

Cultural Content in Language Coursebooks

Al-Hussein S. Mohsen ¹

1. Introduction

There are five areas or goals for learning a foreign language; i.e. Communities, Connections, Communication, Comparisons, and Cultures or what could be called the 5 C's of foreign language education. The learner of a foreign language usually aims at achieving at least one of these C's, s/he may sometimes aim at achieving two (National Standards; nd).

These 5 C's were a fruit of a meeting of the teachers of foreign languages in the United States of America in 1993. In the meeting, some standards for teaching a foreign language were developed by an American coalition of four national language organizations; viz. the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the American Association of Teachers of French, the American Association of Teachers of German, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, in order to be as a gauge for the acquisition of a foreign language. These standards are known as the Standards for Foreign Language Learning. They are formulated to determine the requirements and gauges of the acquisition of a language, as well as they describe "what students should know and be able to do" (Ibid). The five C's are related to each other. They cannot be separated from each other.

These standards are not guidelines for the curriculum; rather they provide a gauge of what to be achieved by the student. At the end of each stage, from the elementary school through secondary and later on the university level, the student must be able to do something with the language.

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience, it is essential for a language student to master the language s/he studies in both forms; oral and written. Of course, teaching a language at school level aims at making the students able to use that language in the different forms such as, speaking, reading and comprehending different

¹ Faculty of Arts, Department of English Language ,Al-Asmarya Islamic University, Zliten, Libya .

types of texts. They must also be able to use the language creatively; i.e. they can report their needs and describe the world around. Of course, they need to master the language in order that they can use the academic references and compose creative works in different fields of literature, science and technology.

We aim at teaching a foreign language, English in focus, to make students able to communicate in different ways on different occasions. The second aim is to make students gain knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use the language such as British, American, Indian, Australian, etc. Students, in fact, "cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs" (Ibid).

Besides, learning a foreign language in general and English in particular provides *connections* to additional bodies of knowledge that may be unavailable to the students in their own language. Students can also make comparisons between what they studied in their own language and that they have already studied in the foreign language. They can develop insights in the different issues, in the language, culture, and the world. "Together, these elements enable the students of languages to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways" (Ibid).

Learning a language does not mean merely memorizing vocabulary or the grammatical rules that govern the structures, but it means to know how language works. It also means to know linguistically and socially how to use the language at one occasion and to decide what exactly to say to different people at different times. This could be summarized as knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom. This can make a good human communication. When students learn a foreign language; e.g. English, they have to be able to communicate with others in this language.

Students can be engaged in conversations on different occasions, provide and obtain information, express their human feeling and their viewpoints and exchange opinions. They have to be able to understand and interpret different forms; written or spoken, of language on a variety of topics. They "present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics" (Ibid).

1. Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Students show their good understanding of the relationship between the practices and products on one hand, and perspectives, on the other, of the culture they study.

2. Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Through the foreign language the students study, they have to enforce and further knowledge of other disciplines. They can acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that can be attained through the foreign language.

3. Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language and of the concept of culture through comparisons of the language and culture studied and their own.

4. Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

Students can use the language both within and beyond their school communities. They can show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for their own enjoyment and enrichment.

5. Communication

Teaching/Learning a language does not mean only to teach the grammatical rules and to produce similar compositions. Some students may try to translate the sentences they learn into their native tongue, others may not. Instead of this, it is essential that students learn the language in a way that enables them expand their knowledge in different disciplines; e.g., Mathematics, Chemistry, Geography, Computer, Psychology, etc. It can support their knowledge even outside school subjects. "Students can relate the information studied in other subjects to their learning of the foreign language and culture"(Ibid).

For this reason, what the students have in their course-books in the preparatory school should be added to their treasure and to be wide-knowledgeable. They get information relating different topics in the world. They may have studied the same pieces of information in other subjects, but here the material represents an instructional tool for teaching language through culture and entertainment.

2.Culture Teaching in Language Teaching

Teaching culture, today, is a main part in language teaching, they cannot be got separable. For that, language cannot be taught in different patterns that give no interest to students, the material must be attractive, useful, and add some benefit to the learners. Culture occupies a vital role in language teaching (Xiao-yan, p. 50).

In one meaning, teaching culture means to teach something about the British or American culture such as the political system, the arts, the music, etc., as a part of a language course that could be presented in the last few minutes of the class or at the end of the course. But there is one question; what topics of culture could be taught? That differs according to the different conditions of the learners.

A simple example for teaching in class is greetings (Hello, Hi, etc.) that usually come first. Differences manifested in the way of greeting are not universal, they are actually cultural features of a certain society. Some societies shake hands or respond in any other form. Some sentences like *On Friday, we go to the mosque.* reflect some cultural values. It conveys some cultural message. *Going to mosque* indicates a regular religious behaviour of Muslims. The point here is that the lesson in which this sentence occurs means to introduce a grammatical or syntactical structure, but the content is cultural. One more thing is that it negatively reflects that *going to mosque* takes place only on Fridays while it is a daily routine for a Muslim individual. In fact, words cannot be taught or used in an isolated form. Grammatical constructions are also not taught without involving some cultural background. Culture could be there through different manifestations of greetings, ways of talking, passing free time activities, cities and countries, etc.

As teaching a language is a very sensitive matter, it cannot be through a very rigid method that presents language only through grammatical rules and some exercises that come later to test how much the learner gets. For an effective teaching of language, it could be presented in the form of materials that can act as a source of enjoyment, pleasantness and knowledge for both the learner and the teacher. In this way, different topics can be emerged together for one purpose; i.e. teaching/learning through enjoyment and knowledge. The material to be manipulated could be from different sources; Arabic, English, or international or local and foreign. The material meant here represents a cultural content of the course-books of language. Local sources means those that belong to the homeland of the learner, on the other hand, a foreign language means that belongs to a place other than the homeland.

Amare(Girma, p. 2) stresses that the local culture must be the major content of curriculum, it is advocated because it supports incorporate the students' native culture. Sometimes, we teach culture of other nations, because we aim to promote the culture of different nations and peoples. It makes students conscious of other nations and cultures. Teaching cultures

of different nations develops "these cultures in harmony with modern education, science and technology"(Ibid, p. 2.).There is one point to mention. For a teacher of language, it is not enough to know the language they teach, but they have to be knowledgeable of the culture of that language, and the different matters of everyday life; i.e. how to shake hands, how to congratulate, how to ask for something, etc.

3. Importance of Teaching Culture in Language Course

Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (Abdullah, 1990, p. 9) maintains that the inclusion of a cultural component in language teaching can improve international understanding, enhance appreciation of one's own culture, facilitate learners' visits to foreign countries and contacts with their people, and motivate learners (Ibid, p. 9).

In teaching foreign languages, culture is there in the course-books and the classroom. Adaskou and his colleagues (Girma; 2008, pp. 6-7.) discuss that besides literature in advanced stages of teaching a foreign language, the different dimensions of culture can be taught in the material. It could show the aesthetic sense of culture in which a language is associated with culture, include information about sociological concepts such things as family life, education and holidays, the semantic and the pragmatic senses of culture,etc.

To learn culture in a foreign language course, the learner has to have attitudes of curiosity, openness, and willingness to suspend disbelief, and value judgments with regard to other peoplebeliefs and behaviours. This is right for advanced learners who study a high level cultural material, such as poetry, novels, etc. But school students as learners of English have to be keen on and interested in learning new cultures which necessitates that the material as well as different pieces of information presented to be attractive and interesting.

It is necessary for students to perceive and identify the cultural differences with the identification of the different, exciting, attractive, etc. elements of a given culture. This perception comes through comparison, confrontation, and contrast works. It is very amazing to know about different topics from all around the world. Through perceiving the culture of the other, it is possible to understand their behaviors according to the norms of their culture. This leads to a positive result for peoples to live together peacefully and friendly.

4. Goals of Introducing Culture in Course-Books

A language student should have some knowledge of the culture of the language they study, that helps them acquiring the language more

effectively either in vocabulary or in syntactical structures. In this sense, culture means literature in its different forms, but it can be extended to cover different areas of life and general knowledge of the world either whose first or second language is English or that in which English is a foreign language. McKay (Celce-Murcia; 2001, p. 329) states that "the ultimate goal of learning is not to convey information about culture not to promote the acquisition of culturally influenced ways of behaving, but rather to help learners see their culture in relation to others so as to promote cultural understanding." In the light of this statement, learning is not only a matter of knowing some pieces of information about the culture under study, rather to make the students able to compare their culture to other cultures, and to judge for the others. It is helpful for better understanding.

5. Aims of Teaching Culture (or Cultural Topics)

At the end of language courses, students are expected to be able to

1. know the main meanings generally associated with keywords or the cultural topics. As they are exposed to different cultural topics, students are expected to have knowledge of the main cultural features in the topics; for instance, the name of the place or cultural behaviour, the age or the time when this behaviour or this cultural topic occurred, etc.
2. know about the different cultural topics of the course and expand the cultural competence of the world around. Students have to have link the topics they have studied during the year. They have to be more competent with such topics.
3. be familiar with the different elements of the different cultures of the world.
4. enhance their knowledge of the different subjects such as geography, history, science, etc., they study in Arabic.
5. acquire some habits of people whom they study about.
6. be organized.

6. When to Teach Culture

According to Brooks (Brooks; 1964, p 84), language and culture are two faces of one coin, that they are both taught by the old and learned by the young. It could be said that it is not possible to talk about one without talking about the other. Culture should be taught along with language. Without culture, there is no language; language and culture are reciprocal. There is an argument that "culture should be taught when we have students to teach"(M. Fleet;p. 5.); i.e. when there are a classroom, a teacher, and students, then culture is taught. They are both obtained together in the same

society through living continuously for the first two decades of the one's life. Culture, as a practice cannot be taught without seeing the old generation practice that culture. It is the accumulation through history. People can obtain any language or culture through living in those languages and culture's society even without being originally members of those societies.

7. Benefits from Teaching Culture

Teaching a language is important for different parts, for both the individuals and society. Without a language, there is no mental activity as a language is the tool used to express thoughts, ideas, beliefs, etc. Teaching culture enables students know each other more and more and then more understanding and less confrontation take place.

Teaching culture has many benefits that may not be achieved through other ways of teaching and learning (Ibid, p. 9):

- i. **More Authentic Language Learning:** Teaching cultural material in different forms supply the learners; i.e. the students with real situations of using the language in everyday life. It allows them to feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign peoples and not just hear their language (Ibid, P. 9). They can learn about literature, science, geography, history, economy, and general life of people.
- ii. **Motivates Students to Learn Languages:** Teaching about the target culture of the language and other cultures when teaching the target language piques the interest of students and acts as a motivator (Ibid, P. 9). It gives them a good motivation to grasp the language and the other related materials. It may be felt more lively than providing merely some patterns and models of fabricated stories and essays written for the sake of teaching language.
- iii. **To Dispel Myths:** "Culture teaching also helps to dispel myths or debunk stereotypes associated with the target culture peoples"(Ibid, P. 9). Teaching culture gives an actual image of the people/s who speak the target language. It teaches the students real facts about the life of the society where the target language is spoken.
- iv. **Language and Culture are Interconnected:** The relevance of teaching culture with language is based on the belief that language and culture are interconnected. The predominant view is that culture cannot be taught without language and similarly, that language cannot be taught without culture. It is seen that without

the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete.

8. Comparisons of Cultures

Through learning and studying a foreign language, students can expand their knowledge of other cultures, they may face some similar aspects and others are different. They recognize different systems of life and different methods of expressing feelings and needs through the study of learning a foreign language. Students can make comparisons of their own culture and other cultures. In addition, they demonstrate their understanding of other cultures through the comparisons they make. Moreover, they expand their knowledge of the surrounding world through recognition of the language and its culture.

- i. The language acquired by students has to enable the students use it in a way that they can entertain themselves through reading, listening to radio, watching TV or movies. The students can also access information as they continue to learn along their lives. They can share their knowledge with others. They can use their own skills to entertain themselves.
- ii. Students read the material in English, listen to the teacher in the classroom and watch or listen to the accompanying CD. After the lesson, the students try to reproduce the material they have read or listened in their own way. They have to keep the main elements in their own way. They have to notice the main points in the material under study.

For communities; the standards targeted are that students be able to communicate with each other; i.e. interpersonal communication, and to present any material. They also have to be able to express their own cultures in the language they acquire.

9. Dangers and Problems

Teaching about a foreign culture, the culture of the foreign language under study, may pose some problems and dangers:

- i. One danger in teaching culture is that language teachers may attempt to teach culture when they do not have the knowledge or expertise to do so. Such attempts may do more harm than good. If the target culture is presented in such a way that false impression arises, the alternative of no culture is preferable.
- ii. The second danger is the amount of work done in the mother tongue in many classes in which the teacher stresses culture; i.e. when teaching a foreign language; the teacher should avoid using the

mother tongue of the students in the class. While few foreign language teachers would currently recommend banning mother tongue use, work done in the mother tongue does not lead to foreign language communication skills. The linguistic level of activities may affect the ongoing of this situation, as well.

- iii. The third danger is that "the culture content selected for the class may concentrate on the unusual, the bizarre and esoteric to the exclusion of the basic characteristics of the culture. Culture activities should not be turned into some sort of circus freak show" (Firat;np).
- iv. The teacher may contribute to such a situation by concentrating on the differences between the cultures rather than on the total picture of any given culture segment. In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, the teacher should describe all aspects of the situation.

After the dangers in teaching culture, the problems in teaching it come.

The first problem is how to provide culture information. Many teachers, through no fault of their own, are simply not equipped to teach culture. If the goals, definitions, organisation and techniques are provided, the teacher can incorporate teaching/learning activities for cultural objectives.

But this can be realised only if the answer to the question '*What to teach?*' can be found. Even those teachers who have visited or studied abroad may have overlooked many basic customs among the people. So, without previous preparation and direction in planning what to look for, the visitor may gain relatively few insights into the foreign culture during a stay in the foreign language or target language community. Guidelines need to be provided and observation must be done in order to shape what to teach.

Language teachers need assistance in overcoming their lack of knowledge about the target culture. **Firstly**, in cultural studies they need help from experts who can identify them basic characteristics of the target culture. This can be presented in undergraduate and in-service programmes. **Secondly**, they need help from the commercial publishers who can produce materials containing much of the information they need to know. **Thirdly**, they may need from colleges and university members for further training programmes in order to overcome their lack of expertise in culture.

- i. The second major problem is how to devise ways of presenting culture in such a manner that the students can comprehend and

relate to the information. Culture content must be presented at a level and in a manner to which the students can attach some relationship between the information and their own background experiences. This is not something easy. In order to realize this, the advantage of visualization and dramatization is necessary.

- ii. The third problem is that of finding time in the class period to include culture. The first point regarding this problem is that many of the described techniques take relatively little class time. The second point is that even if they do take more time than the teacher may desire, the ends justify the means in this case. So, more time can be spent on culture without weakening the students' language skills, because culture will help them to use combine their language skills with communicative skills in order to have a complete mastery of communication.

Besides, while trying to make learners aware of the target culture, because of ethno-linguistic identity theory, learners may be completely against the target language culture. They may reject all foreign customs and way of life. If the learners are exposed to foreign culture though they are against it, culture shock may be in the agenda. The learner suffers from culture shock. This situation affects both his personal life and linguistic success.

10. How to Deal with Problems

Many teachers focus heavily on teaching grammar instead of teaching vocabulary and the content of the language. They believe that students have to master the grammatical rules in a way that that enables them produce different models of expressions.

English textbooks should include interesting materials that attract the students' attention on the content rather than grammatical structures, the materials should belong to real life. Teachers should help their students to notice that learning a language is not just learning its grammatical rules, vocabulary items and so on, but to learn how language is practiced daily.

11. Content

One main term in this study is the *content* of a school or academic course that means the material prepared for study which may be used to support the aims of the policy of the teaching. Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 303.) defines *content* as "the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes." In general, all the materials used and needed for the purpose of teaching a language could represent a kind of content. It helps the learner to study the language in focus, it could be used for teaching

vocabulary, culture, literature, phonetics, etc. There are many factors that affect the selection of the content. They differ according to the national policy of the state, the age of learners, the purpose of teaching language; a foreign or second language; the method or approach used for teaching (Ibid, p. 303).

Historically, the term *content* has many definitions according to the teaching method described, e.g. in grammar-translation, "*content* was defined as the grammatical structures of the target language." But, in the audio-lingual method, it "consisted of grammatical structures, vocabulary, or sound patterns presented in dialogue form." Communicative approaches define the term *content* as "*the communicative purposes for which speakers use the second/foreign language*" (Ibid, p. 303). For a class following a notional/functional orientation, the *content* might cover different topics such as invitations or in individual lessons on questions form, polite vs. informal invitation forms, and how to accept or decline an invitation. In the same way, the content of a Natural Approach lesson might be a game, in which students play roles of different characters along with descriptions that match the characters, must locate the person who matches a certain description by asking each other questions, thereby using language for problem solving." (Ibid, p. 303.) Currently, another definition of content is as "the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes" (Ibid, p. 303.)

The content of the teaching material may vary in subject matter due to many factors, for instance; the student interest, or the need of an EFL adult. It could vary according to the subjects the student is currently studying in their school. In general, the content changes according to different factors including the type of learners; their age, sex, the method of teaching used, the cultural background, etc. (Ibid, p. 303).

12. Importance of Using Cultural Content

It is well known that knowing a language is not only the knowledge of grammatical rules, vocabulary items and pronunciation of these items. It goes beyond that. Successful language learning and performance requires language users to know that culture underlying language in order to get the meaning across. Culture effects changes in individual perception and is vital for expanding an individual's perspective of the world.

According to Stuart and Nocon (1996), learning about the lived culture of actual target language speakers as well as about one's own culture requires tools that assist language learners in negotiating meaning and understanding the communicative and cultural texts in which linguistic

codes are used" (p. 432). Shanahan (1997, p. 168) states that cultural content provides exposure to living language that a foreign language student lacks. So, culture is not something consisting of facts to be learnt, but a helpful tool to make learners feel the need to speak and use the target language.

Knowing about the outer world can contribute in developing the students personality as they become more knowledgeable of how people in other parts of the world react against different subjects and issues.

13. Importance of Cultural Content in the Course-books of English as a Foreign Language

Presentation of culture in the course-books of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses is a good component in teaching language, for that the material would be useful and vital for the learners or the students; it provides them with a real context of language. Besides, they find it a good source of knowledge; they would wish to acquire the cultural knowledge "which enables them to engage authentically with the language use of a particular native-speaking community"(Middle East Technical University, np.).

Cultural material included in course-books must be a variety of different topics not only from the native society of the language, but it may also contain topics on culture from different parts of the world. "The target culture does not need to be English or British culture and should include a variety of cultures."The material presented must consider the factors concerning the students in focus; their age, their cultural background, what they have studied in earlier stages in the different courses. This could help the students just to recognize the new vocabulary (Ibid, np.).

As teaching/learning a language is and could be not an aim for itself, but it serves other purposes. Consider, that a country is planning to develop the society in all fields of life, it needs to introduce different technologies, and to seek for foreign technical aids which without a foreign language, English in our case, the whole project is going to fail.

14. Cultural Material in the Course-Book

McKay (McKay; 2000, p. 27) identifies three types of cultural materials: target culture materials, learners' own culture materials and international target culture materials. For her, the best one is international target language materials, which supposedly covers a variety of knowledge from different cultures all over the world using the target language (Ibid, pp. 9-10). That will most probably increase the learners' interest rather than imposing only one culture all the time and prevent learners from having the

fear of assimilation into a specific culture, and help them respect other people's cultures.

15. Types of Content

A course book is very important for teaching language, the material that a course-book should contain must be cultural in order to represent the culture of the language native speakers. The content of a course-book is essential for students to master the language in order to be able to speak and write in that language. For the learners, it is a must to master the material to be able to pass the exams. The cultural materials or contents represent a core material that constitutes the main part in teaching language.

15.1 Content-Based Instruction

Language can be taught/learned better when it is presented in a form of texts that represent a good input to the learner. This is true even for the native language or any other language for the learner. Children receive language in a form of content not in any other form such as grammar. The researcher considers that it is wrong to believe that a second/foreign language is learned if it is instructed as grammar only. Teaching content can provide the learner with a good material that contributes in building their character and shape their mentality.

Krashen(Celce-Murcia, 2001.p. 304) discusses that "in content-based instruction, the focus is on the subject matter and not on the form or on what is being said rather than how". In this way, students can be pushed to share their knowledge of language through producing some sentences rather than being kept silent in the classroom. Providing a content can create students/learner who can acquire language in a correct way and be able to use the second/foreign language productively; i.e. to produce a message that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately (Ibid. p. 304).

Models of content-based instruction can be classified according to several means. Some models are used in the foreign language teaching, while others are used in the second language. Some other models are used for language teaching at the elementary school level, and others for the secondary level (Ibid; p. 305.) Content-based instruction is widely used for teaching language to specific group of students in one field such as electrical professionals, nurses, etc.

15.2 Content-Enriched Foreign Language Teaching

Courses which provide a content that is enriched with materials covering different topics other than grammar can be a good approach to teach a foreign/second language along with other elements necessary for teaching a foreign language such as teaching aids, language laboratory,

etc.

Then students are expected to communicate in other topics in the classroom. In this content-enriched type, courses must be practical and cover things that are in touch with the students'/learners' needs. The contents could vary to cover history, geography, science, technology, sports, media, etc. There should not be much focusing on grammar, it would be rather more useful to focus on content through which the students or learners can manipulate their language and enrich their vocabulary, yet they broaden their knowledge of the surrounding world. They have to know about the life they share with others.

15.3 Theme-Based Model

In this model, some topics or themes are selected to "provide the content from which teachers extract language learning activities" (Ibid, p. 306). This model has been widely used for special education students and second language learners in the United States. It has also been implemented in language institutes at the college or university level. This model is used in situation where students come from different language backgrounds or interests but with the same goal; i.e. to attend college or university in an English-speaking country (Ibid, p. 307).

Authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation, provide authentic cultural information and provide exposure to real language, they relate more closely to learners' needs. On the other hand; the material must not be too much culture bias. In these texts, it is advised to use authentic materials for the learners to listen, for the gist of the information presented. Students will have a chance for pleasure. Using cultural content in classroom is for the supposition that it will foster learner motivation. It also helps students to interact with the native people of the language and with other people using the same target language.

16. The Reason for the Use of Cultural Content in Course-Books

Culture is sometimes defined as the customs, values, laws, technology, artifacts and art of a particular time or people. Culture in English language teaching materials has been subject to discussion for many years. The reason for the use of cultural content in classroom is for the supposition that it will foster learner motivation (McKay, 2000, p.7). Cultural content is used in order to motivate students to learn about the language they study and about the people who speak it.

The reason for the use of cultural content in classroom is that it will foster learners' motivation (McKay, 2000, p. 7). She, like many other experts, believes that there should be a variety of culture in the materials

and not only an overload of western culture in ELT classrooms. Besides, learning about a culture does not mean accepting that culture. If the role of the culture in the materials is just to create learner interest towards contents and thus towards language, that is highly desirable. But overuse of cultural material in the language classrooms will constitute problems not for students but also for the teachers and decrease the motivation.

The researcher believes that cultural content is a key to effective teaching and learning a language provided that problems arising from introducing culture into EFL classroom are dealt with effectively and teaching strategies and learning materials are chosen appropriately.

17. Types of Cultural Materials

Concerning the cultural content of the cultural material in language course-books, McKay(Kilickaya; nd.) identifies three types of cultural materials; target culture materials, learner's own culture materials and international target culture materials. Some topics that can be presented within the course syllabus are mentioned below(Çakir;2006,p. 159.).

- i. History, geography, climate, transportation
- ii. Political systems
- iii. Different ethnical and social groups
- iv. Daily life and routines, living conditions
- v. Youth culture, clothing, sport, holidays, money
- vi. Social life, family life, meeting people
- vii. Education, professional life,
- viii. Traditions, folklore, tourism, ...

Rivers (Rivers; 1981, pp. 315-316.) discusses the relation between language and culture, and he defines culture as "that training which tends to develop the higher faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and the intellectual comprehension." He sees that language is taught and used in the context of its culture. He (Ibid, p. 323.) sees that there are some goals for teaching culture such as understanding the interrelations in the native society. Students have to be informed about the native society of the language they learn.

Using cultural content in classroom is for the supposition that it will foster learner motivation. It also helps students to interact with the native people of the language and with other people using the same target language.

The content of language course-books in elementary and preparatory school must be of a wide range of topics that contribute enlarge and broaden their knowledge of the world. Therefore, subjects must belong to

different topics such as literature, arts, history, geography, technology, space, science fiction, etc.

18. Sources of Cultural Information and Cultural Content

Techniques for Cultural Content

The cultural material can be chosen from many sources as follows

Newspapers,

Video,

Talks/discussions,

Role play/dramatizations, and

Culture quizzes/tests.

Topics and materials included as cultural material could be varied and selected from different sources. In this age, there is a wide range of material to be chosen from the world in all fields. On the Internet and with the help of the different means of technology, people can have easy and quick access to many sources of materials which could be in the form of texts, pictures, charts, tables, etc.

Teachers can use practical techniques and a wide range of sources for teaching culture in the EFL classroom. Playing roles can have a great effect on teaching culture and language.

19. Selecting the Content

Students in classroom can be a good source of culture, they can talk, discuss, or share knowledge about the world. They may have conversations, express feelings and emotions, exchange opinions and experiments. In addition, they share the cultural content in the classroom, and present information and concepts. They also learn how to read different types of texts, analyze, and understand them. After that, students have to be able to present the information they obtain and can express them in different forms. It is necessary for the students as learners English as a foreign language reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines through their English.

20. Authenticity of Cultural Material

Authentic material could be defined as the "exposure to real language and its use in its own community" (Kilickay;2004). The material must be objectives, meets the learner's needs and be from the real life. Authentic texts are materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real text; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language and not for teaching purposes.

The material presented in the classroom and/or in the course-book must be authentic; i.e. it is originally produced for native speakers in

magazines, journals, newspapers, etc. The material must be produced by native members of the language; designed not for language students. Kilickaya (Kilickaya, nd.) argues that the cultural material presented in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom should be authentic and not presented intentionally for textbooks; i.e. they should be real magazines articles and reports, cooking recipes, real advertisements, etc.

Authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation, provide authentic cultural information and provide exposure to real language, they relate more closely to learners' needs. On the other hand; the materials must not be too much culture bias. In these texts, it is advised to use authentic materials for the learners to listen, for the gist of the information presented. Students will also have chance for pleasure in the class of language. There are many discussions that the materials presented in the EFL classrooms should be authentic, not produced for instructional purposes. This means that the material should be derived from newspaper reports, real magazine articles, real advertisements, cooking recipes, etc. because of their usefulness to the learners.

21. Using Authentic Materials: At Which Level?

Some studies concluded that learners enjoy dealing with authentic materials since these materials enable them to interact with the real language and its use. Also they do not consider authentic situations or materials innately difficult. However, learners state that they need pedagogical support especially in listening situations and when reading literary texts such as the provision of a full range of cues (Kilickaya, Authentic, nd.).

Authentic materials help learners interact with the real language and content rather than the form, because the learners feel that they are learning a language that can be used outside the classroom. They can use it in real life when they contact with people in the community. Authentic material can helpfully fill the gap between the competency and performance of the language learners which is a usual problem among the nonnative speakers. It is necessary to make the language patterns in real life situations.

"Since learning about a culture is not accepting it and the role of the culture in the materials is just to create learner interest towards the target language, there should be a variety of culture in the materials, not a specific one" (Kilikaya; 2004, Authentic).

22. The Main Advantages of Using Authentic Materials

Authentic materials motivate the learner positively as they feel they learn real things, they provide authentic cultural information that relates to

the real world; besides, learners are exposed to real language, they can provide a good sense for the learners to learn a real language. For these reasons, the students or the learners can particularly be acquainted with the foreign language, they feel they are learning real language that keeps them in touch with their surrounding world, with peoples from different areas in the world. They learn the different forms of the English literature. They get recognized to the whole world through different topics they study in their language course books. Materials have to be selected in order to meet the learners' needs and interests as well as take the ages of the learners in consideration.

23. Disadvantages of Using Authentic Materials

Richards (in Kilickaya) points out that authentic materials often contain difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items and complex language structures, which cause a burden for the teacher in lower-level classes. Martinez (in Kilickaya) argues that authentic materials may be too culturally biased and too many structures are mixed, causing lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts.

24. Conclusion

Finally, the researcher sees that the cultural content is very important for the learner in general and student in particular. It should be varied and well-selected. It could contain information that belongs to different fields.

The content has to serve the needs of the students in their study and it must be connected to their courses.

Schools should be supplied with the necessary tools and materials that help in teaching language and cultural content. On the other side, teachers have to be trained and well-prepared for the task of communicating cultural information.

References

- [1] Abdullah, Norhana. (1990.) *Cultural Elements in a Malaysian English Language Textbook*. KolejUniversiti Islam Malaysia, Bandar BaruNilai, Negeri Sembilan. Retrieved<http://www.ddms.usim.edu.my>.
- [2] Bateman, Blair. (N.d.)*An Analysis of the Cultural Content of Six Portuguese Textbooks*. Brigham Young University, MarilenaMattos, University of Minnesota.
- [3] Brooks, Nelson. (1964.) *Language and Language Learning; Theory and Practice*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.

- [4] Çakir, İsmail. (2006.) *Teaching*. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*. Developing Cultural Awareness in Language. Retrieved http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde23/pdf/article_12.pdf.
- [5] Celce-Murcia, Marianne, ed. (2001.) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. 3rd ed. Boston: Heinle&Heinle Thomson Learning.
- [6] Ferit Kilickaya, Kilickay. *Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms*. Turkey: Middle East Technical University. Retrieved <http://www.metu.edu.tr/~kilickay>.
- [7] Firat, İsmail. (N.d.) Retrieved www.jlls.org/Issues/Volume1/No.2/firaltay.pdf.
- [8] Fleet, M. (nd.) Retrieved www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content.../c9.pdf
- [9] Girma, Mulugeta. (2008.) *Use of Students' Native Culture as a Resource in the EFL Classroom: the Case of Second Year English Majors in the Department of English Language Education of AAU*. (MA), Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. Retrieved <http://etd.aau.edu.et/dspace/bitstream/123456789/1914/1/MULUGETA%20GIRMA.pdf>.
- [10] Kilickaya, Ferit. (2004.) *Internet TESL Journal* Vol. 10. No. 12 (December 2004). Guidelines to Evaluate Cultural Content in Textbooks. Turkey: Middle East Technical University. Retrieved [http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kilickaya-Cultural Content/](http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kilickaya-CulturalContent/)
- [11] Kilickaya, Ferit. (2004.) *Internet TESL Journal* Vol. X, No. 7. (July 2004.) *Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms*. Retrieved <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/KilickayaAutenticMaterial.html>.
- [12] National Standards in Foreign Language Education. (nd.). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century*. Washington: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Retrieved http://www.actfl.org/files/public/StandardsforFLLexecsumm_rev.pdf.
- [13] Porto, Melina. Retrieved www.reading.org/downloads/.../Foreign%20language%20reading_Porto.pdf.
- [14] Rivers, Wilga M. (1981.) *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- [15] Xiao-yan, Wang. Reflection on the notion of culture teaching." *US-China Foreign Language*. Retrieved Jan. 1st, 2008. www.linguist.org.cn/doc/uc200801/uc20080109.pdf-Similar.

Majalat

Al-Ulum Al-Insaniya wat - Tatbiqiya

(Journal of Humanities and Applied Science)

**An Academic, Intellectual, Cultural, Comprehensive
and Arbitrated Journal**

Issued by the Faculties of Arts and Science , Al-Asmaray Islamic University

- **Nano-emulsion (miniemulsion) Copolymerization of Styrene(St) with Methyl methacrylate (MMA) Using Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate (SDS) and Cetytrimethylammonium Bromide (CTAB) as Surfactants .**
- **On Some Characterizations of Hadamard Matrices.**
- **Manufacturing Quality Teachniques For Training and Education and Their Possible Applications Within Libyan Institutions .**
- **Cultural Content in Language Coursebooks .**
- **The Role of The Teacher and Motivation in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary .**

The first issue was in January, 1989

Issue No. 24

(June) 2014

24

العلوم الإنسانية والتطبيقية

علمية فكرية ثقافية جامعة محكمة تصدر عن كليتي الآداب والعلوم بزياتن .. الجامعة الأسمرية الإسلامية

- أثر الإنتماءات الضيقة على التنمية البشرية في ليبيا .
- أحكام الإيمان في الإسلام .
- إشكالية التأصيل النظري والمنهجي لمفهوم التنمية السياسية .
- إصلاح وتطوير الجهاز الإداري ، دعم للتحويلات السياسية والاقتصادية .
- الإدراك الذهني لخريطة الوطن العربي لدى أعضاء هيئة التدريس بكلية التربية قصر بن غشير .
- البنية الإيقاعية في النثر العربي .
- التدخل الدولي الإنساني ومشروعيته .
- التوجه نحو التدين وعلاقته بالتكيف النفسي والاجتماعي .
- الخصائص التعليمية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية للسكان في منطقة مصراته للفترة من 2006 - 1973 م .
- الفلسفة السياسية بين أفلاطون والفارابي .
- المؤسس الحقيقي لمدرسة المعتزلة أبو هذيل العلاف آراؤه الكلامية ، الألهية ، الإنسانية ، الطبيعية ، وما تفرّد به من آراء .
- مفهوم فلسفة اللغة عند ابن حزام الأندلسي .
- قضية الالتزام في الفن الشعري من التراث إلى التجديد .

صدر العدد الأول في شهر يناير من سنة 1989 م