



Language and Culture in English classrooms Greetings ways of expressing politeness

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Teaching culture when teaching English provides the students with the opportunity to appreciate and understand values. It also equips them with the knowledge of different ways of doing things. The students are made to use as a way of accepting differences in the global society.

In order to teach culture in practice of ELT, the teacher has to have cultural knowledge, cultural value, cultural behavior, and cultural skills. Cultural knowledge is the entirety of culture within the society. Cultural skills refer to the ability to be aware and have intercultural sensitivity when using English language to communicate and interact with others.

Cultural knowledge refers to the awareness of daily routines within the society, whereas cultural value is the awareness of what people regard to be important in the society. All these aspects have to be displayed during practice of English language teaching.ⁱ

When it comes to identifying and defining the role of culture especially in language classroom, several issues are raised. Some of the concerns include the appropriate moment for teaching culture when teaching language, the best way of teaching culture in a language lesson, and the necessity of a target culture for the students. As it was mentioned earlier, culture and language are inseparable.ⁱⁱ

It is not enough to make the learners aware of a target culture but they also have to be shown how to use the knowledge of culture to interact within the society. Students have



to be taught how to address different people in a culturally appropriate manner. They have to learn how to address their peers, and how to address their elders within the standards accepted in the society. The best moment to teach culture according to Tomlin (2008) is immediately after the students gain knowledge of basic grammar.

Many studies have been done in the area of culture and language and there is a wide range of complexity due to various findings reported. Most of the findings reported are based on theories and concepts in the field of psychology such as constructivist, cognitive and behavioral. This therefore implies that studies in culture and language began as early as studies on these concepts were conducted.ⁱⁱⁱ

The chief proponent of behavioral theory is B.F. Skinner. The theory basically talks about observing changes in behavior either through negative reinforcement or positive reinforcement. Whenever learners display desirable behaviors, the instructors can encourage recurrence of the behavior through positive reinforcement of the behavior. This can be through rewards.

The final theory upon which culture and language are built on is the constructivist theory. This theory was developed by Bruner and it asserts that students construct knowledge by actively interpreting every learning experience that they go through.

This implies that the assertions that learners store information are insufficient for learning to take place. The students have to draw conclusions from every learning experience and as a result construct knowledge. Therefore it is not only a matter of receiving information but also a matter of constructing knowledge.^{iv}

Used Literature



ⁱ Venuti, L., 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge, New York.

ⁱⁱ Wagner, D. A., Messick, B. M. & Spratt, J., 1986. Studying literacy in Morocco. In: *The acquisition of literacy*. Norwood: Ablex, pp. 233-260.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wehrwein, E. A., Lujan, H. L. & DiCarlo, S. E., 2007. Gender differences in learning style preferences among undergraduate physiology students. *American Physiological Society*, pp. 31:153-157.

^{iv} Wei, Y., 2005. Integrating Chinese Culture with TEFL in Chinese Classroom. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 2(7), pp. 55-59.