

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHING CULTURE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT

Language is a basic form of communication. It can be verbal, physical and biologically innate. Culture is the distinctiveness of a specific group of people. This distinctiveness can be observed in the language, religion, social behavior, music and the arts of these groups. Language and Culture are closely associated as culture finds its expression in language. Therefore, anyone learning a new language without having knowledge about its culture is deficient. In learning language, Culture plays an important role. It is pertinent then to mention that including culture in the learning process of a foreign language does not rule out the need to learn the four language skills in addition to spellings, sentence structure, word articulation, and vocabulary building. This article aims to establish the role that culture plays in the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language. In its examination, the study highlights how culture in English as a foreign language (EFL) can be taught. The study of the Documentary Research Survey examines the usefulness of culture in teaching language and verifies whether their teaching conforms to the curriculum. Data used in the analysis of this study were obtained from external sources such as documents, articles and book chapters. The study confirmed that including culture in the context of learning foreign language is important. The outcome of the culture curriculum is not yet incorporated into secondary school operational plans.

**KEYWORDS:** Language, Culture, Teaching/Learning EFL

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### INTRODUCTION

Teaching culture in the learning of foreign language aims to educate students and develop their interest in the learning of foreign language (target) and knowing the culture from which the language evolved (Cakir, 2006). Kaikkonen (2001), in addition to this, stated that the most important goal of teaching foreign languages is to help students learn beyond their mother's shell and culture. Teaching a foreign language requires one to know the culture of the country that speaks the language. This indicates that there is a need for a strong commitment towards the development of cultural understanding in a language learning environment in view of recent national and international development. Strasheim (1981) argues that if culture is successfully incorporated in foreign language learning, there will be a significant contribution to general human knowledge; linguistic ability and cultural sensitivity which can, in turn, play a vital role in the security, defense and economic well-being of the country; and how this comprehensive understanding should be a compulsory component of basic education. Hadley and Reiken (1993) held that to in order to make students sensitive to other cultures and ready to live more harmoniously in the foreign language community, cultural understanding must be promoted in several ways.

EFL students generally use their mother tongue rules and cultural conventions in learning foreign language which will create communication disruptions. However, teachers sometimes do not address the issue of culture while teaching foreign language classes. This may be a result of their lack of time, poor understanding of target culture or no training on what aspects of the culture to teach, among others. The basis of this study is on the premise that language is a behavior that is culturally learned. Therefore, it will examine how cultural values are at the heart of language teaching and learning and how teachers should constantly reflect on how their understanding of culture affects the ways they teach the language. Language, in its cultural context, creates meaning. The creation and interpretation of meaning take place in a cultural setting. In language learning classes, students should engage in how the context affects what is communicated and how it communicates.

## **UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE**

Understanding the relationship that exists between language and culture is fundamental to the learning process of a foreign language. In actual use, language is not sufficient in conveying complete meaning. The language spoken in its cultural context gives more meaning. Therefore, the creation and interpretation of language meaning take place in a cultural setting. In language learning classes, students should be taught how culture affects the context of what is communicated and how it communicates. The culture of the student and the culture in which meaning is created or communicated influence the way possible meanings are understood. This context is not a unique culture, because the foreign language and its culture as well as the student's language and culture are simultaneously present and can participate simultaneously. The art of communicating in a foreign language involves developing an understanding of how the culture interacts with language with each use (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003).

### **Understanding the Culture**

Anthropologically, culture is defined as the unique way people live (Chastain, 1988). Culture according to Trivonovitch (1977) is "... an all-inclusive system that incorporates the biological and technical behavior of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behavior from birth and this all-inclusive system." This process can be termed as "socialization" (Croft, 1980). It is a process where an individual accepts the linguistic and non-linguistic way of life of the society he lives in.

Communication is the process of applying grammatical rules in verbal and written practices. However, some teachers are sometimes barely aware of the need for cultural orientation of their students in teaching non-native language. In some cases, learning the culture of the country the language is spoken is considered to be a threat to the aboriginal values. Also, some learners of foreign languages have not had a close contact with individuals from the target country and thus do not see the need to learn the cultural aspects of the target language except they travel to the target country and experience difficulties in speaking and understanding the language. The non-verbal communication of the target culture viewed from television series speaks little or nothing about the target culture and this conveys misconception. With these conditions, the relevance of culture in language teaching is overlooked.

Learners and experts who have no knowledge of the culture of their known foreign language are confronted with problems of comprehending, interpreting, translating and producing written and verbal content. This problem is however minimized for learners with cultural knowledge of their known foreign language. In other words, a logical look at the native culture of the learner is as important as learning the culture of the foreign language. This indicates that besides the

lack of intercultural awareness of learners, paralinguistic and manner of behavior also affects the competence of the learner's verbal side of communication.

### **What is Language?**

Language is at the heart of language teaching and learning, and teachers must know what language really is as their understanding of language affects the way it is taught.

Traditionally, the language is seen as a code. It is held that language is formed from collection of words and rules that links each word together. Viewing language this way, we are limited to just the vocabulary and the rules of sentence construction in learning language. One is restricted to language as fixed and finite means of communication without exploring its complexities.

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Language and culture share dynamic relationships. Firstly, language is a vital aspect of culture. It is the main vehicle through which a culture's beliefs, values, and standards are communicated. Second, culture influences language. Language culture would not be known as language is an important promoter and of culture. Also, culture is the basis and one of the most important attributes of the language is that it has a great influence on the language. If there were no culture, the language would be like water without a fountain or a tree without roots.

In learning a foreign language, 'language transfer' refers to the effect of a language, usually the mother tongue, on learning another language (the target language). It is also a common strategy used by foreign language students. They often use the rules governing their mother tongue to learn the foreign language which results in inappropriate forms or errors in the target language. This is called a negative transfer, also called interference. Language is inextricably linked to culture. As cultural values are reflected and transmitted through language, foreign language learners unconsciously transfer their way cultural way of thinking and expression while communicating the target language. This is referred to as a cultural transfer. In fact, the difficulty most foreign language learners experience in the study of languages is not the linguistic or grammatical pattern, but the cultural differences. In the word cognition process, people always store patterns in their brains. This can be represented in comparison to a brain-immersed file system, where individual knowledge and experience are classified and stored. After receiving new information, the brain will establish a new scheme to store it or place it in an established schema of the same class. Thus, Cultural schema can be referred to as the structure of knowledge based culture. Teaching of cultural knowledge and establishing the cultural scheme will enable students to understand and better express foreign language. When necessary, students can solve the problem of cultural difference interference using cultural patterns stored in their brains. The introduction of Cultural schemata is very important in the learning process of a foreign language.

### **TEACHING CULTURE USING LANGUAGE**

In classes, while teaching EFL, we can also teach culture simultaneously. The way of greetings, guiding and other statements found in conversation or models that our students listen to and read should have a hint of the target culture. Teachers should encourage a culture in language learning by expressing it through their body movements, gestures, and intonations. The intellectual curiosity of the students is stirred and satisfied when they discover that there is another way they can express the way they feel, what they desire and needs when they read foreign country literature.

To enable students to have a deeper understanding of culture and appreciate the role of culture in language, it is necessary to show how these models work in relation to each other in the cultural system. For foreign language learners to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds on a personal level, the language learner will need to not only understand the cultural influences affecting others behavior but also to how their own cultural background influences their thoughts, understanding and language expression. Through the teaching of the target culture, intercultural communication has been developed. This is achieved by preparing an inventory that includes linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the target culture. In this way, language could cut across cognitive systems (Seelye, 1968). The culture of people refers to all the aspects of the communal life of a society. Language learned and used in the context of the target culture enables its learners to speak the language like native speakers who speak it with distinctive meanings and functions. This indicates that language is an important component of culture and it is expressed in a unique pattern and so is the behavior of individuals, languages expressed in a unique way.

Foreign language, therefore, means changing the behavior of the learner by depositing a new way of life and new life values into his existing cultural behavior (Lado, 1964). Therefore, language and culture have a close relationship that is widely recognized. Communicative behavior and cultural systems are interconnected; they influence the speakers' form and content of language, his beliefs, values, and needs present in his culture. Also, students who need to improve on their cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity are least willing to achieve these goals. Teachers have the responsibility to educate students on cultural differences without criticizing these differences. Learners of foreign languages should understand new ways of categorizing and coding foreign languages in order to speak the language as well as its native speakers. This does not imply that the students' native language is not distinct from them. Languages have the potential to be expressed in a unique way making it distinct from each other. Students should know these distinctions in foreign language classes in relation to their native language for effective non-native language communication.

### **CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

The issue regarding the intricate role of culture in language learning has raised several controversial questions such as: Is it possible to learn a language without knowing its cultural aspects? Is it possible to "teach" culture? If a teacher believes in "teaching" culture with language, what does the teacher mean by "culture"? Is teaching culture simply a means introducing certain elements of shallow culture such as customs, food or festivals, or does it mean increasing students' awareness of a deeper culture such as beliefs, values and/or the norms manifested in the behavior of people? In addition, which "cultures" should be chosen to be representative of linguistic culture? The list of questions seems endless and the dilemma at stake seems intractable.

However, it seems that people agree, at least, with one basic premise: culture is not only inextricably linked to language, but also plays a significant role in the whole teaching and learning process of foreign languages. The question is not whether to or not to teach culture, but it is on what type of teaching can promote students' understanding of the nature of language, communication, and human relationship. Tucker and Lambert argued that effective communication of foreign language depends on the degree of the student's non-ethnocentrism. For effective communication of foreign language, the student must develop "awareness and sensitivity to the values and traditions of the people whose language is being studied" (Tucker, 1973). The importance of understanding the "culture" of the foreign language to be learned is to enable the students to have a complete understanding and comprehension of the foreign language.

At this point, the answer to the questions earlier asked needs to be attended to: what does Culture mean to people? In a foreign language class, when teachers talk about the inclusion of culture into foreign language teaching, they imply the introduction of the target customs or traditions into the language. However, in the English language, the problem about which culture to introduce is found. This is because English is no longer, and in fact may never have belonged to a certain group of people.

Moorjani and Field (1988) stated that the difficulty involved in choosing a culture to be included in teaching foreign language is due to the following: These societies are heterogeneously characterized and this poses as an obstacle in teaching culture because such choice can only be made on the grounds of ideology: what culture do we teach, or rather, what culture do we defend as model? On a shallow level, one might reason that the culture with 'prestige' should be used as the cultural foundation of the foreign language studied. This, however, is an overly simplified and shallow representation of what culture is. It may be useful for teaching a foreign language but it is harmful when we are interested in culture as it reduces it to a one-dimensional cartoon ... [We must] help our students understand the fact that none of our target cultures is identical, that each one presents a constant pressure between the 'prestigious and powerful' culture and culture of 'minorities and dispossessed'. Culture can be taught effectively using a triangulation through which the American cultures can interact and reflect on both a "prestige" form of the target culture and an alternative culture within the target society (Moorjani & Field, 1988).

If so, as language teachers, we could at least make the students know their own culture. Hall said that to understand each other's culture, "you have to transcend your own culture [which] can only be done by clarifying the rules of operation"(Hall, 1976).

Another problem with language teaching from a cultural point of view is that there is a clear dichotomy between native and non-native speakers of the language. It must be decided to what extent, if any, non-native speakers have to comply with the standard of language use or communication modes of native speakers (Bentahila & Davies, 1989). It is particularly important to keep this in mind, given that English is an international language.

It is recognized that second language English speakers or foreigners have already acquired communicative competence in their first language and culture. Sometimes, this competence is perceived negatively, as it interferes with the person's competence when transferring the competence in the first language to English and also causes misunderstandings. Side discusses the comparison of languages and cultures to identify and describe the problems that second language students will face (Li, 1998). Its basic assumption is that individuals transfer forms and meanings, and this transfer is distributed between their native language and culture, and foreign language and culture. As a result, communication problems occur between people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. From this perspective, the lack of communication is minimized by maximizing compliance. To master English, one must be able to communicate in the language so that native speakers accept it as their own (Lado, 1957). This view completely excludes the validity of the cultural origin of the non-native speaker. The suppression of one's cultural identity may not seem so traumatic. However, the values of the English language in conflict with that of your own mother tongue may cause the non-speaker to compromise.

## **IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

According to Wei (2005), language has a double character: it is a means of communication and also a carrier of culture. Language cannot exist without culture; neither can human culture exist without language. A particular language is a representation of a particular culture. And according to Brown (2000), the relationship between language and culture is described as follows: "Language is part of culture and culture is part of the language; these two are closely interrelated and inseparable. The true meaning of language or culture is lost when they are separated from each other ". Summarily, language and culture are inseparable (Jiang, 2000). With regard to the teaching and learning process of foreign languages, Gao (2006) holds that there is an obvious interrelationship between language learning and cultural learning such that language learning can be termed as cultural learning. Therefore, language teaching is cultural teaching. He further states that foreign language teachers should know the place of cultural studies in foreign language classes and try to strengthen students' cultural awareness and improve their communication skills. Wang (2008), also states that "the teaching of foreign languages is a teaching of foreign culture and the teachers of foreign languages are teachers of foreign culture". Tomalin (2008) held that the role of the English language at international and global levels are major drivers for the teaching culture in language classes making it the fifth basic language skills in addition to listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Learning this fifth language skill will equip one with the mentality and technique to understand ones' use of English in communication. It will enable one to understand and appreciate the values, ways of life of other societies and the unique qualities of their culture. This fifth language skill involves understanding the contextual use language with respect to the target culture, being flexible and open-minded to a different way of doing things. Following this trend, Tomalin (2008) argued for the teaching of culture in ELT process to include cultural knowledge (knowledge of the institution of culture, the capital C), cultural values (the "psyche" of the country, and what people think term important), cultural behavior (knowledge of the daily routines and behaviors, small c) and the cultural skills (development of intercultural sensitivity and awareness, using the English language as the interaction channel).

## **CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

In understanding the relevance of culture in language teaching, the degree of the influence of the background of the culture on language learning must be known so that we can take advantage of its influence. Below, the functions of culture in the teaching and learning component of language are demonstrated in order to account for the roles that culture plays in language learning and teaching. We will examine culture and its influence on listening, speaking, reading and translating.

### **Cultural Influence on Listening**

In learning foreign languages, students spend time learning, practicing, assessing their ability to listen and comprehend all in a bid to understand the language better. Despite all of these, students often complain their progress is not still satisfactory. Thus to improve in the understanding of foreign language, some buy tape recorders to assist in their learning process. They devote several hours a day to them. However, they still find it difficult to comprehend new listening material. Many factors contribute to these some of which have been identified and understood. They include; poor vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation skills, and most importantly, the lack of necessary cultural background knowledge of the language learned which involves knowing the culture, politics, and economy of the target language country.

To determine the listening and understanding ability of foreign language learners, we are actually taking into consideration their overall ability in English, analysis, creativity, intellect, etc. For instance, when we are listening to

something that involves an event we are familiar with (news, reports, stories, conferences, art, science, sport or the economy), we would understand it easily. In the event of the introduction of new words, the listener will guess its meaning in light of the context it is used in. This, however, would not be the case if we do not have the knowledge of the cultural background of the foreign language to be learned. Sometimes the material used can be easy and we can get the pronunciation of each word on the tape correctly, but in the introduction of a new word, we would find it difficult to understand the word in the context it is being used because we lack the necessary cultural knowledge to deepen our understanding.

### **Cultural Influence on Speech**

Like listening, speaking is not just a matter of pronunciation or intonation. People need to read a lot to understand the cultural knowledge of the target language. In this way, they can communicate successfully with others. Therefore, in oral English training, teachers should emphasize the practical use of language and try to use the material of everyday life. This can help people use appropriate sentences in appropriate contexts. Otherwise, even if one had been well trained in the linguistic aspect of the language, one can make mistakes or have misunderstandings due to the cultural knowledge gap. The following experience of a young interpreter further demonstrates the above statement:

There was a young interpreter whose pronunciation was standardized and natural. The first time he was appointed to accompany a foreign guest, he went out of his way to show that he was enthusiastic, kind, considerate and competent. He tried to be as attentive as possible by saying:

“You come here.” “You are sitting here.” “Don’t go too fast.” “Follow me.” “Do not be late.” But the next day, he was surprised to learn that the stranger did not want to go with him because the stranger thought he was not polite. For the foreigner, the interpreter did not help him but instead rebuked him as if he were reprimanding a child. The interpreter has had no problems with English, but his lack of cultural knowledge makes him incompetent for the job.

The story is simple, but it says something important. During oral communication, stakeholders should pay close attention to the context, that is, what you say, who you say, when and where you say it, etc.

### **Cultural Influence on Reading**

Reading does not only involve the repetition and recurrence of the language words that the students already have. It is also the complex process stimulated by external information that prompts the cognitive system to decode, recognize, analyze, judge and infers the material (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Therefore, non-verbal information is essential in the language learning process. These include information on humanism, history, geography, and traditional local customs, etc. Reading can be affected by the reader's language skills, but culture influences the reading process more. Most notable, reading barriers is not necessarily because of not knowing the language; rather it is primarily because of the interference of the mother tongue of the speaker with the target language (cultural differences). Cultural differences exist in basic information, words, sentences, and text structures, all of which will become possible barriers to reading. Sometimes students can recognize and understand the meaning of each word in the text, but still do not understand clearly the meaning of the entire sentences or paragraphs. This indicates that the knowledge of the language itself is not sufficient in understanding what is being read. Therefore, attention must be given to the influence of culture in reading as the words of people are always linked to their countries culture.

### **Cultural Influence in Translation**

It is widely accepted that translation is strongly influenced by culture. When translating, we need to have sufficient knowledge of the target language and the source language. The difficulty of translation lies mainly in the understanding of cultural knowledge. Knowledge of cultural backgrounds includes many aspects, such as art, history, geography, philosophy, science, etc. Making students aware of the important features of the target culture helps them realize that there are no superior and inferior things and that there are also differences between people from different cultures (Wang, 2008). Kramersch, (1993) argues that foreign culture and its own culture must be placed side by side for students to understand a foreign culture. Students' interaction with native speakers or texts will force them to build their own meaning instead of having educators who simply transfer information about people and their culture. In addition, non-native speakers should have the opportunity to have their own meaning and reflect on their own and objective culture. He refers to this as the establishment of a sphere of "interculturality". In addition, what educators should always keep in mind when teaching culture is the need to educate their students about their own culture (Straub, 1999) and the "target culture" (Wei, 2005) to cultivate a degree of essential intellectual objectivity in intercultural analyzes. Teachers and program designers according to Coleman (1996), Holliday (1994), and McKay (2002) are required to take into account the socio-cultural context of students in choosing materials and teaching approaches for particular teaching contexts because they ignore the standards and expectations of the students: what the students bring to the classroom. It denies the students' experiences of other culture (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005). In addition, Li (1998) and McKay (2002) held that the lack of consideration of variations in learning cultures can lead to frustration and subsequent failure in language classes. Cohen (1996), Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), and Intachakra (2004), in their study, indicated that the mastery of a language requires the mastery of the cultural contexts in which important social events occur, because it conveys warm and united feelings between the interlocutors. This is the "social" use of language (Kumar, 2001). Students should understand what native speakers mean when they use their language, even if they do not choose to reproduce the behavior of native speakers (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000).

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF CULTURE**

Given the dynamic nature of culture, Lessard-Clouston (1997) formulated certain guidelines. In the guideline, he considers the importance of developing knowledge of the target culture, as well as the skills necessary to master communication and behavior in the target culture. It states that cultural awareness is necessary to develop the student's understanding of the dynamic nature of the objective and their own culture. From a methodological point of view, teachers should adopt a systematic and structured approach because students benefit more when the lessons and cultural aspects of language teaching are well planned and developed. The evaluation of the learning culture is part of the learning process and provides important feedback for both students and teachers. Teachers should help students express and respond to their cultural learning experiences. Students go through the stages of the learning cycle developing skills, developing cultural behaviors and discovering cultural explanations. The teacher's role in the learning cycle is crucial because it can, to a large extent, influence the student's attitude towards learning culture. Teachers must establish good working relationships with students, creating an atmosphere of reciprocity and respect (Ellis, 2003). Teachers must be versatile. They must be able to fulfill many roles: present cultural information, frame and model cultural behaviors, guide and conduct cultural research and analysis (Moran & Lu, 2001). They must also listen and sympathize with the students. Teachers should share their own cultural experiences with students to help them enter another culture. It is obvious that teachers play a central role in the

development of their students' cultural awareness. Students are complemented with basic materials to integrate cultural objectives into the learning process. They must be aware that each child is individual and has their own cultural identity. Teachers should encourage active reflection and cultural comparison, and develop a metacognitive awareness that includes cultural awareness (Ellis, 2003).

### **CULTURE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: IMPLICATIONS**

Language is a main component of culture with values, beliefs, and standards, as well as customs. It is a product of the culture that is transferred from one generation to another generation through socialization (Blanc, 1989). Language is considered to be the main tool used by an individual to internalize culture and the main vehicle for cultural transmission (Seelye, 1984).

Language teachers have stressed the point that language learning certainly involves the students being taught the languages culture, because "language does not exist outside a cultural context" (Perkins, 1988). There is certainly a place in present-day language courses that introduces students to the culture of the foreign language taught for proper study and understanding.

In the foreign language context, one will require the knowledge of both the language and the target culture to speak and think the native speaker of that language would (Lafayette, 1975). However, there seems to be a lack of studies that focus on the role that culture plays in learning a foreign language in study settings abroad. Most research in foreign language contexts has been limited to the study of extinct language (Bialystok, 1986; Johnson, 1986), developing language skills (Gardner, 1980) or attitudes towards culture (Gardner, 1985). No study on the expectations of students has been carried out - the linguistic process itself and its subsequent opinions after the training. Nostrand (1988) stated that research on the second foreign language has overlooked important elements of culture and language learning, and therefore requests that the research discover to what extent cultural problems can affect students' motivation to learn a second foreign language.

To account for the importance and influence of cultural aspects in language learning, Schumann built a model called acculturation. The acculturation model involves the consortium of social variable and emotional variables which, according to Schumann (1986), take into account the students' social and psychological integration in the light of the target language country. Ellis (1989) defines acculturation as the process of adaptation to a new culture. This adaptation process requires an understanding of the thinking, beliefs and emotional systems of the target culture.

Among the social variables, Schumann underlines the link between the student group and the target language group. Among the affective variables, he attributes importance to the student's affective reaction to the language and culture of the target linguistic group (Stern, Tarone, Stern, Yule & Stern, 1983). While social variables are linked to a group phenomenon, affective variables are associated with individuals. According to the acculturation model, foreign language students must acclimatize to learn a language (Elis, 1989). Schumann assumes that "the degree to which students acclimate themselves in the target language group will control the degree to which they acquire the second language.

Other aspects of Schumann's acculturation model are the implications for learning a second foreign language. Allwright and Bailey (1991) argue that the receptivity or defensive attitude of students of a second foreign language to the target language and the target language group may be strongly affected by the characteristics that students bring with them due to their cultural background (social variables of Schumann), and for its psychological characteristics (Schumann affective variables).

Cultural (social) and emotional (personal) variables are important for language learning. Goodman (1988) held that learning a language is both a social convention and a personal invention. According to him, we humans invent a language to communicate with each other (social construction of language), but since language is "made up of people, it is also a personal invention. In his words, Goodman (1988):

“Generally, language is created by human beings with the aim of giving expression and meaning to the happening in the world. However, human beings create this language from the context of social background and environment. Individual makes use of symbols, grammar to explain and represent their social environment. This language is referred to as social language; individuals use this social language to comfortably represent the society in which they operate”.

In a second language, for example, students are constantly exposed to L2, and the optimal conditions for learning the language and culture seem to exist (Spolsky, 1989). However, if for social or emotional reasons, the student refuses and does not adapt to the foreign culture, the opportunities for linguistic and cultural entry, exit and interaction will be greatly reduced. This, in turn, will hinder the second language process.

Language is one of the "most observable expressions of culture" (Ellis, 1989). In naturalistic second language contexts (for example, in a context of study abroad), the ways in which second language students adopt the target culture are crucial to their language learning. In other words, if students acculturate, they will learn; if students do not acculturate, they will not learn (Gass, 2013).

Schumann's acculturation model explains why second language students often fail to acquire a native-type skill. Therefore, they can be cut off from the necessary intake due to social or emotional (psychological) distance. Social and emotional distance affects the number of contacts students can have with the target language.

Some researchers like Hoeh and Spuck (1975) and Klink (1980) advised in their study that culture inclusion in language will be best learned when the students learn first the culture from which the language originates. These researchers recognized that immersion programs abroad are the best experience that second language students can have if they want to be acculturated and competent in second language communication. Klink (1980) noted in his research in learning a second language that students learn best in contact with the target language and culture. And that classroom experiences alone cannot satisfy this need”. Teachers must use the study programs abroad in teaching so that L2 students can have the opportunity to be in touch with the target language and culture.

In fact, it seems that the quality of language is not only linked to the role that culture plays in its development over time, but that culture and, in particular, the cultural identity of the culture can also be deduced. It is obviously different from culture, as cultural identity requires that students are sensitized about the relationship existing between language and culture and the way they explicitly and implicitly affect each other.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the study above, it can be concluded that culture and language share a strong relationship which makes them dependent on each other as the two cannot be separated without losing the meaning of one or the other. If one of them is separated, the other remains incomplete. In EFL classrooms, students must learn English with the elements associated with culture so that they can acquire the target language with a cultural background that reflects their real situations. It has been observed that many students, who sometimes have excellent academic performance in the English subject, have difficulty communicating with native speakers or in real situations. This could be the result of learning English without a good

knowledge of their culture. Therefore, the role that culture plays in the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language cannot be overemphasized especially in the development of the learner's syllable. The developers of materials and the syllables used for the EFL program can also inform students, as well as teachers, about the role of culture in language learning. This can be done by proposing for the provision of applicable and appropriate cultural issues that will suggest the need for a culture teaching in the language class.

Teachers must take into account the importance of culture and must have prior knowledge of cultural knowledge related to the learning situation with which they will teach students.

Finally, efforts should be geared towards the organization of teacher training workshops that are aimed at improving their knowledge and understanding of sociology, intercultural psychology, anthropology, and semiology. The workshop should also address how in practice this knowledge can be applied for a better understanding of the significant role culture plays in the language learning process.

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