The Role of Culture Through the Eyes of Different Approaches to and Methods of Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract

It is commonly accepted that language is a part of culture and that it plays a very important role in it. However, the priority given to the place of culture as a significant component in language teaching has not been equally the same in different approaches and methods of foreign language teaching. This paper explores the role of culture in language teaching and the importance of the integration of culture into the teaching of language in traditional, innovative and modern approaches to language teaching. It starts from the ancient times and the age of popularity of Grammar-translation Method when the role of culture was only implicitly recognized and culture was confined to literature and fine art and ends with the present situation where the pressing need for cross-cultural encounters in the era of globalization has led to the notion of intercultural competence.

Keywords: *culture, culture and language teaching, language teaching approaches and methods, intercultural competence*

Introduction

The Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus define culture as 'the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared basis of social action'. This system is acquired socially and organized in our minds in culture specific ways forming a framework, which largely determines the way we perceive and define the world around us (Alptekin, 1993).

According to Chastain (1988), language and culture are inseparably bound; therefore, complete comprehension during any type of intercultural communication depends upon the participants' awareness of the social and cultural significance of the words and expressions employed. Language is used to convey meaning, but meaning is determined by culture. Damen (1987) notes that to be meaningful, language must be culture-bound and culture specific.

When studying formulations of objectives of different foreign language teaching (FLT) methods, we usually encounter such statements as: "to learn the everyday life of the target language speakers", revealing the place of culture in that particular method. Although the place of culture and its role in language teaching has long been present in the thinking of language teachers, the priority given to it may vary from one period to another leading to different viewpoints in different FLT approaches and methods. This article aims at investigating the role of culture in the traditional, innovative and modern approaches to FLT. In order to have a clearer picture of the issue, let's start with different definitions of culture from various perspectives.

What is culture?

Defining culture is a very difficult task. According to Duranti (1997), culture is such a complex notion that it may be neither possible nor desirable to arrive at an all encompassing definition of it. It means different to different people. For some, it refers to an appreciation of good literature, music, art, and food. However, for anthropologists and other behavioral scientists, culture is the *full range of learned human behavior patterns*. The term was first used in this way by the pioneer English anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture,* published in 1871. Tylor (1871) said that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Since Tylor's time, the concept of culture has become the central focus of anthropology.

Even within the field of ELT, the term culture has been defined in many different ways. Trinovitch (1980, cited in Cakir, 2006) defines culture as "... an all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and technical behavior of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behavior starting from birth, and this "all-inclusive system" is acquired as the native culture. This process, which can be referred to as "socialization", prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society in which he lives.

Robinson (1985) distinguishes between behaviorist, functionalist, cognitive and symbolic definitions of culture. Firstly, culture in *behaviorist* anthropology is seen as consisting of various forms of behavior, such as customs, habits and rituals that are linked to specific situations and social groups. Culture is hence comprehended as something concrete that can be seen and experienced, but very little interest is devoted to why or under what circumstances the behavioral patterns arise. Secondly, culture is viewed from a *functional* perspective. Although functionally oriented anthropology also deals with culture as a social phenomenon, it seems to go further than the behaviorist approach in the sense that it tries to describe and understand the structure and variety of these forms of behavior, as well as clarify the roles they play in society. Both approaches provide the learner with a fairly concrete model for dealing with a foreign culture, by trying to describe how and why a representative of another culture acts in a particular way. Both the behaviorist and the functionalist approach represent

a product perspective on culture, which, according to Robinson, tend to dominate FL instruction. Culture, according to the third perspective, that is the *cognitive* view, does not consist of material phenomena, such as objects, people or behavior, but is rather a process of memorizing, associating and interpreting incoming data, which is continually going on in every individual's brain. Culture could thus be resembled to a computer program within the individual. In order to be able to clarify the essence of culture, cognitively-oriented anthropologists have encouraged individuals to be aware of and analyze their personal experiences. Robinson(1985) regards this "inner" view of culture as a valuable contribution to the behaviorist and functionalist approaches. It represents a view of culture as an ongoing process, which, according to Robinson, has had a fairly limited influence on foreign language education. The fourth perspective, the *symbolic* view sees culture as a dynamic system of symbols and meanings and stresses the significance of continuous change. It focuses neither on outer events, nor on internal mechanisms, but on the meaning emerging as a result of the dialectic process between the two. Every individual is taking part in a process, in which previous experiences influence the interpretation of new phenomena, and previous interpretations influence new experiences. In every society and in every individual, culture thus takes on a new meaning, i.e. culture can also be viewed historically.

Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990) help us define culture on a more specific level by outlining four meanings of culture. Their *aesthetic* sense includes cinema, literature, music, and media, while their *sociological* one refers to the organization and nature of family, interpersonal relations, customs, material conditions, and so on.
Their *semantic* sense encompasses the whole conceptualization system which conditions perceptions and thought processes, and
their *pragmatic* or *sociolinguistic* sense refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code which are necessary for successful communication. While not necessarily all-inclusive or mutually exclusive, these aspects of culture provide more substance to the general definition above and reflect culture's many dimensions.

Samovar, Porter & Stefani(1998) define culture as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving . They claim that this definition 'covers most of the major territory of culture on which scholars currently agree'.

Culture is also defined in terms of intercultural communication (Lusig & Koester, 1999), the capacity and ability to enter other cultures and communicate effectively and appropriately, establish and maintain relationships, and carry out tasks with people of these cultures. With the rapid increase in foreign language learning/teaching recently, the concept of 'intercultural competence' has gained much more significance in relation to the role of culture in EFL learning/teaching. According to Meyer (1991), this competence refers to "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of

foreign cultures". This definition, in fact, adds to the notion of communicative competence and enlarges it to incorporate intercultural competence.

The important point we must take into account when defining culture is that the most frequent definition of culture in language teaching is related to two expressions, culture with capital "C", or formal culture, and culture with small "c" ,or deep culture. Writers in cross-cultural studies often distinguish between two uses of the word culture as: 1)the total way of life of a group of people, and 2) a refinement or sophistication within a society. The first use has been called little /small "c" culture, and the second, big "C" culture. Little "c" culture includes the routine aspects of life, such as how common people greet one another, what they wear, what they eat, and their myriad daily habits. Little "c" culture encompasses everything as a total way of life, so big "C" culture is necessarily part of little "c" culture. A cultured (big "C") person knows the finer points of manners and customs, and can distinguish between the common and the refined .In summary, on one hand culture can be seen as civilization, the great achievements of a people as reflected in their history, social institutions, works of art, architecture, music, and literature, commonly referred to as big "C" culture (Hu, 2002). On the other hand, culture can be viewed as the customs, traditions, or practices that people carry out as part of their everyday lives, i.e. little/small "c" culture (Halverson, 1985).

Language Teaching and Culture

The significance of teaching culture in and through language teaching has been recognized and widely discussed over the last two centuries. As research and practice have progressed over these years, the definition of culture and the relationship between language teaching and culture have been defined and redefined. Regarding the relationship between culture and language teaching, there are at least two main viewpoints: the static and the dynamic views. The earlier models including Brooks (1975) or Nostrand(1974) among others, tended to view culture as unvarying and composed of discrete, concrete facts that can be taught and learnt. Liddicoa (2002) maintains that this static view of culture does not recognize the link between language and culture. It merely transmits cultural information to learners and ignores the constantly developing nature of culture. This view treats cultural knowledge as either facts or artifacts. Students are expected to learn information about a country or people, their lives, their history, their institutions, or their customs or about the cultural icons these people have produced, such as their literature, their art, their architecture, or their music. A result of this orientation is that the cultural component becomes self-contained and is often very remote from the language itself. Moreover, the cultural component may be further separated from language by being taught and presented in the students' first language rather than in the target language. Although there may be some place for cultural facts in a languages curriculum, it is more important to study culture as a process in which the learner will eventually engage rather than as a closed set of information that he/she will be required to recall (Liddicoat, 2002).

By contrast, the more recent models see culture as a dynamic and variable entity. The dynamic view of culture requires learners to actively engage in culture learning, rather than only learn about the cultural information of the target culture in a passive way. They are encouraged to view cultural facts as situated in time and space and variable across time, regions, classes and generations (Crawford & McLaren, 2003). In Liddicoa's (2002) view, culture is seen as sets of variable practices in which people engage in order to live their lives and which are continually created and re-created by participants in interaction. These cultural practices represent a contextual framework that people use to structure and understand their social world and communicate with other people. As such, culture is not about information and things; it is about actions and understanding. In order to learn about culture, it is necessary to engage with the linguistic and non-linguistic practices of the culture and to gain insights into the way of living in a particular cultural context. Cultural knowledge is not therefore a case of knowing information about the culture; it is about knowing how to engage with the culture. It is important that the scope of culture learning move beyond awareness, understanding and sympathy, and begin to address the ways in which culture learning will be practiced by learners. Cultural knowledge is, therefore, not limited in its use to a particular task or exercise, but instead it is a more general knowing which underlies how language is used and how things are said and done in a cultural context. As such, it resembles very closely other types of language knowledge. The dynamic view of culture also requires learners to have knowledge of their own culture and an understanding of their own culturally-shaped behaviours.

This major transformation in perspective has also been characterized by conceptual shifts from culture-specific to culture-general models of intercultural competence. Culture-specific learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a given "target culture," i.e., a particular culture group or community. Culture-general learning, on the other hand, refers to knowledge and skills that are more generalizable in nature and transferable across cultures. This body of knowledge includes, among other things, the concept of culture, the nature of cultural adjustment and learning, the impact of culture on communication and interaction between individuals or groups, the stress associated with intense culture and language immersions (culture and language fatigue), coping strategies for dealing with stress, the role of emotions in cross-cultural, cross-linguistic interactions, and so forth. Culture-general skills include the capacity to display respect for and interest in the culture, the ability to be a self-sustaining culture learner and to draw on a variety of resources for that learning, tolerance and patience in cross-cultural situations, control of emotions and emotional resilience, and the like (Lustig and Koester, 1996, Kelley and Myers, 1995).

Now let's examine various views proposed by different educators and scholars in respect to the relationship between culture and language teaching. Seelye (1976) claims that learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use. Seelye (1976) maintains that knowledge of linguistic structure alone does not carry with it any special insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system.

According to Rivers (1981) the focus must be on both appropriate content and activities that enable students to assimilate that content. Activities should encourage them to go beyond fact, so that they begin to perceive and experience vicariously the deeper levels of the culture of the speakers of the language.

Kramsch (1993) sees culture as a fifth language skill besides the usual four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Out of those considerations, Kramsch develops a concept that she terms looking for third places. Rather than simply adopting the target culture, Kramsch explains that a third place emerges, a place that "grows in the interstices between the cultures the learners grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to" She points out that at the intersection of multiple native and target cultures, the major task of language learners is to define for themselves what this 'third place' that they have engaged in seeking will look like, whether they are conscious of it or not.

According to Brown(1994) culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language _ the means for communication among members of a culture_ is the most visible and available expression of that culture. And so a person's world view, self-identity, and systems of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another. In a word, culture is a way of life. It is the context within which we exist, think, feel and relate others. It is the "glue" that binds a group of people together. It can be defined as a blueprint that guides the behavior of people in community and is incubated in family life. It governs our behavior in groups, makes us sensitive to matters of status, and helps us to know what others expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations. Thus, culture helps us to know how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is to the group. Brown (1994) maintains that a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language. He believes that the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. As a result, cultural competence is an integral part of language learning, especially in foreign language learning.

Similarly, Tang (1999) propounds the view that culture is language and language is culture. He suggests that to speak a language well, one has to be able to think in that language, and thought is extremely powerful. Language is the soul of the country and people who speak it. Language and culture are inextricably linked, and as such we might think about moving away from questions about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in foreign language curriculum, to issues of deliberate immersion versus non-deliberate exposure to it.

Nida, a well-known linguist and translation theorist, also made some brilliant points concerning the relationship between language and culture. Nida (2001) held that culture is the totality of beliefs and practices of a society; nothing is of greater strategic importance than the language through which its beliefs are expressed and transmitted and by which most interaction of its members takes place.

Liddicoat et al. (2003) also claim that language and culture interact with each other in a way that culture connects to all levels of language use and structures; i.e. there is no level of language which is independent of culture .Moreover, the fact that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality clearly shows that language and culture are bounded together (Kramsch, 1998). The relationship between language and culture is made meaningful in language learning as "the person who learns language without learning culture risks becoming a fluent fool" (Bennett, Bennett & Allen, 2000).

Mitchell and Myles (2004) argue that "language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other" (p. 235). This relationship can be reflected in terms such as linguaculture (Friedrich, 1989), languaculture (Risager, 2005) language-and-culture (Liddicoat et al., 2003) or culturelanguage (Papademetre & Scarino, 2006). It is also shown in cultural denotations and connotations in semantics (Byram, 1989), cultural norms in communication (Kramsch, 1993) and the mediatory role of language in the social construction of culture (Kramsch, 1996).

Role of culture in different language teaching approaches and methods

For years, many ideas and perspectives concerning language teaching and the role of culture in the process of language teaching have come, and then been taken over later by others throughout the history of foreign language teaching. It is clear that every method in language teaching is a product of its times and it also a reflection of the requirements the society imposed upon the language teaching at that time. Long-Fu(2001) maintains that some of the factors responsible for these changes include: a constantly advancing society which creates new roles for language in society, the development of social sciences, and new objectives of language teaching. Stern (1983) considers language teaching as an art which through the ages has pursued three major objectives: social (language as a form of communication), artistic-literary (language as a vehicle for artistic creation and appreciation), and philosophical (linguistic analysis). He maintains that these broad aims have, in different periods in history, been emphasized to varying degrees.

The literature review indicates that different approaches to language teaching approached the issue of the integration of culture in language teaching in various ways, emphasizing different aspects of culture to be included in their teaching program. In this part, I am going to make a clear picture of how culture and culture teaching have been viewed under various circumstances and through the eyes of different approaches throughout the history of foreign language teaching.

Traditional Methods

The Grammar- Translation Method

Rivers (1968) and Omaggio (1986) among others criticize GTM for not paying attention to authentic spoken communication and the social language variation and not offering any concern for the teaching of cultural awareness, at least on an everyday level. Some educators such as Long- Fu(2001), however, believe that a close examination of the technical characteristics of the method reveals that GTM was constantly involved in the comparison of the two languages through translation, hence forced into implicitly recognizing that language is closely interwoven with every aspect of culture, and in fact language is also culture. Long- Fu (2001) refers to the teaching of Latin dialogues or colloquy as a good example of the inclusion of the teaching of culture in GTM. He states that the culture involved in GTM refers only to the high arts of a country, which may not contribute significantly to the students' ability to function linguistically and socially while facing a foreign realty in a daily social interaction, nor to a full understanding of the foreign people. Long-Fu (2001) believes that this is natural since in that time there was no face-to-face personal interaction between people of various cultures, chiefly because the world's economic situation was very primitive indeed then. Thus, the purpose of mastering a foreign language during this period was largely literary rather than pragmatic.

The Direct Method

Due to the advances in science and technology, and with the invention of means of transportation such as steamboats and trains, the foundation of for a social objective of language teaching was laid (Long-Fu, 2001). People now had to deal with real-life situations because they wanted to travel to other countries and do business there. Therefore, their attitude toward learning/teaching a foreign language changed. This led to the advent of the Direct Method (DM) advocated by such educators as Berlitz and Jespersen. This method received its name from the fact that meaning is to be conveyed directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids with no recourse to the students' native language (Diller, 1978).One of the main characteristics of this method is that the use of culturally oriented pictures makes students aware of some of the everyday situations they might encounter in the foreign culture (Rivers, 1968; Omaggio, 1986).

Larsen-Freeman (2000) states that culture in DM consists of the history of people who speak the target language, the geography of the country or countries where the language is spoken, and the information about the daily lives of people who speak the language.

Long-Fu(2001) maintains that DM preoccupation with culture is associated with small 'c' culture at the beginning stages and large 'C' culture at the advanced stage. Jespersen (1904) argues the most important purpose in teaching of languages in DM may be considered as the access to the best thoughts and institutions of a foreign nation, its literature, culture,--- in short, the spirit of the nation in the widest sense of the word. However, as Long-Fu (2001) states, the lack of a well-defined socio-linguistic and socio-cultural theoretical basis made the teaching of cultural content incidental and subordinated to the teaching of language in this method. Teachers do

not concern themselves with was expected to be needed by the students in real life situations

The Audio-Lingual Method

In addition to the teaching of linguistic forms, the Audio-Lingual Method advocates for a contrastive analytic approach in the teaching of culture. The cultural notes that supplement the pattern drills describe everyday life, comparing American culture to the "target" culture (Grittner, 1990). The colloquial and socio-linguistically appropriate language used in the dialogues shows that ALM emphasize the teaching of small 'c' culture especially in the early years of the language learning process. As Chastain(1976) maintains, the dialogues in ALM texts was both linguistically and culturally authentic. By cultural authenticity he means that the conversation in ALM was to take place in the L2 culture and be appropriate to the situation.

Stern (1983), however, believes that while ALM was not impervious to the cultural aspect of second language instruction, language learning in the first instance was viewed as the acquisition of a practical set of communication skills. This indicates that the cultural dimension in ALM is still behind the real purpose of foreign language teaching and again, like the Direct Method, is subordinated to language teaching (Long-Fu, 2001).

The Cognitive Approach

In this approach, the language learner is expected to acquire competence with the consciousness in a meaningful manner as a necessary prerequisite to the acquisition of performance skills (Long-Fu, 2001). The cultural orientation of language teaching reflected by the Cognitive Approach, however, is not as clear as in the previous methods; though it is clear the cognitive psychologists in the late 1960s, like Ausubel, placed great importance on meaningfulness and organization of background knowledge in the learning process (Omaggio, 1983).

Innovative/ Designers Methods

From humanistic approaches, there arise three prominent methodologies _ the silent way, suggestopaedia and community language learning known as Innovative or Designers Methods. Gattegno(1972) advocated the Silent Way Approach where the students are made aware of the various challenges that are presented before them in the process of language learning or acquisition. Here learners are given their full freedom. Based on this method, culture is an inseparable part of language. Language reflects culture and everyday life, art, literature, etc. should be learned (Larsen-Freeman,2000).

Curran(1976), on the other hand, encouraged community language learning wherein the learners are given the independence to talk about their personal and linguistic problems and can decide their curriculum. The teacher is just a facilitator who creates an emotionally secure environment that alleviates their anxiety and fear of learning. Based on this method, knowing the target culture is important to be successful in

communication. Culture is integrated with language. Social life style, art, literature, customs, habits should be taught (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Suggestopaedia is another humanistic teaching method developed by a Bulgarian psychotherapist, Georgi Lozanov. Lozanov(1979) claims that, by this method, a language can be learned three to five times faster than by the traditional teaching methods. This method is based on the modern understanding of how the brain works and how we learn most effectively. Much of the learning relies on music, games, puzzles etc. The culture which students learn in this approach concerns the everyday life of people who speak the target language. The use of fine arts is also common (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Modern Approaches

The Communicative Approach

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) maintain that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). provides for the teaching of everyday, real-world language use in a variety of socio-cultural situations in which features of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and culture are selected and graded according to their priority in actual communication. The Communicative Approach intends to place foreign language teaching in a clearly defined social and cultural context in line with the socio-linguistic viewpoint that language is generally influenced by the society, economics, culture and the people who use it as well (Long-Fu, 2001).Canale and Swain (1980) describe communicative competence as integrated by four parts: *linguistic competence,discourse competence ,socio-linguistic competence* , and *strategic competence.*

However, as Byram (1997) argues, to define communicative competence largely in terms of sociolinguistic norms of a particular community or on a native speaker model basis seems to be rather narrow a view from the perspective of intercultural communication. This is because such a model ignores the social identity of the learners in any intercultural communicative event. Byram (1997), instead suggests a 'language for intercultural understanding' dimension of cultural teaching which will be explained in the next section.

Cooperative Language Learning

More than just being a classroom way of learning language vocabulary and forms for future exam use, , classroom activities allow learners to use their different understandings of how the world operates, leading to stronger personal ties between group members, more well-defined individual identities, and a greater sense of membership in the learning community. Cooperative Language Learning can help students feel less isolated as learners and form a more effective "classroom culture" in which collaboration towards a common emergent goal plays a significant role in their emotional and linguistic development as a legitimized member of a social learning community (Murphey & Asaoka, 2006). More than simply a methodology for language teaching, CLL is a methodology of encouraging students to continue the

cooperative learning process well beyond the classroom and school context into the greater society around them.

Content-Based Language Instruction

Among the main tenets of Content-Based Language Instruction is that teachers must be candidates who are able to understand and construct learning environments that support students' cultural identities, language and literacy development, and content-area achievement. Language use depends on the cultural background of the user. So learning a foreign language implies learning about the culture of its native speakers, which is no less relevant in the context of CBI. Met (1991) proposes that "... 'content' in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture".

In CBI classes, culture is a very important aspect intermingling with the specific vocabulary students usually acquire. Teachers should take into consideration the fact that their students have already studied language for several years so they have the necessary linguistic skills to understand language. The task of interspersing culture into the English classes becomes easier for the CBI teachers since they can present culture through the specific vocabulary or expressions students need to acquire. Teachers may present classes with texts illustrating different cultural aspects closely related to the students' future specialization; he or she may use visual materials bringing out important cultural facts, newspapers or magazines from that country with both cultural and factual content. Debates, role-plays and case studies shouldn't be left out since they represent a great opportunity for students to express their opinions as well as to imagine how it feels to be "in the skin of a foreigner".

Task-Based language Teaching

One of the main features of TBLT is that it implements classroom activities in which students use authentic materials and have specific tasks to accomplish in order to meet real-world language objectives. One of these is *Activities Using Cultural Objects* . These activities involving the direct use and handling of products of a culture(such as postcards, photographs, symbols, and images in song lyrics)can be very effective in a task-based language classroom. One such activity, called Culture Composition developed by Tomalin and Stempleski (1998), has as its purpose the development of writing skills, as well as the recognition of cultural artifacts. The teacher hands out various pieces of realia, collected from travels abroad to English speaking countries, such as bus or air tickets, receipts, coupons, money and photographs. The items are mixed up and in random order. Students are put into groups of two or three. They identify each item, and then make up a story about their set of items. The groups present their stories to the rest of the class, each person in the group taking a turn to tell part of the story. As an item occurs in the story, it is shown to the class and placed on the table. When all groups have finished, the students write their own individual version of their story. For these types of activities which teach culture ,a task-oriented approach is suggested. Students work together in pairs or small groups to fine- tune

precise information. They share and discuss what they have discovered, and interpret the information within the context of the target culture and in comparison to their own culture.

The Intercultural Competence

One of the most significant changes in language learning and teaching over the past two decades has been the recognition of the intercultural competence as a key component. This change has transformed the nature of the experience of teaching and learning languages to a great extent. According to Atay et al.(2009), the objective of language learning is no longer defined in terms of the acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language, which refers to a person's ability to act in a foreign language in linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate ways (Council of Europe, 2001). Rather, it is defined in terms of the intercultural competence. As stated by Byram (1997), the success of interaction implies not only an effective interchange of information, as was the goal of communicative language teaching, but also the "the ability to decenter and take up the other's perspective on their own culture, anticipating and where possible, resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior " (p. 42). Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). Language learners must know what forms are culturally appropriate to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should realize that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own discourse community may be perceived differently by members of the target discourse community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.

The best known model of intercultural competence is supplied by Byram (1997). Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence identifies five different factors involved: Knowledge, Attitudes,

Skills of interpreting and relating,Skills of discovery and interaction and Political education including critical cultural awareness. *Knowledge* includes learning about social groups, products, practices and processes of interaction. *Attitudes* involve curiosity and openness towards the other as well as readiness to revise cultural values and beliefs and to interact and engage with otherness. *Skills of interpreting and relating* mean ability to identify and explain cultural perspectives and mediate between and function in new cultural contexts. *Skills of discovery and interaction* are related to the ability to acquire new knowledge of culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge attitudes and skills under the constraint of real-time communication. Finally *critical awareness* is defined as the ability to evaluate critically the perspectives and practices in one's own and other cultures. The influence of Byram's model has been immense. It gives a detailed outline of what intercultural competence is and what kind of skills need to be considered when teaching language according to the intercultural approach. It is useful for teachers as it breaks down a

complex concept into its constituent parts. Additionally, the model is specifically designed for the language classroom.

This change to the role of culture in language teaching entails a change in teachers' perceptions toward foreign language teaching. They are now expected not only to teach the foreign linguistic code, but also to "contextualize that code against the socio-cultural background associated with the foreign language and to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence" (Castro, 1999). The teacher is expected to mediate between the native language and target language culture(s) to help learners achieve the above mentioned goals (Byram & Risager, 1999; Edelhoff, 1993). Thus, to support the intercultural learning process, foreign language teachers need additional knowledge, attitudes, competencies and skills. They need to be acquainted with basic insights from cultural anthropology, culture learning theory and intercultural communication and need to be willing to teach intercultural competence and know how to do so (Edelhoff, 1993; Willems, 2002).

Conclusion

Language instruction must be grounded in the culture of the target language community. The words of a given language have only the potential to convey meaning. True communication is the result of deciphering those linguistic symbols in view of the social context in which they were produced (Smith and Luce, 1979). Abolghasem (2010) points out that cultural awareness and understanding of a second language is enhanced through culture teaching in foreign language classes.

The integration of culture within the FLT is not something new. It has been debated and emphasized at various times during the history of language teaching, although it may seem to be a very implicit part in some FLT teaching methods and approaches. Even in the Middle Ages when the emphasis was laid on

analytical skills and translation from and to the native language was the medium of language instruction,

according to Long-Fu (2001), "the fact that language is deeply embedded in a culture and every language is part of a culture had been unconsciously understood though not always recognized". As Brooks (1964) maintains, this is evident in GTM's focusing on the foreign language literature and fine arts which is a reflection of the FL culture of the foreign country where the language is being spoken.

Owing to the rapid overall development of the global society and social sciences, the demand for the integration of culture in FLT was increasingly felt. The rise of social sciences, such as anthropology or sociology, allowed for a broader definition of culture, which included everyday practices such as beliefs, values, behavioral patterns, events, language, etc. (Kramsch, 1995a; Lange, 1998; Hadley, 2001;

Shanahan, 1998). Learners' cultures and experiences, therefore, need to be validated within the teaching materials and instructional practices used.

Later, due to the vast changes in the world and greater need for people of different cultures to interact, the emphasis was placed on the social function of language and communicative skills even more than before. Simply being able to 'read' the language (emphasized in GTM or the Cognitive Approach), or just 'speak' the language (focused in the Direct Method or the Audio-lingual Method) was far from satisfactory in a modern multicultural global world (Long-Fu, 2001). These changes resulted in the acceptance of the Functional-Notional Approach or the Communicative approach as the standard approach to teaching language with a focus on the acquisition of communicative competence (like a native speaker) as the desired goal in language learning. This method, however, is criticized by many educators, including Savignon(1983) and Byram (1997) among others, for the fact that it ignores the social identity of the learners in any intercultural communicative event. Byram (1997) argues that the requirement that learners have the same mastery over a language as an (educated) native speaker ignores the condition under which learners and native speakers learn and acquire a language. Moreover, he maintains that this implies that a learner should be linguistically schizophrenic, abandoning one's language and culture in order to blend in another linguistic environment. Byram (1997) proposes another way of teaching culture which does not necessarily mean abandoning one's own culture and draws on the notion of intercultural competence, referring to "the ability to decenter and take up the other's perspective on their own culture, anticipating and where possible, resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior " (p. 42).

Obviously, a change of content to language instruction requires a change in the curriculum (Lange, 1999). Byram (1989, 1994), Kramsch, (1991, 1993) or Lange (1999) call for theoretical frameworks that highlight the interrelationship of language and culture. "Without frameworks to guide teaching and learning, classroom activities consist of the use of isolated worksheets and independent activities that have no coherent purpose" (Lange, 1999). In case of ELT, with English now being used globally across diverse cultures, English educators will not only need to be more culturally and linguistically aware but also able to design curriculums with an international and multicultural focus. In the other modern approaches such as Task-Based Language Teaching, Content-Based Language Teaching , and Cooperative Language Teaching , there is a great role for culture and social awareness.

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