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THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Annotation: The purpose of this article is to discuss the impact of culture on learning a language, speaking styles, and comprehension. A language is not only a means of communication but also a main element of cultural heritage. This article examines an inseparable relationship between culture and language, the results of interview with the second language learners as well. Also, some difficulties arising from cultural differences, its impact on vocabulary and idiomatic expressions will be discussed. Additionally, the article explores the significance of integrating culture into language education to develop students' understanding and fluency. There are several techniques to facilitate language learning through culture to improve students' language acquisition.

Key words: cultural diversity, foreign languages, idiomatic expressions, communication, lexical resource.

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is considered a fundamental part of language [Samova, Porter, 2015] and they are deeply connected, affecting each other in different way. People begin to understand the inseparable relation between culture and language when they are involved in the process [Pulverness, 2003]. Language is not just a communication tool; it shows society's history, customs, and traditions. Gleason [1961] writes in his article, "Language is not only the product of culture, but also is the symbol of culture." Every language shows a cultural identity of society and forms the way of thinking. It is really difficult to learn a foreign language without understanding its culture. Therefore, understanding it is an essential element to succeed in learning a particular language, and many people say that language learning is a way to learn culture, and in this process, culture is a vital component. This is because language is incomplete without studying culture.

The culture affects language in every way, including vocabulary, expressions, and communication styles; the structure of language shows the traditions and customs of a country as well. In some cultures, for example, it is valued to speak directly, while others pay attention to indirect communication and respectfulness. Additionally, a cultural environment accelerates a language learning process and makes it easier. As people are learning foreign languages, their way of thinking becomes improved, and this helps them broaden their horizons, making them well-rounded individuals.

II. METHODS

All the time learning and teaching foreign languages cause to some discussions among scholars and they suggested different strategies therefore foreign language teaching methods vary from country

to country. In Uzbekistan, for example, second language teachers tend to display videos and movies about different cultures during the teaching process and we interviewed students who are learning a second language to find out how effective this technique is and to compare my own view with other scholars.

McKay [2003] affirms that culture affects language teaching in two different ways: linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, it influences the semantic, discourse, and pragmatic levels of an exact language. As for pedagogical effect, it has an impact on the choice of the language materials, as they are important in teaching methodology, and second language teachers should consider cultural context.

Many scholars find cultural factors important in teaching and learning foreign languages and propose different effective techniques. One of the most famous American linguists and researchers, John Schumann [2010], discovered the Acculturation Model. In this model, social and psychological factors and their influences on language learning are explained. His model is aimed at helping learners acquire a second language productively and successfully through learning its culture. Additionally, immersive learning environments are one of the most effective techniques for language learners. This strategy urges students to learn a second language through daily activities, cultural practices, and community involvement. Interacting with native speakers, for example, lets people speak naturally with intonations and makes them feel confident while speaking. They practically express themselves, and this leads to mastering a certain language easier and without stress, exchanging ideas and cultural knowledge with each other. Also, watching movies and reading books in a language that people are learning is a funny way to learn both culture and language equally.

Cultural immersion encourages students to practice language while participating in cultural events, festivals, and community gatherings. As a result, learners become more aware of other countries' cultures and customs. Some idioms have different meanings in different languages, and they are varied according to culture. Take the idiom "Have a nice day" as an example; it is mostly used when people want to say goodbye to each other in a friendly way in western countries, especially in the USA and the UK, while in other countries, this idiom is used in formal contexts.

III. RESULTS

We conducted an interview with fifty students learning a particular language. According to interview results, only eight of them found the strategy inappropriate while others prefer it. The students who liked the method mentioned its usefulness since this helps them to learn a certain language in a productive way and this will be beneficial later in life when they go abroad.

Learning different foreign languages brings about cultural diversity, and this has both positive and negative impacts. This allows society and its institutions to develop, at the same time causing some problems. As for benefits, cultural diversity leads to the integration of different worldviews and ways of thinking, which stimulates innovative ideas. Furthermore, people can develop mutual respect and tolerance by interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. This helps strengthen international relationships in the process of globalization. As a result of globalization, new words are becoming added, and they contribute to expanding the lexical resource of language. In addition to this, integrating culture related resources in teaching foreign languages can boost learners' confidence and motivation. For example, when students use the language practically within its cultural settings, they are more likely to engage in learning process actively.

Learners sometimes face some challenges because of cultural diversity since some idiomatic expressions and jokes have different meanings in every culture resulting in misunderstandings. In this

situation, it is not only difficult to learners but also teachers have difficulties. Barna [1985] says that communication within cultures fails to create mutual understanding therefore teachers should consider cultural background of each student while teaching foreign languages since intercultural training is equally important for both teachers and learners. Every culture has its unique and distinct approach to education and this results in several difficulties while adapting to different teaching and learning styles. It may lead to frustration and lack of motivation, preventing learners from practicing language.

IV. DISCUSSION

One of the purposes of the interview is comparing my own opinion with linguists. Before interviewing students, I thought learning foreign languages through videos and films was not useful as expected however most of scholars found it more beneficial compared to other strategies. After the interview, I made sure that the technique works well for language learners as this can help improve students' linguistic comprehension [Kuo, Ming-Mu; Lal, Cheng-Chieh, 2006]

It is sometimes natural to have challenges while learning new language due to cultural barriers. One of the main issues is the concept of code-switching. the term of "code-switching" was introduced by Einar Haugen for the first time in the 1950s. It is focused on to analyze bilingual speakers' attitude towards language and its cultural contexts. In this process learners mix their native language with the language that they are learning. Consequently, they are highly likely to confuse and lack fluency, especially when learners have difficulty to separate two different structure and linguistic systems. According to Cassie Smith-Christmas [2013], code-switching in classrooms can slow down language learning process and reduce students' confidence and self-esteem. Brown [2019] noted that misunderstandings which are caused by cultural differences can lead to burnout and decreased willingness to learn language. Thus many scholars, nowadays, are trying to find ways to mitigate challenges in learning and teaching foreign languages, encouraging both teachers and learners to see language as a useful tool rather than a barrier.

V. CONCLUSION

There is a complex relationship between culture and language learning, and students come across some culture-related barriers while learning, as it is quite a difficult process yet beneficial. Some learners feel like foreign languages threaten their cultural identity. However, cultural exposure plays an essential role in mastering a new language, enhancing engagement and comprehension. As well as language being more than just vocabulary and grammar structures, it consists of social norms and cultural references. These are factors that help learners use the language appropriately in diverse cultural settings and also foster open-mindedness and empathy, which are important qualities.

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