

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Language and culture are intertwined in human existence, particularly in learning and language education. The purpose of this research is to describe cultural understanding in English learning. This study is classified as qualitative research since the data was gathered through library research. This culture is highly appropriate for foreign language study, which focuses on improving communication skills with the target language. The incorporation of culture into the English learning process might lessen the likelihood of misconceptions occurring throughout the communication process.

Keywords: culture, language, English, intercultural language

When we talk about language, we naturally bring up culture. Language is a tool for communication that may help people in different countries connect. English was the first language spoken in the United Kingdom, and it is currently one of the most widely spoken worldwide languages in many nations. English is a foreign language in Indonesia, and it is almost never spoken in regular conversation. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills that are emphasized in English classes in Indonesia. If a student does not have cultural understanding when a sentence or utterance may be transmitted, a student who can utilize solid English syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation may not be able to express his views easily and acceptably. For example, a student learning basic dialogue in English at school may try to practice spoken communication. When she sees a foreign national woman near her residence, she greets her with "Hello, Miss. "What age are you?" Grammatically, there is nothing wrong with the student's greeting sentence, but if the greeting is assessed for its socio-cultural acceptability, it could be said that the greeting is unacceptable because in the English-speaking community, asking for someone's age, especially a woman, is one of the less polite things to do. This demonstrates how a statement might be misconstrued when used in an incorrect context (Abusyairi, K. 2013). Language and culture cannot exist apart from one another. Language is an aspect of culture, hence cultural awareness is essential when teaching foreign languages, particularly foreign languages like English. Culture influences the success of message transmission and the composition of fluid dialogue between the speaker and the interlocutor. Thus, learning English requires not only learning the elements and components of the language, but also acquiring cultural characteristics. English teachers must include cultural components in their instruction so that pupils can converse in the language. English cultural knowledge can assist students grasp the scenarios they may encounter when reading or listening to English materials.

Language and culture are two interconnected concepts. Brown (1994) asserts that language is a component of culture and vice versa. understanding a language cannot be isolated from understanding how the language is used in everyday life, particularly how the language influences and contributes to the culture of its original speakers. According to Brown (2001),

the link between language and culture is so tight that when discussing language, culture is inevitably brought up. Culture and language are two interconnected concepts. The phenomena of tense in English is another illustration of the link between culture and language. Tense is used in English to express actions that take place at various periods. For example, I went to school and school. Both phrases indicate "I'm going to school," but the time may be deduced from the distinct verbs even without including a time adverb in the sentence. Culture is essential in language acquisition since it eliminates communication misunderstandings. Language is constantly engaged in cultural elements; for example, language may be a tool of cultural growth; language can be a mirror and a representation of people's culture; and someone can acquire culture via his language. In other words, humans live and gain experiences via and through language. According to Nababan (1986), language is the key or the main gateway to a society's culture. Thus, using his language, topics pertaining to life patterns, value systems, and customs that exist in the midst of a community may be comprehended and examined. When teaching languages, teachers have a difficult task: developing cultural understanding in their students. This is done not only to ensure a thorough knowledge of the subject, but also to analyze imaginatively how these intellectual principles might be used in the classroom. According to McKay (2003), in the context of learning English as a foreign language, students should be introduced to various cultures that exist in English-speaking communities so that they can be more sensitive to various cultural variations in English-speaking communities and develop intercultural communication skills. This may be accomplished by incorporating it into the curriculum during learning and learning activities so that students can appreciate their own culture while also recognizing differences and similarities with other civilizations (H. Zulianti, A. -Maximilian, and G. D. Ajeng 2016). The cultural teaching of native English speakers cannot be isolated from the teaching of English. The primary chance for most pupils to learn about a foreign culture is when they study the language. Cultural learning is anticipated to be included as one of the factors that must be taught in class while studying a foreign language. Teachers of foreign languages are required to incorporate cultural factors into the language instruction they teach. As a result, the educational materials offered must be a duplicate of how the language is used in a natural cultural setting (Z. L. Afriani 2019). Culture and language have a strong relationship since they impact each other. Culture may be taught in conjunction with four abilities, namely hearing, speaking, reading, and writing, when studying English. According to Brown (2001), cultural learning may be used in numerous ways, including:

1. Examine cross-cultural distinctions between other cultures and students' own languages, stressing that no culture is superior to another.
2. The promotion of noble qualities is the most common cultural integration in English learning practiced by instructors.
3. Teaches cultural connotations and sociolinguistic components of language learning.

The integration of local culture at the material level distinguishes culture-based English learning. Choosing the best learning approach for conveying material about other cultures that differ from the indigenous culture. According to Liddicoat (2004), there is a main framework containing four cultural activities, namely: 1. studying and understanding a cultural practice 2. comparing cultural practices 3. exploring culture 4. positioning oneself in the third place between two (or more) cultures. Liddicoat (2004) also offers numerous possible ways, including

explicit cultural education, integrating culture into four language skills, teaching culture from the beginning of language instruction, teaching bilingually, engaging intercultural discovery, and assisting learners to continue learning. Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, and Kohler (2003) offered another technique based on five educational concepts, which include:

1. Active building, which suggests that learners must seek and create their own knowledge of the target culture in order to describe, evaluate, and compare it to their own;
2. Making connections, which stresses the capacity to connect and recognize cross-cultural links;
3. Social connection, as demonstrated by engaging debates among students;
4. Reflection, which is seen as an important component that requires learners to respond to and reflect on culture in a nonjudgmental manner;
- and 5. Responsibility, which entails the capacity to raise awareness of cultural differences and respect others with diverse cultural traditions.

It is critical to explore cross-cultural disparities during the language learning process since it will assist pupils comprehend why a group of people views things differently when compared to other people's opinions. This understanding can help students become more open-minded individuals who see cultural differences as factors that influence human existence. According to Moran (2001), cultural experiences on the engagement of learners in cultural learning may be highlighted as the key to cultural learning. The four basic purposes of language in relation to cultural learning are as follows: language to engage in culture, language to describe culture, language to understand culture, and language to respond to the culture being studied.

The tactics given above can help language teachers strengthen their students' cultural knowledge. They kept in mind that regardless of the tactics used by teachers, each level must be relevant and capable of leading children to cultural awareness in language acquisition. Of course, learning vocabulary and linguistic notes, as well as exercising the four language skills, is critical. However, if pupils are not exposed to the socio-cultural components of the language, they may merely learn the language as a whole. According to Seeley (1993), this is understandable since knowledge of linguistic aspects without awareness of the cultural norms prevalent in the language-user community is insufficient to be utilized as provisions to allow students to communicate in a language in an acceptable manner.

In order to conclude, learning other languages means learning characteristics of the English language such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and spelling. Learning a foreign language, on the other hand, incorporates cultural characteristics inherent in the language. This cultural learning is required to avoid misconceptions between speakers and listeners throughout the communication process. If there are no misunderstandings between the speaker and the listener, communication can be effortless. Of course, variations in language and culture can always cause problems when conversing in a foreign language. A connection, namely cross-cultural communication, is required to connect these impediments. This intercultural dialogue might begin by exposing foreign language culture to language learners as part of the process of acquiring foreign languages.

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