

University of M'sila

Faculty of letters and languages

Master1 level: Language and culture. Teacher: Mrs. Harizi

S2 lecture 2: Teaching the Target Language Culture in Classroom: Pons & Cons

Introduction

Defining terms

Culture and language

Benefits of teaching the target language culture

Drawbacks of teaching the target language culture

Conclusion

Introduction: In this age of technology and globalization, people interact with one another more frequently and easily than ever before. It seems increasingly important to learn a second or a foreign language.

Researchers recommend that cultural characteristics of the language that is learned should be taught in addition to the linguistic aspects, which have historically received more attention.

After decades of advancement in language instruction, teaching culture to foreign or second language students has increasingly taken centre stage in both language curriculum and teacher-training programs. However, incorporating culture in second and foreign language classrooms can present challenges for the teaching and learning processes.

Defining terms

Culture: "the way of life for an entire society." As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, art. norms of behaviour, such as law and morality, and systems of belief. - Culture is the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour. (James Spradley

Cultural awareness: It is being sensitive to the differences and similarities between two cultures when communicating or interacting with members of other cultural groups. The sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion.

Culture and language: Wenying Jiang compares the relationship between language and culture to an iceberg. Language, and some aspects of culture, are at the tip of the iceberg, the part you see above the water. Yet, the majority of what forms the iceberg, culture, hides below the surface.

The tip of the iceberg includes values, beliefs, language, symbols, rituals, norms

The deep side of the Iceberg involves religion, ancestry, skin color, language, class, education, profession, skill, family and political attitudes...etc.

- Another analogy for the relationship between language and culture is that of a person. Language is the flesh and culture is the blood. You put the two together and you have a whole person. However, one without the other results in death.

- Linguist Ken Hale from Massachusetts Institute of Technology agreed, “When you lose a language, a large part of the culture goes, too, because much of that culture is encoded in the language.”
- Culture influences our values, traditions and methods of interaction while language facilitates those interactions.
- Language allows you to interact and culture tells you how to do so correctly.
- true understanding of a language requires an understanding of the surrounding culture.

Advantages

- **Develop Cultural Competency & intercultural competence & Provide rich context for TL teaching:** Expose students to a variety of cultures, religions, ethnic background and authentic materials (proverbs, idioms,..); students will become more tolerant to others’ cultures; they learn new system of language and new culture.
- **Cultural information & Cultural awareness can discourage negative attitudes:** Students gain maturity as they may not like the habit of other people with different ethnicity or religion. However, over period of time students may accept other’s culture.
- **Building confidence & Gain understanding :** students who are familiar with foreign culture, achieve greater confidence and gain the ability to communicate with people from the outside.

Disadvantages

- **Threat to cultural identity:** -students who are exposed to lessons that are heavily focused on foreign culture may lose their own sense of cultural identity.

-This may also privilege one cultural perspective over others and contribute to the dominance of that culture.

- **teacher bias:** a teacher may find it difficult to plan a lesson that relates different cultures or different religions and different learning abilities.

- It may reinforce stereotypes or biases about the target culture, leading to misunderstandings or misconceptions.

- **Cultural Sensitivity & ethical issues:** - Teaching culture requires a high level of cultural sensitivity and awareness.

- Educators must be careful not to offend learners from diff cultural backgrounds by presenting material that is culturally inappropriate.

- T culture raises ethical considerations, particularly when dealing with controversial topics. Teachers then must approach cultural content with care and integrity, respecting the perspectives and experiences of all learners.

- **Key considerations in teaching culture :** Cultural Diversity, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Comparison; Language Proficiency; Learners' needs analysis, Context, Authenticity; Critical thinking; Reflection and Evaluation.

Conclusion

To sum up, as long as the use of the cultural information is beneficial in EFL classrooms, it also has limitations, so it should be presented in a way that teachers should take into their consideration the effects of the target culture on the students' native culture . Despite the potential drawbacks, incorporating culture into language learning can enrich the educational experience and help learners develop a deeper understanding of the target language and its speakers. It is essential for teachers to be mindful of these challenges and to approach cultural instruction with sensitivity, flexibility, and a commitment to promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect.