
*Developing EFL University Students' Cultural
Awareness:
A Theoretical Account*

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I. Introduction:

An effective foreign language teaching (henceforth FLT) process usually caters for the development of a set of competences, namely grammatical competence, communicative competence, pragmatic competence, and cultural competence on the part of learners. Cultural competence outlines foreign language (FL) learners' ability to identify themselves with the way of life of the speakers of the FL, i.e. their conventions, customs, beliefs, values, ways of living, etc.. Accordingly, Yang (2005: 28) maintains that the pioneering language teaching theorists Lado, Brooks, Rivers and Chastain have heavily emphasized that understanding the foreign culture should be a demanding aspect of the process of language teaching and learning in general, and that of FLT in particular. Such a viewpoint highlights the fact that language and culture are two complementary elements so intricately interwoven to the extent that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. In other words, the learning of syntactic structures or new

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vocabulary and expressions does not suffice unless the FLT process incorporates some cultural elements that are intertwined with language itself (Brown, 2000: 177).

Regarding the problem to be investigated, a prime objective behind teaching English as a foreign language (henceforth TEFL) is to help learners develop a good communicative ability during and/or after the course of their involvement in the process of learning the new language. Yet, learners, almost everywhere, after many years of studying English, fail to carry over their intended communicating, oral or written, messages. It is claimed that EFL learners' communicative failure stems, in addition to the weakness of their linguistic and communicative competence, from their inability to manage or attend to the cultural aspects of EFL, i.e. weak cultural competence. To be more specific, a noticeable proportion of learners view learning English as the mere achievement of a satisfactory level of pronunciation, grammatical rules and vocabulary, i.e. linguistic competence. Such a misconception runs contrary to the fact that an FL and its culture are two inseparable elements, and that any attempt to strip a language off its culture, makes language learning quite meaningless. This is also reflected by English language teachers' inclination not to probe the cultural matters incorporated into the teaching materials, but to provide learners with mere linguistic items and structures forgetting that going beyond linguistic knowledge, i.e. dealing with culture, is quite advantageous.

The current research paper aims, in the main, at highlighting the very close pertinence of "culture" to the process of FL learning and teaching by highlighting the importance of incorporating cultural elements into EFL teaching materials. It also attends closely to the concept of "cultural awareness" and underpins its positive role in developing both proficiency and success in English. Finally, the current research aims at proposing certain pedagogical points which, if efficiently handled by teachers, can enhance learners' knowledge of the foreign language and culture and, in turn, their ultimate management of the various linguistic skills.

The present paper is never claimed to be unique in terms of the topic it explores since many researchers, within the Iraqi context, have approached "The Role of Culture in FL Learning", setting out from varied perspectives. Yet, the "The Development of FL Learners Cultural Awareness" remains, in spite of its positive pedagogical consequences, a domain of research that is totally untapped as far as the literature related to TEFL in Iraq is concerned. Hence, the present paper is expected to be of some value to everyone who feels some degree of concern about the current situation of ELT in Iraq.

II. Definition of Culture:

The thorny nature of "culture" makes defining the term extremely difficult. Likewise, proposing an all-embracing definition of 'culture', particularly in an increasingly international world, requires both precision and comprehensiveness.

Traditionally, Trinovitch (1980:550) defines culture as "an all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and

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technical behavior of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behavior starting from birth".

At a broader level, culture is always referred to as 'the whole ways of life of a people'. Such a global view of culture subsumes, according to Duranti (1997), both 'material' manifestations that are easily observed, and 'non-material' ones that are more difficult to observe and represented by all the social practices that bond a group of people together and distinguish them from others. Consequently, culture is "something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in the form of face-to-face interaction, and, of course, through linguistic communication"(Duranti, 1997: 24).

Goodenough (1997) states that culture incorporates knowledge or beliefs that make a member in a social group behave in a manner acceptable to others. It is not a natural phenomenon and does not consist of things, peoples' behavior or emotions, but rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving, relating and interpreting them.

According to Peck (1998), culture is all the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people. It is that facet of human life learned by people as the outcome of their belonging to some particular group; it is that part of learned behavior shared with others. Not only does this concept include a group's way of thinking, feeling, and acting, but also the internalized patterns for doing certain things in certain ways. This concept of culture also includes the physical

manifestations of a group as exhibited in their achievements and contributions to civilization.

Culture, is viewed by Brown (2000: 176), as a way of life. It is the context of one's existence, thinking, feeling and relating to others. It binds a group of people together, governs their behavior, makes them sensitive to matters of status, and helps them to know what others expect of them. Thus, culture helps one to know how far s/he can go as an individual and what his/her responsibility is to the group.

It can be concluded that investigating "culture" is quite problematic due to its unbounded and dynamic nature; a point that undeniably leaves many cultural avenues wider and not probed. Also, culture's embodiment of the knowledge shared with people, the aspects of life within a certain society, and the set of rules and behavior patterns of the people who live together, remains to refer to a wide range of main fields and subfields to the extent that giving a whole picture of them is a very laborious task.

III. Culture and Language:

The controversial issue of the mutual relation, i.e. interaction, between language and culture, as Genc and Bada, 2005: 74) state, has somehow been settled by virtue of the writings of the prominent philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1980; 1999), Saussure (1966), Foucault (1994), Dilthey (1989), Von Humboldt (1876), Adorno (1993), Davidson (1999), Quine (1980) and Chomsky (1968), side by side with those by the two striking linguists, namely Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956). For instance, Sapir (1929: 209) is cited as stating that "language does not exist apart from culture. That

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is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives". A viewpoint that is enhanced by Malinowski's (1964) statement that "language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of the people, and it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader concepts of verbal utterance".

In the same vein, viewing language as a part of culture that must be approached with the same attitudes we hold towards culture as a whole, a conveyer of culture, and something that is itself subject to culturally conditioned attitudes and beliefs, formed the basis for An American committee's approach (1960) to study the relation between culture and language (Bishop, 1960:29).

On his part, Brown (2000: 170) notes that culture and communication are inseparable. Language is the carrier of culture and culture is the content of language. He further argues that culture is the 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.

In the light of the preceding propositions, language does not exist on its own. It is rather an integral part of the culture of a people that reflects this people's beliefs and sentiments. It is not an abstraction existing in a vacuum, but a described verbal reaction in a given cultural framework, the purpose of which is to communicate with other human beings. In other words, to communicate with people from other cultures, the

meaning of language can often be obscured if there is insufficient knowledge of the cultural norms and values associated with the people who speak the languages of those cultures. Therefore, the most important thing is to learn and understand the cultural influence on their behaviors and also on their activities and the forms of linguistic expressions.

IV. The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning:

Broadly speaking, culture plays a vital role in general education since studying culture means the learning of the geography, history, etc. of the foreign culture and a liking for its native speakers. Therefore, the topic of teaching and learning culture has been an issue of much interest to language educators.

In the context of FL teaching and learning, Politzer (1959: 100-101) argues that teaching an FL without simultaneous teaching of its native culture means teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning. Added to that, Genc and Bada (2005: 73) argue that the dialectical relation between language and culture has always been a concern of FL teachers and educators alike to the extent that incorporating culture into the FL has been a subject of rapid change throughout language teaching history. This is evident from the bulk of publications on the role of culture in foreign language instruction over the past decades; a phenomenon that is coupled with the undeniable assumption that learners find in learning a foreign culture a source or a means that helps a lot at both linguistic and pragmatic levels; i.e. in the skilful and authentic use of the

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words and expressions belonging to the FL, and "interacting naturally with persons of the other culture, while recognizing and accepting their different reactions" (Cakir, 2006: 157)..

In the same vein, Pedersen (1988) maintains that integrating culture into the FL curricula is a must when learners are not aware of the differences in cultural institutions and systems, the stress resulting from functioning in intercultural situation, the differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles, and the paramount differences and similarities of practices across different cultures, and are not knowledgeable of the way that rights or responsibilities are defined differently in different cultures.

Concerning the present paper, the topic under discussion has been approached by first studying the inevitable role of culture in the process of FL teaching and learning, and secondly attending to 'cultural awareness' by highlighting the ways to develop it in the FL classroom.

It is worthwhile that in many FL classrooms, learners effective communication is viewed as the mere efficient management of using the grammatical rules in oral and written practice, intertwined with full absence of learning about the foreign culture. The latter is sometimes assumed to be a threat to learners' native culture and personal and/or national identity, and hence looked upon as a subsidiary task that does not worth a lot. Also, in such settings, learners' relative or absolute distance from the foreign culture and its speakers eliminates any opportunity to appreciate the

importance of learning the cultural aspects of communication and their beneficial outcomes.

Consequently, the absence of the role of culture in the foreign language classroom has been the concern of many teachers and scholars and has sparked considerable controversy. Kramersch (1993: 224) mentions that it was only in the 1970s that FL situational context has been in vogue due to the emphasis on sociolinguistics; i.e. basing foreign language learning on a universal ground of emotional and physical needs, so that "the foreign culture would appear less threatening and more accessible to the language learner". Likewise, a number of researchers attended to the beneficial consequences of incorporating culture into FL learning. For instance, Chastain (1971) argues that studying culture provides learners with a means to study the FL as well as rendering its study meaningful. It further helps learners relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places.

In the 1980s, scholars began to probe the dynamics of culture and its vital contribution to effective language learning. For example, Byram et al. (1994: 8) nominate Littlewood as an advocate of the value of cultural learning although linguistic proficiency remained the prime aim of the development of learners' communicative competence. In fact, scholars set out of the idea that FL learning is FL culture learning, and, that culture is, even implicitly, taught in FL classrooms for different purposes; the most prominent of which are promoting learning as well as increasing learners' motivation.

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By the same token, Tucker and Lambert (1972: 26) state that to foster cultural awareness by dint of teaching culture means to bring to the learners' consciousness the latent assumptions and premises underlying foreign people's belief and value systems.

It is also worthwhile that familiarity with the foreign culture facilitates the development of cross-cultural communication. This is so because, as Rivers (1981) points out, communicative behaviour and cultural systems are interrelated as there is relation between the form and content of a language and the beliefs, values, and needs present in the culture of its speakers. Also, familiarizing learners with the cultural components helps to develop the communicative skills, understand the linguistic and behavioral patterns both of the foreign and the native culture at a more conscious level, develop intercultural and international understanding, adopt a wider perspective in the perception of the reality, and make teaching sessions more enjoyable to develop an awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension and communication.

According to Tomalin & Stempleski (1993: 7-8), the teaching of culture helps learners develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours, become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the foreign culture, increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the foreign language, develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the foreign culture, develop the

necessary skills to locate and organize information about the foreign culture, stimulate their intellectual curiosity about the foreign culture, and encourage empathy towards its people.

In line with this, Tavares & Cavalcanti (1996: 19) maintain that in EFL classrooms, students' intellectual curiosity is aroused and satisfied when they learn that there exists another mode of expressing feelings, wants, needs and when they read the literature of the foreign country since assimilating how these patterns function relies on the depth of cultural understanding

Hammerly (1982) contends that culture influences FL teaching in two ways. First linguistically by affecting the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language; and second pedagogically by influencing the choice of the language materials since the cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are accounted for while deciding upon the language materials. This is so because without the study of culture, FL teaching is inaccurate, incomplete and meaningless when learners are ignorant about FL native speakers or the country in which the FL is spoken. In other words, learning a new language means a lot more than the mere studying of syntax and lexicon (Genc and Bada, 2005: 73).

Finally, Cakir (2006: 157) sums up the main reasons behind familiarizing learners with the FL cultural components to be: developing the communicative skills, understanding the linguistic and behavioral patterns of both the foreign and native cultures, developing intercultural and international understanding, adopting a wider perspective in the perception

of the reality, making teaching sessions more enjoyable to develop an awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension, interpretation, and translation and communication.

V. Developing Cultural Awareness in the Foreign Language

Classroom:

Our next point of departure, as stated earlier, focuses on cultural awareness and the ways to develop it in the FL classroom. It is crucial to note that learners usually, in the early stages of learning an FL, intend, mostly consciously, to develop some linguistic competence, i.e. a good command of grammar and vocabulary. Yet such linguistic knowledge does not suffice unless it is coupled with a satisfactory level of cultural competence represented by the acquisition of an amount of cultural information, i.e. being acquainted with both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences and understanding the thinking ways and life style of the people belonging to the foreign culture. Consequently, almost all researchers (Kramsch, 1993; Peck, 1998; Straub 1999, to mention only few), state that FL learners must first become conversant with what it means to be part of a culture, namely their own culture. By exploring their own culture, i.e. by discussing the very values, expectations, traditions, customs, and rituals they unconsciously take part in, they are ready to reflect upon the values, expectations, and traditions of others. At any rate, the foreign language classroom should become a

locus where the prime objective should be the development of foreign culture knowledge, which is usually referred to as cultural awareness.

With regard to our first point of departure, namely the definition and components of cultural awareness, Hovater (2009: 63) points out that cultural awareness, in a broad sense, refers to individuals' ability to understand and internalize the values, beliefs and characteristics of their native culture, and simultaneously comprehending that others may not share those same values, beliefs and characteristics. Also, Brown (1986) maintains that the process of cultural awareness, viz. becoming adapted to the new culture, comprises four main stages, namely euthoria, i.e. experiencing excitement as a result of knowing little about the foreign language can be a source of excitement, culture shock, i.e. experiencing instability and anxiety, gradual recovery, i.e. gaining confidence with the language, and adaptation or assimilation, i.e. developing language awareness and high level of competence.

As for developing cultural awareness in FL classrooms, In the context of FL teaching and learning, cultural awareness should be developed in the FL learner so as to adjust him cognitively, affectively and behaviourly to the new cultural context since an adequate input of foreign cultural knowledge in the FL classroom can be of great assistance to developing cultural awareness on learners' side (Yang, 2005: 30). In this respect, Mairitsch (Oct 2002 – Jan 2003: 50) argues that FLL, in addition to enhancing learners' linguistic competence, can noticeably contribute to their social and cultural education;

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thus developing learners' cultural awareness through effective communication with others and understanding themselves as cultural and linguistic beings.

Likewise, Rivers (1981: 323-4) suggests that learners should be able to demonstrate that they have acquired certain understandings, abilities, and attitudes, i.e. they understand that people act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs, they understand that social variables as age, sex, social class, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave, they can demonstrate how people conventionally act in the foreign culture, they are aware that culturally conditioned images are associated with even the most common foreign words and phrases, they are able to evaluate the relative strength of a generality concerning the foreign culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating the statement, they develop the skills needed to locate and organize material about the foreign culture from the library, mass media, and personal observation, and they possess intellectual curiosity about the foreign culture and empathy toward its people.

Also, Pederson (1988:3) states that “developing cultural awareness is not an end in itself but rather a means toward increasing a person’s power, energy and freedom of choice in a multicultural world”. Similarly, Alta (2005: 170) acknowledges the role of cultural awareness in enhancing learners' intentional and purposive decision making ability as

it accounts for the many ways that culture influences different perceptions of the same situation.

Such importance of cultural awareness has made the identification of the effective means to foster cultural awareness in the FL classroom something quite demanding. It has become, as Yang (2005: 28) outlines, a necessary and important ingredient and a major concern in FL teaching and learning. In line with this, Straub (1999) states that a prime objective behind FL teaching is to foster understanding the foreign culture from an insider's perspective so as to enable the student to accurately interpret foreign cultural behaviours in such a way that might facilitate the FL learning. In the same manner, Lessard-Clouston (1997) identifies FL learners' need to master some skills in culturally appropriate communication and behaviour.

The preceding assumptions and thoughts have paved the way to the posing of two prime questions in this respect: "How can FL teachers assist students in acquiring cultural knowledge which is akin to the language they are learning? And "How can culture teaching conform to the dynamic nature of the foreign culture and the FL?"

Answers to the afore-listed questions reveal varied approaches of how to tackle the matter under discussion. For instance, a point of much pertinence to this issue focuses on the incorporation or integration of the FL culture into the syllabus in the form of conversations, reading material, listening and speaking tasks and in written work in both individual and group situations. Kramsch (1993) opines that by bringing to the fore some elements of the foreign culture,

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FL teachers can make students be aware that learning culture goes hand in hand with the learning of the structural elements of the language. Added to that, on deciding which tasks or activities to use in the FL classroom, it is logical that the instructor chooses those that can awaken learners' interests. In this respect, learners' adequate linguistic competence and instructors' necessary guidance can motivate learners to read and to deal with the cultural norms and values contained within the FL materials.

Also, identification of the goals behind teaching the foreign culture and people can motivate learners and enhance their curiosity to know more about such culture. Quoting Rivers (1981), Alta (2005: 171-172) presents a detailed account of a number of goals of cultural instruction toward which classroom activities and materials should be directed all for the sake of granting learners' (1) understanding that people act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying the basic psychological needs, and that social variables such as age, sex, social class and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave; (2) ability to demonstrate how people conventionally act in the most common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture and to evaluate the relative strength of a generality concerning the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating the statement; (3) awareness that culturally conditioned images are associated with even the most common target words and phrases, (4) development of the skills needed to locate and to organise material about the foreign culture

from the library, mass media and personal observation, and (5) possession of intellectual curiosity about the foreign culture and empathy toward its people.

Tomalin & Stempleski (1993: 16) point out that a further technique can be adopted by dividing the FL class into groups of three or four and have them list the characteristics and traits, namely music, race, origin, geography, architecture, customs, arts, crafts, clothing and food that set borderlines between the native and the foreign cultures. Such an exposure to the foreign culture, as Singhal (1998) argues, through what he labels as 'cultural capsules', i.e. presenting learners with isolated items about the foreign culture, while using books and other visual aids can be a further source for developing cultural awareness. This can be substituted by the provision of 'culturgrams', i.e. providing learners with cultural information by cultural clusters that comprise a series of culture capsules (Peck, 1998). Added to that, Chastain (1988) maintains that the use of role-play in EFL classrooms can help students to "overcome cultural "fatigue"" and to "promote the process of cross-cultural dialogues". It further "provides opportunities for oral communication".

On her part, Valdes (1986) views teaching poetry as a valuable source for the teaching of the FL and its culture. This is due to the fact that poetry is highly esteemed in many cultures and is duly of interest to many FL learners. Although poetry is characterized by its complicated syntax, imagery, metaphor, vocabulary and meaning, a competent instructor's efficient and careful selection of the poems to be studied can

evade a lot of predictable and unpredictable problems in this respect.

Also, Singhal (1998) suggests cultural problem solving as another source for providing cultural information. By so doing, learners, in their attempt to develop 'cultural competence', viz. to assess manners and customs, or appropriate or inappropriate behaviour, and to employ various problem-solving techniques, are engaged in analyzing different activities in the FL.

Instructors' attempts to provide learners with a reasonably sound knowledge of their native language and culture can pave the way for better understanding of the attitudes, behaviour and customs of the foreign people and their culture. The merit of such an activity lies in the fact that learners' identification and understanding of cultural similarities and differences can be advantageous for the development of cultural awareness in FL classroom.

Finally, quoting Rivers (1981), Alta (2005: 173-174) suggests the following instructional activities which, if conducted, on the sound bases, in the FL, can foster cultural awareness: (1) Sequential presentation of the aspects of the foreign culture with reading, exposition, discussion illustration by films, slides, maps and other visual means and personal research objects, (2) a contrastive study between the native and the foreign cultures by means of readings and other informational material derived from articles, newspapers, magazines, and poetic themes, (3) interdisciplinary courses on the history, sociology, fine arts, or philosophy of the country

or countries where the FL is spoken, (4) a conversationally oriented course to familiarize learners with the foreign culture so that they may interact orally in a more effective and sympathetic way with speakers of the language, (5) teaching literary texts on the foreign culture, in terms of its themes or values, including popular fiction, folklore, ballads, children's rhyme and anything else that can illuminate the thought and life experience in the culture, and (6) presenting films that are representative of aspects of life in the foreign culture.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations:

Language is a part of culture and plays a very crucial role in it. As such, learning a language is, in fact, inseparable from learning its culture; a point that has gained momentum in FLT since the development of cultural awareness is conducive to having a good command of the FL itself. To develop cultural awareness, the teaching of culture should become an integral part of FL instruction, i.e. culture should be the message to students and language the medium, and students should be helped to distinguish between the cultural norms, beliefs, or habits of the majority within the speech community. Accordingly, FL teaching materials should offer a lot of cultural information as well as sufficient cultural interpretation. This is so because if the culturally-influenced behavior arises out of the language materials and if culture is clearly identified and systematically treated as a regular feature of the language lessons, better results in teaching can be achieved.

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In an attempt to put the preceding theoretical points into practical guidelines and classroom practices, it is commendable that FL teachers adopt the following:

- (1) Since students must be receptive to the concept of learning about cultures other than their own, teachers have to provide in advance the most effective means to overcome the cultural barriers that might stand in the way of carrying out the relevant teaching-learning activities.
- (2) Since cultural equivalence values a lot in the teaching of a certain topic, teachers should use first language equivalents for enhancing learning, familiarizing students with the foreign culture, increasing and developing students' awareness and curiosity towards the foreign culture and their own culture.
- (3) Since cultural teaching methods are diverse, teachers' should resort to the use of various methods to improve and develop students' cultural awareness.
- (4) Since students can benefit from materials' enlightening points about the cultural knowledge, teachers should do much more work in lesson preparation.
- (5) Teachers must be good at teaching cultural knowledge points which are discovered during lesson preparation, and combining teaching process by selecting appropriate methods so that the students can expand their cultural knowledge.
- (6) Since comparisons between cultures are expected to enhance students' cultural awareness, teachers should abundantly use culture-based activities that involve the

cultural values of both the native and the foreign languages.

- (7) Since drama plays a vital role in foreign culture learning through the development of students' linguistic and cultural knowledge and the creation of much vitality in the FL classroom, a noticeable proportion of time and work should be allotted for the introduction and practice of such plays.
- (8) Since photo displays, songs, foreign festivals, authentic materials, and audio-visual media are very effective in developing students' cultural awareness, it is practically necessary for the teachers to know how, when, why and where to use all these elements.
- (9) Since teachers are the main mediators in culture transmission to their students, they are supposed to receive both experiential and academic training in this respect.
- (10) Since FL teachers are usually foreign culture teachers, they are supposed to be efficient enough to experience and analyse both native and foreign cultures, and to introduce students to a kind of learning which challenges and modifies their cultural identity in terms of their membership of a certain social and national group.
- (11) Since teaching materials are expected to contribute to the achievement of the practical, cultural, and educational aims of learning an FL, they should meet students' needs or teachers' purposes in the classroom. They should also interpret the information within the context of the foreign culture and in comparison with the students' own culture

in such a way that might focus on the production of more cultural references that might support culture teaching and learning.

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تطوير الأورال الحضاري لدى طلبة اللغة الانكليزية في المستوى الجامعي

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الملخص

جعل التوسع الكبير في تفاعل الشعوب و تواصلهم عبر الحضارات، جعل الحضارة تتبوأ موقعا بارزا في عملية تعليم وتعلم اللغة الأجنبية. وبالنتيجة، بات الإطلاع على ما تعنيه "الحضارة" فعلا وعلى أسباب دمجها في هذه العملية من خلال التعرف على تعريفها وكيفية تدريسها أمرا ملحا للغاية. و يتعزز هذا من خلال الحقيقة القائلة بأن تدريس اللغة الأجنبية لا يعني مجرد اكتساب المعرفة اللغوية ممثلة بتعلم التراكيب البنيوية والمفردات والتعابير الجديدة، وإنما معرفة العناصر الحضارية التي تشكل جزءا لا يتجزأ من عملية تدريس اللغة الأجنبية، تلك العملية التي تعني أيضا تجنب الأخطاء الحضارية التي قد تكون مؤثرة بشكل سلبي أكثر من مثيلاتها اللغوية على ضوء الأحكام الخاطئة والمشاعر السلبية التي قد تولدها تلك الأحكام. وهذا يعود إلى حقيقة أن كل وجهات النظر تؤكد بأن اللغة تشكل الواسطة الرئيسية التي تتم من خلالها التعبير عن الحضارة، وبأن مستويات الإدراك الحضاري لدى الطلبة تجاه اللغة الأجنبية يمكن أن يكون له وقع واضح على ممارسة هذه اللغة وأدائها.