

According to the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996), culture is typically understood to include the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and both tangible and intangible products of a society. The relationship between perspectives, practices, and products within culture is illustrated below.

Figure 1: What constitutes culture? (The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996, p. 43)

Perspectives

(Meanings, attitudes, values, ideas)

Practices   Products

(Patterns of social interactions)   (Books, tools, foods, laws, music, games)

What are the characteristics and components of culture?

Although the task of defining culture may be difficult, it appears that characteristics and components of culture can be identified. Damen (1987) presented six notable characteristics of culture.

1. Culture is learned.

2. Cultures and cultural patterns change.

3. Culture is a universal fact of human life.

4. Cultures provide sets of unique and interrelated, selected blueprints for living and accompanying sets of values and beliefs to support these blueprints.

5. Language and culture are closely related and interactive.

6. Culture functions as a filtering device between its bearers and the great range of stimuli presented by the environment.

Additionally, Damen (1987) also suggested that culture can be examined from the point of view of its individual components (such as dress, systems of rewards and punishments, uses of time and space, fashions of eating, means of communication, family relationships, beliefs and values), or from the more social point of view of its systems (such as kinship, education, economy, government association, and health). However, Nieto (2002, p. 10) postulated that "culture is complex and intricate; it cannot be reduced to holidays, foods, or dances, although these are of course elements of cultures."

What are these concepts: enculturation, acculturation, cultural awareness, cross-cultural awareness, cultural identity, culture bump, and culture shock?

Enculturation and acculturation

In discussion of culture and culture learning, the two terms enculturation and acculturation are commonly used. Whereas the acquisition of a first culture is called enculturation, the acquisition of a second or additional culture is termed acculturation, and both exhibit unique variations (Damen, 1987). Similarly, Brown (1986) defined acculturation as the process of becoming adapted to a new culture. In addition, Damen (1987) clearly delineated enculturation and acculturation as follows:

> Enculturation builds a sense of cultural or social identity, a network of values and beliefs, patterned ways of living, and, for the most part, ethnocentrism, or belief in the power and the rightness of native ways. Acculturation, on the other hand, involves the process of pulling out the world view or ethos of the first culture, learning new ways of meeting old problems, and shedding ethnocentric evaluations" (p. 140).

Cultural awareness and cross-cultural awareness

Another term worthy of discussion is cultural awareness. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) pointed out that cultural awareness means to become aware of members of another cultural group including their behavior, their expectations, their perspectives and values. Kuang (2007) delineated four levels of cultural awareness. At the first level, people are aware of their ways of doing things, and their way is the only way. They ignore the influence of cultural differences. People become aware of other ways of doing things at the second level, but they still see their way as the best. Cultural differences at this level are deemed as a source of problems, and people

are likely to ignore the problems or reduce their importance. People at the third level of cultural awareness are aware of both their way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they tend to choose the best way according to the situation. At the third level, people come to realize that cultural differences can lead to problems as well as benefits, and are willing to use cultural diversity to generate new solutions and alternatives. Finally, at the fourth level, people from various cultural backgrounds are brought together to create a culture of shared meanings. People at this level repeatedly dialogue with others, and create new meanings and rules to meet the needs of a specific situation. In essence, it can be said that individuals who experience the four levels of cultural awareness proposed by Kuang (2007) move from a stage of "cultural ignorance" to a stage of "cultural competence."

Krasner (1999) mentioned a three-step process of internalizing culture that was proposed by Agar (1994): mistake, awareness, and repair. Generally, step one, mistake, is when something goes wrong; step two, awareness, is when the learners know the frame of the new culture and possible alternatives; step three, repair, is when learners try to adjust to the new culture. A critical goal of culture teaching in foreign language teaching, as Krasner postulated, is raising students' awareness about the target culture.

Like cultural awareness, cross-cultural awareness, as Damen (1987) indicated, involves discovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behavior and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. It is also "the force that moves a culture learner across the acculturation continuum from a state of no understanding of, or even hostility to, a new culture to near total understanding, from monoculturalism, to bi- or multi-culturalism" (Damen, 1987, p. 141). In a similar vein, intercultural communication is defined as acts of communication undertaken by

individuals identified with groups exhibiting intergroup variation in shared social and cultural patterns (Damen, 1987). Citing from Rich and Ogawa (1982), Damen remarked that the term intercultural communication has had different names such as cross-cultural communication, transcultural communication, interracial communication, international communication, and contracultural communication. Zhang (2007) argued that having the proper awareness of cross-cultural communication is the first step to achieve harmony and success of intercultural communication.

Cultural identity, culture shock, and culture bump

Some other culturally related terms include cultural identity, culture shock, and culture bump. Damen (1987) noted that cultural identity is associated with the relationship between the individual and society, and it is at stake when the process of acculturation is under way, because to become bicultural is to develop an altered cultural personality and identity. Kramer (1994) indicated that foreign language learning is a hermeneutic process where learners expose their own cultural identity to the contrasting influences of a foreign language and culture.

Culture shock which is a common experience for a person learning a second language in a second culture refers to the phenomena ranging from mild irritating to deep psychological panic and crisis (Brown, 1986, 2007). In terms of the origin of the term, Damen (1987) pointed out that it was coined in 1958 by Oberg who suggested that it resulted from anxiety over losing familiar signs and symbols. Damen further indicated that culture shock is an intermediate stage in the acculturative process, and is particularly painful as it follows an initial period of euphoria and joy at the new and strange. Culture shock may endure for some, whereas for others it is

quickly followed by a devastating period of depression, dislike of the new and strange, illness, discouragement, and despair (Damen, 1987).

Using Pederson (1995) as a guide, Brown and Eisterhold (2004) described the classic model of culture shock as a U-shape curve of five stages.

1. The honeymoon stage

2. The disintegration stage

3. The reintegration stage

4. The autonomy stage

5. The interdependence stage

To further explicate what each stage means, Brown and Eisterhold (2004) stated that in the first stage, the honeymoon stage, the differences observed in the new culture are exciting and attractive. The second stage, the disintegration stage, is a period of frustration and helplessness. The new culture appears overwhelming in this period, and the response of the newcomer is typically depression or withdrawal. In the reintegration stage, culture appears to be a problem, and the newcomer is defensive, not responsive. The newcomer in the autonomy stage has perspective on the culture, and his or her opinions are balanced, objective, and may indeed be relatively positive. Finally, some people attain the interdependence stage when they adopt a new identity as a bicultural or multicultural person.

Unlike culture shock, culture bump, as Archer (1986) noted, occurs when a person from one culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange, or uncomfortable situation when interacting with people of a different culture. Archer posited that such a phenomenon results

from a difference in the way people from one culture behave in a certain situation from those in another culture. Moreover, a culture bump, as Archer indicated, also happens when a person has expectations of one behavior and gets something completely different; and an individual does not have to leave one's own culture in order to experience a culture bump. Whereas culture shock extends over an extended period of time, culture bumps are instantaneous, usually over within minutes or even seconds, but the effect may be long-lasting, and can occur any time an individual is in contact with members of another culture (Archer, 1986). This author maintained that culture bumps provide a good chance for international educators, as they lead both teachers and students to an awareness of self as a cultural being and provide an opportunity for skill development in extrapolating one cultural influence on everyday life, expressing feelings successfully in a cross-cultural situation, and observing behavior. Archer also suggested that although culture bumps can be negative, neutral, and positive, negative culture bumps should ideally be eliminated.

Jiang (2001) noted that for native English speaking teachers who work in English as a foreign language contexts culture bumps are inevitable, so whenever culture bumps occur, those teachers should use the incident as an opportunity to teach their own culture, since knowledge obtained from experience tends to be more deeply rooted than from books. Culture bumps can happen to anyone who is not familiar with a new culture; therefore, not only language students but language teachers may also encounter such experiences which can turn out to be very instructive for teachers and students to discuss in the class.

What is the relationship between language and culture?

Both language and culture are concepts that seem to have posed great difficulties for scholars to define. Besides, there seems to be an inevitable relationship between these two concepts. As Wardhaugh (2010) postulated, the nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and continues to fascinate people from a wide a variety of backgrounds. Shaul and Furbee (1998) stated that languages and cultures are systematic to a large degree, and are thus observable and describable. These authors added that whereas the systematic description of language is called linguistics, the description of cultures is called ethnography. Furthermore, many authors have pointed out that language and culture are closely related (Ardila-Rey, 2008; Brown, 2007; Damen, 1987; Kuang, 2007; Kramsch, 1998; Tang, 1999). For example, Ardila-Rey (2008) maintained that: "Language and culture are inextricably linked with each other" (p. 335). Likewise, Brown (2007) pointed out the interrelatedness of language and culture:

> Language is a part of a culture, and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition (as may be the case, say, in acquisition of reading knowledge of a language for examining scientific texts), is also the acquisition of a second culture" (pp. 189-190).

In the same vein, Kramsch (1998) held that language is the main means whereby people conduct their social lives and when it is used in context of communication, it is bound up with culture in various and complex ways. Tang (1999) went even further by equating the concept of language with that of culture. In other words, this author claimed that language is synonymous with culture. Another author, however, considers one as the container of the other. Kuang (2007, p. 75) wrote: "Language is the carrier of culture and culture is the content of language."

Language is even regarded as the product of culture, as Muir (2007) asserted that language is just one of the various cultural products.

Wardhaugh (2010) pinpointed three main claims concerning the relationship between language and culture. First, it is claimed that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world. Second, a relatively weaker version is that the structure of a language does not determine the world-view, but it is still greatly influential in predisposing speakers of a language toward adopting a particular world-view. Third, it is also claimed that there is little or no relationship between language and culture.

The issue of the relationship between language and culture has also been mentioned in a much discussed hypothesis proposed by Sapir and Whorf. The former was a linguist, and the latter was Sapir's student who was a chemical engineer by training, a fire prevention engineer by vocation and a linguist by avocation, as Wardhaugh (2010) mentioned. The hypothesis has been given several different names: the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the Whorfian hypothesis, Linguistic Relativity, or Linguistic Determinism (Brown, 2007).

When addressing the question of the extent and the way language is related to the world-view of the people who speak it, Eastman (1980, p. 75) summarized the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as follows: "A person's language determines how that person segments his world." The hypothesis Sapir and Whorf proposed has become two different versions: a strong one and a weaker one. Whereas the strong version may not have received very much approval, the weak one is likely to be easily "received." Commenting on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Kramsch (1998, p.13) wrote:

The strong version of Whorf's hypothesis, therefore, that posits that language determines the way we think, cannot be taken seriously, but a weak version, supported by the findings that there are cultural differences in the semantic associations evoked by seemingly common concepts, is generally accepted nowadays.

Like Kramsch, Bonvillain (2000) succinctly summarized the two versions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

> The opinions of Sapir and Whorf on relationships among language, thought, and behavior have come to be known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. One summation of this theory, sometimes referred to as the "weak version," is that some elements of language, for example, in vocabulary or grammatical systems, influence speakers' perceptions and can affect their attitudes and behavior. The "strong version" suggests that language is ultimately directive in this process. The difference between the two versions seems to be the degree of control that language exerts. The "strong" position is clearly unprovable" (pp. 51-52).

In short, examining the evidence to support or disprove the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Wardhaugh (2010) emphasized that the most valid conclusion concerning the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that it is still unproved. Total acceptance as well as outright rejection of the hypothesis may not appear logical. Therefore, most researchers seem to admit that there is a relationship between language and culture, but the exact influence of one on the other can still be a contentious issue that is not easily proved or disproved.

What are some different views on culture in language learning?

Culture is defined differently by different individuals, because each may have a different view on culture. Holme (2003) indicated that in the communicative era language teachers tend to center on culture according to a combination of five views: the communicative view, the classical curriculum view, the instrumental or culture-free-language view, the deconstructionist view, and the competence view. Holme then described each view in greater detail.

First, the communicative view is derived from the communicative approach with its emphasis on giving the students language that can be put to quick use in a particular context. Culture, in this view, may be used to enhance discussion skills. Second, culture in the classical-curriculum view helps to increase the intellectual value of the language. Third, the instrumental or cultural-free-language view could begin from a common concern in respect of hidden political and cultural agenda of a language. Fourth, the constructionist view postulates that language students may be manipulated by the cultural construction of a text and the text's implicit message; language learning, therefore, should entail a good understanding of such meanings. Finally, the competence view contends that the knowledge of a language's culture is thought essential to a thorough understanding of a language's nuances of meanings. Knowledge of a culture in this view presupposes a competence that is essential to the understanding of language's true meaning. As Holme noted, whereas the first three views treat cultural content as marginal or even irrelevant to successful language learning, the last two views treat language and culture as being learned in dynamic interaction, with one being essential to the full understanding of the other.

It can be hard to learn a language without knowing its culture. Learning a language has in fact been considered as "inseparable from learning its culture" (Kuang, 2007, p. 81). Roh (2001) went much further to state that the ultimate aim of foreign language teaching should be the understanding of both language and culture. More than two decades ago, Brown (1986) remarked that second language learning in some respects involves acquiring a second identity, and that second language learning is often equal to second culture learning. Brown (2007) again clearly averred that acquiring a second language is acquiring a second culture.

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Similarly, Damen (1987, p. 4) noted that: "…language learning implies and embraces culture learning." This author also pointed out that language learning and culture learning are inextricably bonded in human society as the way language and culture are. Likewise, Seliger (1988) posited that culture is among the various factors that will affect the rate and degree of second language learning. Seliger reasoned that because language is employed in social exchanges, the feelings, attitudes, and motivations of learners in relation to the target language, to the speakers of the language, and to the culture will have an influence on how learners respond to the input to which they are exposed.

English language teaching in the present post-method situation has become increasingly sensitive to the issue of culture (Sowden, 2007). In addition, Swiderski (1993) stated that in both English as a second language setting and English as a foreign language setting all aspects of teaching and learning are cultural in nature. In 1999, Atkinson contended that culture is a central but unexamined concept in the field of teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and argued that culture should continue to take a central place in TESOL. Having conducted a review of TESOL Quarterly articles, Atkinson (1999) concluded that culture is generally still very much understudied in TESOL. This author observed that except for language, learning, and teaching, there is possibly no more important concept in TESOL than culture, as teachers face culture in all they do either explicitly or implicitly. That is, it can be said that culture is one of the focal concepts in language learning and teaching in general and in TESOL in particular, and whether teachers want to deal with it directly or indirectly in their practices, they can by no means avoid it.

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In a somewhat similar manner, restating the idea made by Mcleod (1976), Lessard-Clouston (1997) maintained that second and foreign language teachers teach and their students learn about the culture of the second or foreign language regardless of the fact that whether culture is overtly included in the curriculum or not. This author also argued that current second and foreign language teaching is in fact culture teaching, so teachers do not need to be aware of culture in the language classroom. However, he further added that aspects of culture in second and foreign language education still need further research and understanding.

On the face of it, his argument appears logical. Language teaching is actually culture teaching, so why do teachers have to be aware about culture? The answer to such question is not as simple as one might think, for learning a culture is a lifetime undertaking, and learners as well as teachers may not be able to decide where to start and what most important aspects need to be considered (Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk, 2008).

Damen (1987) pointed out that even though language learning and culture learning are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, the processes are different from each other in the first as well as in subsequent acquisitions, and language teachers must understand the nature of all of these differences. Therefore, it may be sufficient to suggest that if second or foreign language teachers are not aware of culture in the language classroom, they may run the risk of being ill-prepared to help their learners to learn to use the target language in a culturally appropriate manner. As a result, learners may not be able know sufficient cultural knowledge of the target language, which may potentially lead them to regrettably experience miscommunication or misunderstanding.

Additionally, language teachers need to be interested in the study of culture, because they have to teach it (Brooks, 1959, as cited in Roh, 2001). Refusing to deal with cultural issues in an explicit and overt manner may indirectly weaken learners' ability to communicate both linguistically and culturally successfully in their future, which is definitely not an intention of any conscientious educators. Not teaching culture or not being aware of culture learning in the second or foreign language classroom simply on the grounds that language learning is culture learning is a wretched excuse, because culture can easily be forgotten, ignored or given passing attention in the classroom when teachers are not consciously aware that cultural learning can tremendously benefit their students in second or foreign language learning and using.

What are the roles of teachers, curricula, and textbooks in culture learning in second and foreign language learning?

Several different factors may have an impact on the success and failure of culture teaching in language classrooms. Teachers, curricula, and textbooks are among the most important factors to take into consideration. Damen (1987, p. 5) postulated that there are reasons for the limitations of teachers' efficiency as cultural guides.

1. Teachers do not know what "culture" to teach.
2. Until recently only a few textbooks of methodologies have been available to assist teachers in the direction of culture learning.

Assuming that language teachers can naturally teach culture is a serious mistake, for defining what culture is not easy, and neither is deciding on what culture to teach. Furthermore, without proper training in instructional methods to teach culture, it is not likely that teachers can do the job of teaching culture as effectively as expected. Regrettably, guidance on culture

teaching may seldom be overtly stated in the curriculum of second or foreign language teaching programs. Damen (1987) observed that while cultural guidance is rarely part of the stated curriculum of the English as a second or foreign language, or any language classroom, it is, nevertheless,

> often part of the hidden agenda, a pervasive but unrecognized dimension, coloring expectation, perceptions, reactions, teaching and learning strategies, and is, more often than not, a contributing factor in the success or failure of second or foreign language learning and acquisition (p. 4).

Lafayette (1988) pointed out that among the three main components of the language curriculum (language, literature, and culture), the greatest amount of time and energy is still directed to the grammatical and lexical aspects of language; nonetheless, culture remains the weakest component "due to its uneven treatment in textbooks and to the lack of familiarity, among teachers, with the culture itself and with the techniques needed to teach it" (p. 47). However, it may seem that culture is getting some more attention in the curriculum, as culture has been increasingly advocated as an integral part of the curriculum in foreign language education (Tang, 2006).

Textbooks can serve as one of the decisive factors in culture learning. Wandel (2003) suggested that textbooks should contain materials allowing and provoking diverging opinions and discussions on cultural stereotyping. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) stated that it is often expected that second or foreign language textbooks should contain elements of the target culture. Nevertheless, through their examination of a range of textbooks from different parts of the world, Cortazzi and Jin found that a target culture is not always included. These authors also clearly articulated that English as a foreign language textbooks can have seven different roles in culture

learning. Textbooks can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skiller, and an ideology.

Cortazzi and Jin then clearly elaborated on their points. First, these authors argued that textbooks can be a teacher, because they contain material intended to teach students directly about English-speaking cultures. Second, textbooks can also be a map that provides an overview of a structured program of language and culture elements. Third, they can be a resource or a set of materials and activities from which the most appropriate or useful items can be chosen for both linguistic and cultural learning. Fourth, textbooks can also be a trainer, especially for inexperienced or untrained teachers both in terms of language and culture. Fifth, textbooks can be considered an authority, for they include reliable, valid, cultural content written by experts. Sixth, textbooks can be seen as a de-skiller, as they allow teachers to follow the cultural content and activities as presented. Therefore, teachers may not use a creative, interpretive, and critical approach to using materials as they have been trained to do. Finally, textbooks can be deemed as ideology, as they reflect a worldview or cultural system, a social construction that may be imposed on both teachers and students; thus, textbooks can indirectly construct teachers' and learners' view of a culture.

What are the hidden assumptions of teaching second or foreign language using the communicative approach?

Damen (1987) postulated that when educators are committed by the communicative approach to second language learning and teaching to provide opportunities for meaningful communicative interaction for the learners and to give priority to learners' needs, educators

should examine their personal commitment to the five hidden assumptions (see Table 1) before,

after, and during training periods.

Table 1: While riding the communicative competence bandwagon…. (Damen, 1987, p. 213)

We assume that….	Which means that….
1. Nothing human is off limits nor to be arbitrarily ignored.	1. Cultural relativity is the golden rule for those who would communicate interculturally.
2. Culture or cultural patterns are learned or taught. Such learning is additive rather than replacive.	2. Learning a new culture is part and parcel of learning a new language, but it is not a similar process.
3. Culture learning and language learning are inextricably linked so that the question is not whether to teach culture, but whose culture to teach.	3. There are many ways to approach cultural instructions and learning. No approach will serve all teachers and all students in all contexts. Choices must be made.
4. Cultural patterns within a given culture are as parts to the whole; they exhibit a cultural rationality within that context.	4. Cultural patterns reflect a general consistency at any given time, although individual manifestations vary.
5. Ethnocentrism is not necessarily a dirty word.	5. Man is a culture bearing animal. Loss of cultural identity should not be a goal of cultural instruction.

Damen (1987) further elucidated the hidden assumptions. The first assumption implies

that the principles of cultural relativity must be welcomed and practiced in the language

classroom. It is also pointed out that: "…cultural relativity, the nonevaluative acceptance of the

logic and holism of a given cultural system, precludes attitudes of chauvinism, especially on the

teachers' part" (Damen, 1987, p. 212). The second assumption implies that the goals and

objectives of cultural learning in the classroom should be carefully chosen and honed to the

needs and desires of the learner.

The third assumption clearly states that as culture learning and language learning occur together, the question of whether culture should be taught or not is not valid. The fundamental question in terms of cultural instruction has to do with the selection of content and approach. The fourth assumption entails that to embrace the concept of cultural relativity is to recognize that the cultural patterns within a given culture function as parts to the whole and exhibit a general consistency at a certain point in time. Finally Damen suggested that the final assumption shows the need to maintain individuals' psychocultural identity. Ethnocentrism which, as Damen pointed out, is synonymous with adherence to a given set of cultural options adjudged right, is a natural and necessary human attitude.

What can be some goals for culture learning in the language classroom?

If culture is perceived to be part of the second or foreign language curriculum, specific goals should be clearly set. Richards (2001) presented three reasons for setting goals in language teaching. First human beings are generally motivated to pursue specific goals. Second, the utilization of goals in teaching improves effectiveness of teaching and learning. Third, a program can be effective to the extent that its goals are sound and clearly described.

Gaston (1984) set forth four stages of cultural awareness: (a) recognition, (b) acceptance/rejection, (c) integration/ethnocentrism, and (d) transcendence. This author argued that sets of specific skills must be developed at each stage of the process. At the first stage, learners have to develop a key skill labeled non-judgmental observation. Then, they need to learn to cope with ambiguity at the second stage. At the third stage, the ability to empathize should be

developed. Finally, at the fourth stage, learners need to develop the ability to respect and appreciate other cultures.

In an attempt to help classroom teachers to deal with setting goals for their students, Valette (1986) maintained that cultural goals can be classified into four categories: (1) developing a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about the target culture, (2) acquiring a command of the etiquette of the target culture, (3) understanding the differences between the target culture and the students' culture, and (4) understanding the values of the target culture. In the same vein, Peterson and Coltrane (2003) indicated that cultural activities as well as objectives should be carefully and clearly organized and incorporated into lesson plans. These two authors even asserted that culture must be included as a vital component of language learning.

A case in point is the US. Kramsch (1991) noted that American foreign language teachers have given a renewed look at the relationship between language and culture, and that in the US current efforts are directed at linking the teaching of language to that of culture. Specifically, the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996, 2006) set two standards for culture goals: whereas the first stresses the practices (or patterns of social interactions), the second emphasizes the products (such as books, tools, foods, laws, music, and games) associated with cultural perspectives (such as meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas). Moreover, it was also mentioned in the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996, 2006) that both formal culture ("big C") and daily life culture ("little c") are viewed as inseparable, because they are both inextricably woven into the language of the people who live in the culture, and because

understanding and involvement with both aspects of cultures is of crucial importance for students at all levels of language learning.

What are some techniques for teaching culture awareness?

Authors such as Byram (1989), Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991), Byram and Morgan (1994), and Morgan and Cain (2000) have pointed out that one of the dimensions that is often ignored in foreign language teaching is the learning of cultural awareness and understanding. Hughes (1986) provided some techniques for teaching cultural awareness.

1. Comparison method

2. Culture assimilators

3. Culture capsule

4. Drama

5. Audiomotor unit or Total Physical Response

6. Newspapers

7. Projected media

8. The culture island

Hughes (1986) also elucidated the characteristic of each technique. First, the teacher using the comparison method begins each discussion session with a presentation of one or more items in the target culture which are distinctively different from the students' culture, and the discussion then focuses on why these differences may cause problems. Second, developed by social psychologists to facilitate adjustment to a foreign culture, the culture assimilator is a short

description of a critical incident of cross-cultural interaction that could possibly be misunderstood by the students. The students are then presented with four possible explanations from which they are asked to choose the correct one. If the wrong choice is chosen, they are asked to seek further information that would lead them to the right conclusion.

Third, culture capsule is somewhat similar to culture assimilator, but cannot be assigned as a silent reading exercise. The teacher gives a brief presentation that show one essential difference between an American and a foreign custom, which is accompanied by visuals illustrating the difference, and a set of questions to stimulate class discussion. Fourth, Drama is a technique especially useful for directly involving students in cross-cultural misunderstandings by having selected members act out a series of short scenes including a misinterpretation of something that happens in the target culture, and the cause of the problem is typically clarified in the final scene.

Fifth, primarily developed as a listening exercise, Audiomotor unit or Total Physical Response utilizes a carefully constructed list of oral commands to which the students respond. The commands are arranged in an order which will cause students to act out a cultural experience. Sixth, using the technique called Newspapers, the teacher asks students to compare a given item in the foreign newspaper with its equivalent in their newspapers.

Seventh, for Projected media, films, filmstrips, and slides can be used by the teacher to provide cultural insights as well as various classroom activities. Finally, in the classroom using the technique named the culture island, the teacher maintains a classroom atmosphere that is

essentially a culture island through the use of posters, pictures, a frequently changing bulletin board to attract students' attention, elicit questions, and comments.

What are some techniques for teaching culture to second or foreign language students?

Byram, Morgan, and Colleagues (1994) commented that despite the fact that there are some indications of concern with theories of cultural learning, most influential theorists in the field of foreign language teaching have not yet provided an adequately developed understanding on which practitioners can base their teaching. Many authors have proposed, however, some viable ways or approaches to teaching culture to second or foreign language students.

Lafayette (1988) suggested some specific activities for integrating culture and the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Brooks (1986) recommended that teachers begin their classes with a short presentation in the foreign language of a subject that has not been previously announced. Specifically, he provided a list of topics that could be used to introduce culture of the target language in the classroom. Blatchford (1986) argued that newspapers could be vehicles to teach culture. Although Blatchford recognized that it can be discouraging for students to learn from newspapers on their own due to cultural interference and language difficulty, he emphasized that some aspects of the newspaper can help students learn culture more easily with the teachers' help and guide.

Literature has also been considered a useful source to teach culture. Valdes (1986) noted that literature may be used to teach culture to upper-intermediate and advanced second language students so that they can have greater insight into the culture, and they may also have a greater understanding and appreciation of literature in their first language as well as that of the second

language. Another effective way to teach culture in the classroom can be to use commercial television. Scollon (1999) convincingly argued that commercial television can provide a rich source to bring unconscious cultural codes to the level of conscious perception.

Krasner (1999) presented some useful techniques and methods of teaching culture to foreign language students: observation (through films, news broadcasts, maps, or menus), having students visit ethic sections or restaurants of cities, mini drama (which provides an example of miscommunication in the form of dramatization and the students are asked to discover the cause of the miscommunication), culture capsule (which offer brief explanations of foreign language customs, and culture capsule can also be in the form of oral presentation, reading, writing, or visual aids or realia), and role play (which gives the students opportunities to demonstrate and rehearse appropriate cultural behavior).

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) suggested some instructional strategies to teach language and culture that may seem helpful for teachers looking for some practical ways to integrate culture in their language lessons.

1. Using authentic materials such as films, news broadcasts, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials to engage the students in discussion of cultural issues

2. Using proverbs as a way to help students to explore the target culture

3. Having students act out a miscommunication based on cultural differences

4. Presenting objects such as figurines, tools, jewelry, or images that originate from the target culture to serve as a foundation from which the teachers can discuss other cultural,

historical, and linguistic factors, or the students can be asked to do further research to find more information about the items presented

5. Using exchange students, immigrant students, or students who speak the target language at home as expert sources for classroom discussion

6. Sending students into the community of the native speakers of the target language to find information about their target culture

7. Using literary texts as sources for learning culture

8. Using films and television segments to provide students with an opportunity to witness behaviors which are not obvious in texts

What are some practical guidelines on accounting for cultural issues for classroom teachers?

In addition to suggesting specific activities or techniques to teach culture in second or foreign language classrooms, some efforts have been made to guide teachers to teach or address cultural issues appropriately as well as effectively. Brown (2007a) provided four guidelines on accounting for cultural issues for classroom teachers.

1. A student's cultural identity is usually a deeply seated bundle of emotions, so teachers should practice empathy as they relate to their students in cultural matters: behavior patterns, and expectations; expected relationship to authority, family, and peers; ambiguity, tolerance, and openness to new ideas and ways of thinking; students' attitudes toward their own and the second language culture; their view of individualism versus

collectivism; linguistic conventions of politeness, formality, and other sociopragmatic factors.

2. Teachers should recognize the cultural connotations and nuances of English and the first language of their students. Teachers should capitalize those in their teaching.

3. Teachers should use the classroom as an opportunity to educate their students about other cultures and help them to see that no one culture is better than another. Teachers should also practice in words and deed their respect for their students' deeply ingrained emotions that stem from the students' cultural schemata.

4. When cultural differences emerge, teachers should help their students to appreciate and celebrate diversity. Especially in an English as a second language context where students in the same class may represent many different cultures, teachers should try to make their classroom a model of openness, tolerance, and respect.

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) recommended that culture be instructed without preconceptions. In other words, they indicated that cultural information should be provided in a nonjudgmental fashion that does not place value or judgment on distinctions between the students' culture and the culture being explored in the classroom. Citing from Krasner (1999), Peterson and Coltrane pointed out that possessing only linguistic competence is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language. These authors further noted that learners of a language need to understand that language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior in order for communication to be successful. Moreover, as these authors suggested, instead of teaching culture implicitly through linguistic forms the students are learning, teachers can make the cultural features reflected in the language more explicitly.

Furthermore, Wylie (1961) postulated that although it is of great importance to learn the facts about a foreign culture, facts alone are not enough, and that the values and attitudes behind the facts are more important to cultural understanding. In addition, Krasner (1999) argued that both linguistic and extra-linguistic cultural features should be taught to the students so that miscommunication, misinterpretation, and a major culture shock may be avoided.

What are some advantages and disadvantages of teaching culture in the classroom?

It may seem obvious to many second or foreign language teachers that culture needs to be taught, but teaching culture in the classroom may not be as easy as one might have thought. In some cases such as contexts where English is learned as a foreign language, the language classroom may be the only way where cultural contact occurs; therefore, the environment should be made as open as possible to meaningful cultural learning (Damen, 1987). Damen noticed that there are both advantages and disadvantages when taking the language classroom as a specialized context for language and culture learning.

In terms of the disadvantages, Damen reasoned that the classroom is only an unreal situation as opposed to the real world outside the classroom, so the practice of intercultural communication and experiential culture learning projects is mere practice and simulation. However, Damen also mentioned that culture learning in the classroom may present unanticipated advantages, because the members of a language class may be considered as forming a transient, ad hoc group including a teacher and students whose communal existence is limited in time and space. Damen (1987) posited that learning culture in the classroom provides two distinct advantages.

1. As an artificial community, the classroom draws a culturally protective wall around those within, bestowing less severe punishment for the commission of linguistic and cultural errors that could be met outside its walls.

2. The classroom community is managed, unreal, forgiving, and protective, but it is also an environment that provides unique opportunities for experimental intercultural communication. If administered well, this community may provide the first step on a long voyage of cultural discovery that will end in the world outside the classroom.

Moreover, in a recent study in Taiwan Tsou (2005) found that giving cultural instruction to foreign language learners increased not only their language proficiency but also their motivation toward language learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The review of the literature presented above has clearly shown that despite the fact that researchers and scholars may have different definitions for language and culture, most of them are likely to agree on the fact that these two salient concepts coexist in any society. It may also appear that though researchers hold various positions about the relationship between language and culture, it can be incomplete to know one without the other if one would like to have a full and thorough picture of a certain people. Therefore, the study of one language seems entail the study of that culture, and vice versa.

In the case of teaching second and foreign languages, focusing on assisting the learners to master the language only without helping them to develop a good understanding of the target culture may lead to an imbalance in their knowledge of language and culture. Consequently, the

learners may end up possessing a high level of linguistic competence, but simultaneously they may not have a similar level of cultural competence in the target language. Culture shock or culture bump in communication are likely to occur if this is the case.

Those who hold the belief that learning a language will naturally equip learners with the knowledge of the culture of that language seem to have devalued the role of conscious training, teaching, and learning about culture. Culture learning should be considered as learning any other subjects that both the ones who instruct and those who receive the instructions need to emphasize seriously by setting realistic goals, so that both parties can monitor and evaluate their progress periodically to find out if they have achieved or failed to achieve their goals or objectives within a certain time frame. Regrettably, cultural goals may presumably not have been included in many current second language and foreign language learning courses. Future studies may need to further explore if cultural goals and objectives are included in second or foreign language curriculum. Cultural competence is being either intentionally or accidentally neglected in the curriculum, or it may just be given passing attention. Once cultural competence is recognized as important as linguistic competence, appropriate attention could be allocated to the teaching of culture to students learning a second or foreign language.

One major obstacle that often face many foreign language teachers is that they lack cultural competence in the language they teach, because not many have had a chance to live in the country where the target language is spoken, because they may not have had ample training in their teacher training programs, and because the materials they use in their classroom fail to provide them with sufficient and useful information about the target culture. In order to

successfully teach culture to second and foreign language students, conspicuous efforts have to be made in three areas: teacher training, curriculum design, and materials development.

Teacher training programs that prepare second and foreign language teachers for their effective teaching of languages may need to include a significant training session so as to equip the future language teachers with sufficient knowledge of the target culture. Teachers will also need to be informed of the appropriate methods or techniques to raise students' awareness about cultural differences and to teach culture effectively to second or foreign language students. Without proper training, it is irrational to expect language teachers to teach culture to their students with the optimal results.

In addition to teacher training, language curriculum can serve as a guide to lead teachers and learners to the desired cultural objectives of a certain language course. Instead of leaving cultural goals unstated in the curriculum, as it is often the case, language curriculum designers may need to clearly articulate the cultural goals of each language course, so teachers and students can easily center on attaining the goals, and suitable measurements may be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of culture teaching and learning activities.

Finally, as noted previously that Cortazzi and Jin (1999) found that the target culture is not always included in textbooks for second or foreign language students, it is imperative that materials writers be aware of such a fact. It is hoped that they will develop better materials that integrate culture learning into language learning in the most effective and interesting way to help both teachers and their learners to teach and learn culture successfully. Textbooks indeed play a crucial role in culture learning and teaching, because Cortazzi and Jin (1999) argued that

textbooks can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skiller, and an

ideology, as mentioned in the preceding section. It is expected that publishers realize that culture

contents can also be as significant as linguistic contents so that more attention is paid to develop

second and foreign language students' knowledge of the target culture.

Over two decades ago, Lafayette (1988) wrote:

...it is hoped that universities will produce foreign language teachers who are better trained to focus on culture, and that publishers will begin to insist on a more systematic treatment of culture in textbooks. It is most important, however, that teachers begin to view themselves not simply as teachers of language but rather as teachers of both language and culture (p. 61).

What Lafayette (1988) indicated still seems to hold true these days. Not only educational

institutions that train teachers, publishers that produce language learning materials, language

teachers who are mainly responsible for the task of teaching second or foreign languages to

students, but curriculum designers who set goals and objectives for language courses also need to

make a determined and concerted effort to equip foreign and second language learners with both

sufficient linguistic and cultural knowledge and competence to function appropriately and

courteously in the target language environments. It is argued that although culture is increasingly

recognized as one of the important issues in language teaching and learning, more sizable and

noticeable efforts are needed from various parties such as teacher trainers, curriculum

developers, materials writers or publishers, and classroom teachers to make culture learning

more effective so that second or foreign language learners can hopefully be both linguistically

and culturally competent in the target language. Hinkel (1999) rightly observed that applied

linguists and language teachers have become increasingly aware that a second or foreign

language can hardly be learned or taught without addressing the culture of the community where it is employed.

Although there are advantages as well as disadvantages of teaching culture in the language classroom, as Damen (1987) pointed out in the aforementioned section, teaching culture to second and foreign language students is a must that no classroom language teacher should ignore. The question at the time being is not whether to teach culture to students of second or foreign languages or not, but rather the valid question should be how to best teach culture to students in second or foreign language classrooms. Reiterating what Thomas (1983, 1984) observed, Hinkel (1999) noted that nonnative speakers are typically perceived to use inappropriate language behaviors and they are even not aware that they do. Assisting second and foreign language learners to avoid utilizing inappropriate language behaviors is obviously by no means an easy task. Thus, further research is much needed to ascertain effective methods or approaches to maximize the effectiveness of teaching culture in the language classroom and minimize the chances that learners use a second or foreign language in a culturally inappropriate manner.

Nowadays, English is gradually becoming a language for international communication. As a consequence, it is necessary to decide on which culture to teach to learners of English all over the world. Wandel (2003) argued that if the role of English is considered a world language, two main shifts regarding the cultural dimension of educational work seem unavoidable:

(1) EFL- teaching must enhance its cultural and geographical scope and include other English-speaking cultures apart from the UK and the USA. Thus areas/countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Australia, Canada, India and their cultural background must be

taken into consideration and will start playing an increasingly more relevant role in the EFL-classroom.

(2) On the other hand, educating students to make use of English as a lingual franca also means developing their intercultural sensitivity. Students should be allowed to get to know a number of different outlooks and perspectives. They ought to be provided with tools to analyze fundamental aspects of cultures (p. 73).

What Wandel suggested can well serve as food for thought for educational researchers, materials writers, curriculum designers, and language classroom teachers. Indeed, choosing what culture to teach seems to depend on the contexts, and learners' needs and preferences, and it is crucially important for second or foreign language learners to know various outlooks and perspectives.

Moreover, with the advances of technology, the internet has also been employed as an environment for learning about culture. Authors such as Itakura (2004), Jogan, Heredia, and Aguilera (2001), and Ruhe (1998) have examined the use of e-mail as one of the ways to learn about culture. Hanna and Ne Nooy (2009) reasoned that online public discussion in a foreign language provides the potential for learners to experience cultural difference unfettered by physical location, and it also offers a venue for language learners and teachers to focus not on language and intercultural communication but on language as intercultural communication. The potential of the application of technology in language teaching is great, so it is expected that more could be done to benefit learners of second and foreign languages in learning about culture.

In short, it may appear that considerable efforts have been made to suggest viable ways to teach culture to second and foreign language students, but much more is still sorely needed to be done. Learning the culture of a second or foreign language can be as instructive as learning the language itself. Patrikis (1988) was right to state that language teaching and teaching about

culture have been generally separate paths, and it is educators' choice whether to make them

come together or to continue to follow old paths.

Teaching Culture in the EFL/ESL classroom

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