

Practical Techniques in Cultural-Based Language Teaching for Iraqi Classroom

تقنيات عملية في تدريس اللغة القائمة على الثقافة للفصول الدراسية العراقية

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Abstract:

This study aimed to reveal cultural-based language instruction, specifically EFL classroom culture teaching methods. to emphasise the importance of cultural acquisition in language courses, present a variety of practical techniques that have been successful in cultural-based courses, and offer a few tips to improve culture teaching for teachers and students. This research examined successful cultural communication methods in English classrooms.

The study question is :

1. Do Iraqi EFL school instructors use Practical Techniques for Cultural-Based Language?

The study sample included 25 Iraqi EFL teachers randomly recruited from Baghdad University .

The researcher used a questionnaire to meet the study's goals. The instrument was used and data gathered after confirming its validity and reliability. Multiple statistical methods were utilised to analyse the data.

The researcher found: 56% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, and 21% strongly objected to educate the target language's culture. Finally, findings, proposals, and ideas were presented.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Classroom.

الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن التقنيات العملية في تدريس اللغة القائمة على الثقافة، وتحديدًا أساليب تدريس ثقافة اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصول الدراسية كلغة أجنبية، للتأكيد على أهمية الاكتساب الثقافي في دراسة دورات اللغة، وتقديم

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مجموعة متنوعة من التقنيات العملية التي وجد أنها فعالة وناجحة في الدورات الثقافية، وبعض النصائح التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحسين تدريس الثقافة وجعلها تجربة أفضل لكل من المعلمين والطلاب.

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف أساليب التواصل الثقافي الفعالة في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية . طرحت الدراسة السؤال

الآتي: 1. هل يستخدم معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق تقنيات عملية للغة القائمة على الثقافة؟

تكونت عينة الدراسة الحالية من (٢٥) معلماً عراقياً للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من جامعة بغداد.

ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة استخدمت الباحثة استبانة، بعد التأكد من صلاحيتها وموثوقيتها، وتم تطبيق الأداة وجمع البيانات.

واستخدمت عدد من الأدوات الإحصائية لتحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها.

وقد أظهرت النتائج أن ٥٦٪ وافقوا بشدة و ٢٣٪ وافقوا و ٢١٪ عارضوا بشدة على تضمين ثقافة اللغة المستهدفة كجزء من

التدريس في الفصول الدراسية. وفي الختام، تم عرض الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والاقتراحات.

الكلمات المفتاحية اللغة، الثقافة، الفصول الدراسية.

1. Introduction:

In our globalised society, many cultures are blending together. As a result, individuals from many cultural backgrounds are working together and exchanging ideas (1).

Therefore, in order to enhance their students' communication skills and design successful classes, EFL teachers must first understand the language and culture. Cultural integration into language learning is crucial, according to studies on culture and language instruction. It is well-known that cultural factors are gaining prominence in English language instruction (2).

Teaching culture is part of teaching language, according to several scholars. Students of a language are encouraged to absorb as much material as they can. To broaden one's perspective, it is vital to learn languages and become aware of other cultures. Although cultural instruction is rare and sometimes lacking in language classrooms, the vast majority of educators value it (3).

It is obvious that cultural context is necessary for language education when teaching a new language or culture, teachers should employ a variety of strategies. Knowledge of culture is more difficult to impart. It is imperative that educators comprehend cultural variations in language use. Students may learn cultural information and appropriate language use in a variety of classes. Diverse cultural backgrounds need unique approaches to education (4).

Several culturally-based practical processes have been effective in culture-based language training, and this article describes them, along with some tips to enhance culture teaching for both instructors and students (5).

2. Theoretical Background:

2.1 Creating Beneficial Cultural Context:

Learning a culture is best accomplished by living among its native speakers. As they study their own culture, students may also have the opportunity to learn about another culture. In a systematic and economical way, educators may build a classroom. Efficacious practices that foster classroom communication enhance cultural learning (5).

Skills in both written and spoken language are enhanced via cultural and language training. Nonetheless, we have not been successful in eliciting or isolating language responses using a number of our instructional tactics. Structural approaches to English language teaching (ELL) persist in obstructing cultural education since they prioritise point-by-point instruction, grammatical "correctness" and repetition of graded structures, restricted vocabulary, and similar concepts (6).

Nevertheless, there has been a lack of consistent representation of non-native Chinese students in teaching culture.

We need a better method that combines linguistic and cultural studies. By using a cultural texture approach, language instructors may enhance cultural learning.

According to Oxford (1994), "cultural texture" refers to the cultural elements that educators are obligated to impart to their students. Changes in knowledge sources, activity kinds, and good connections are what educators need to make this texture a reality.

A. Various Information Sources:

To start, while doing research, teachers should stress the importance of using encyclopedias, multimedia tools, and the internet. Instead of waiting, students would use whatever means necessary to gain knowledge. As part of their cultural theme analysis, they will also choose relevant facts.

The amount of courseware that instructors need to gather is high since students need to comprehend the target culture from all perspectives. Culture education materials such as these are available. It is easier for instructors to meet the needs of their pupils when they use visual, aural, and tactile aids in the classroom (7).

New approaches to managing a classroom have emerged in response to the rapid evolution of media technology such as videodisc, digital television, portable media players, visual presenter, PowerPoint, the internet, and intranet. While developing and delivering their curricula, cultural studies teachers will need to adjust to the new media landscape (8).

B. Various Activity Types:

When planning an activity for the classroom, keep in mind these guidelines. Focus on the plot and the action. Information must be exchanged, regardless of the means. Those taking part typically have some idea of what they're discussing. Keep "on topic" or "to the point." They establish social bonds via exchanging mundane conversation, such as everyday pleasantries. They may not be able to finish a task without some guidance or oversight. They are free to join in the fun now that they are aware of it (9).

People would be perplexed, embarrassed, and unable to communicate without it. The transmission of information is vital. Here are a few top-notch classroom activities (10).

1. Conducting topic-oriented activity:

Because, as we all know, a subject isn't really a topic unless someone does something about it, the instructor brings up a practical issue. The majority of classroom discussions center on a single topic or set of topics. Whether in or out of class, students take turns talking about a topic through the lens of their cultural traditions and beliefs. Adapting to the target culture is the next step for a teacher who understands their own cultural background is leading them astray. The topics discussed differ substantially across cultural contexts. Through classroom activities, students are guided to transcend cultural boundaries between their native and target languages, while still adhering to certain social norms and regulations. In addition, the instructor may provide remarks on the subject matter as part of the exercise (7).

2. Taking activity logs:

Students keep track of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in relation to cultural learning and classroom activities in an activity log notebook. Keeping an activity diary is a great way for students to reflect on their learning. While they aren't assessed, they are often shared with the teacher. Using this method, teachers may monitor their students' progress and provide them more writing assignments. Cultural education classes may benefit from activity logs in a number of ways, including the promotion of teacher-student dialogue via the use of questions, comments, and replies and the encouragement of regular writing on activity topics (8).

As part of their evaluation of class activities for interest culture learning, students are required to reevaluate their prior knowledge. In addition to keeping track of their objectives, progress, and ideas during the activities, students may provide insightful comments to the teacher. The teacher is required to teach activity records because of the course's complexity. The note goes over the steps of a number of topics and ideas covered in and out of class (11).

3. Selecting authentic materials:

In order for children to gain comprehension, materials must be flexible. It is important to present authentic foreign content, particularly dialogues, in order to showcase the speakers' culture. Teachers should use caution when selecting authentic resources to engage their students, since some may be lacking in cultural and social understanding of the target language, which might lead to frustration. Cultural aspects of a subject should be addressed by educators. Students now have easier access to visual aids such as films and videos (12).

The importance of consistent exposure to one's cultural background in the process of cultural acquisition is well-established. Conversations predominate in authentic audio recordings. It delves into western customs, habits, social graces, and way of life. Teachers have a responsibility to expose their students to the language and culture of native speakers (4).

By using multimedia and network technologies, educators may provide students with real-life learning resources, an intuitive interface, vibrant visuals, and engaging audio. This helps students overcome the challenges of studying in a non-authentic setting and enhances their enthusiasm for the subject. The majority of classrooms feature state-of-the-art video technology and access to high-quality

films and books on classic literature. Videos may be used for both educational and recreational purposes. It would be beneficial to provide pupils with the opportunity to see the corresponding film when we talk about famous authors. Motive and interest might still be sparked by the teacher (3).

4. Employing prediction:

Teachers who are skilled in the subskill of prediction help their students make informed guesses about what a hearing or reading text will cover based on their prior mastery of the language, the information provided (such as the title or subject area), and their own experiences and knowledge of the world (6).

Groundwork, not speculation, is necessary for prediction. Predictions may be more accurate if one has a firm grasp of cultural differences in language, customs, geography, history, and politics. There is no way to decipher a language apart from its historical, societal, and cultural milieu (2).

Inspire the pupils to think critically, draw conclusions, and remember key details. Without cultural awareness, students may struggle to grasp some culturally particular contexts or the assumptions made by speakers. Students' ability to make predictions about a foreign culture may be enhanced by giving them detailed background information that might help them form their own "working stereotypes" about that society.

Students get some experience anticipating new information by making predictions. As previously said, quizzes, like other materials, place a heavy emphasis on prediction. Prediction, similar to "noticing," has the potential to pique students' interests. If the lesson is being taught by video, the teacher could have the students watch silently to try to decipher the words. Pause the video in the middle of the performance and have the class guess what's going to happen next. Computerized control could make this process more efficient. Students will need to reflect on their prior knowledge and question whether their predictions were correct when asked to estimate the content of the reading based on the title (3).

5. Doing Research-Based learning:

Under this method, students investigate a subject. Doing research involves analyzing events, situations, and occurrences in a methodical and objective approach to help students comprehend more and come up with new ideas. One must settle on a "topic" before beginning research. It might be a problem, a piece of study, or a topic to investigate more in order to confirm or disprove previous

assumptions. The source cited is Liu (2004). Depending on its difficulty, the study plan might be lengthy or short, completed in a month or even a day, and undertaken alone or in small groups. As part of a multi-part assignment, students choose a subject that relates to both their academic interests and the target culture, do research on any component of the culture that piques their interest, assemble their findings into a booklet, and then present it in the next class (7).

As part of class or small group work, students may share what they've learned and get feedback. Project durations or poster presentations can increase as a result of this (9).

The target culture may become more interesting to certain students over time.

Games, role playing, field excursions, reading, listening, writing, discussing, and singing are some more great cultural classroom activities. Most traditional English as a foreign language (EFL) exercise may be modified with little effort. Students must be actively involved in order to master the target language and culture (4).

C. Positive Classroom Interactions:

Through the use of an interactional method, second language education and growth from a social viewpoint may have a good impact on the quality and character of language learning. This will activate the drive to study autonomously and provide a diverse learning environment. Diverse perspectives, references, views, experiences, and histories may be shown in classroom interactions, which may help create a positive cultural learning environment. Cultural selling points, according to Cullen, are engaging and accessible lessons for students. In order to create cultural texture, teachers should not present the culture as a whole or focus just on its good aspects. It is important for activities and materials to demonstrate unique cultural aspects. Teachers have a responsibility to help their students understand the world from a variety of cultural viewpoints. According to Cullen (2004), intentional cultural differences may have a positive impact. This is a comparison of several instructional approaches.

Teachers may evaluate their own competency, establish a happy learning environment, and adjust their teaching approach to students' needs via different feedback and constructive classroom engagement.

3. Tips on Teaching Practice:

Encouraging learners to actively participate in cultural learning experiences tailored to their interests is one proven strategy. Teachers of English as a second language should focus on helping their students acquire the following cultural competences in order to study effective cultural communication transmission:

A. Activities for Personalization:

Only by making lessons and resources unique to each student can educators hope to increase students' cultural understanding. A teacher is stereotyping if they introduce a topic about a foreign country without giving their students any opportunities to relate it to their own experiences. Any language teacher worth their salt understands that students love nothing more than prancing around. While learning about a new topic or literature, students may be challenged to draw parallels to their own lives by making up stories about characters, settings, and events that mirror those in the texts. Through discussing conventional methods and crafting a real-life or fantastical story, students may draw on their text-world experiences to develop original perspectives on their own life events. As students reflect on and share their lived experiences, they build beliefs and perspectives that shape their understanding of the text and its context (Beach, 1998). Students are able to build personal and intertextual connections via the use of these reader-response tactics, which engage and enrich their learning.

B. Students' Autonomy in Group Work:

Independent learning is facilitated by group work. The students are free to pick many aspects of their project, including their group, topic, materials, presentation, audience involvement. Everyone in the group works together, exerts influence, and plays a role-playing game. Members engage in greater conversation since they are all responsible for different things. Sharing a same objective also fosters a sense of teamwork.

A presentation that captivates the class and effectively communicates the ideas of each student group is chosen by them. They may present their ideas via debate, lectures, simulated news conferences, or even little plays. Videos, maps, charts, and images are all examples of visual aids. This is a great method for students to learn the basics of interaction.

As part of this activity, participants must evaluate how well they did in comparison to their goals and expectations. Participants might expect constructive

criticism from their peers on their performance. At the end of the session, the teacher should review the key points raised by the students. The group is able to better understand its problems and how other groups might improve thanks to the timely input.

C. Scientific Reading Activities:

Educators ought to cultivate cultural readers. There is more to learning about other cultures than just sitting in a classroom. Students should be required to read. When selecting reading materials for their lessons, educators should keep students' cultural backgrounds in mind. To encourage students to reflect on their learning and cultivate active learning abilities both during and after the course, the text should use appropriate language-learning tactics such as using a partner to verify understanding and reading groups of words instead of words-by-word.

A person can read while listening, speaking, or writing. Hence, play should be more varied and difficult. Students are encouraged to choose the most effective story summary and thereafter craft their own.

In these activities, students apply what they've studied in class to real-world debates by analyzing and interpreting specific passages. Having students work in pairs or small groups allows for more opportunity for students to interact with one another. Partner students study alone before comparing their answers. Students are given several opportunities to work together and engage in meaningful conversation.

D. Cultural Interaction by Literature:

Since most students of foreign languages find it difficult to adapt to new cultures and languages, reading up on any subject could be helpful. Cultures of both pupils and readers have an impact on literature (Chen ,2004). A literary study may provide light on different civilizations.

To fully appreciate a work of literature, readers must be familiar with the cultural assumptions that informed it.

Among cultural artefacts is literature. The importance of its culture and the significance of its goal are both explained by the assumptions upon which it is based. The problem may be solved if teachers helped their pupils understand what they were reading and piqued their interest in studying and relating the ideas presented in the books they selected (7).

E. Design of Course Objectives:

By researching and contrasting other cultures, we search for our own identity. By delving into the origins of a single culture, this beginning course hopes to help students better comprehend our own and other civilizations' interconnectedness. By analyzing cultural objects in their original social settings, this course will introduce students to the global perspectives of comparative cultural studies as they evaluate different presentation styles. Because of this, we will have a better understanding of how literary styles encode, transmit, and analyze cultural values and the factors that shape our surroundings (2).

In order to effectively teach cultural class development methodologies, teachers must demonstrate enthusiasm for and knowledge of the target culture in their daily interactions with students. Throughout the day, teachers will unconsciously gather "teachable resources" such as fascinating words or phrases in texts, tales, or conversation, methods to represent the subject and meaning, and colorful, descriptive ways of speaking and writing. They will also urge students to explore these techniques (5).

3. Methodology:

3.1. Instrument:

In order to gauge university faculty members' perspectives on EFL classroom culture, a teacher questionnaire was developed.

So, those who are interested in the topic and have time to expound may do so, while others who aren't can just circle the values on the Likert scale.

3.2. Participants:

Teachers of English at the university level took part in this study. There are 25 educators on staff, with TEFL experience ranging from 5–15 years and even some with more than 15 years. While 70% had Master's degrees, 30% held Doctoral degrees. Instructors from universities made up the bulk of the participants.

3.3. Results:

The survey questions were assessed by informants as Strongly Agree, Agree, and Disagree. Nearly all (95% of instructors) responded to at least one open-ended question that required a written response, whereas just over half (85%) of students did the same.

There were a lot of examples and recommendations in these free-form remarks, as expected.

Educating the culture of the target language was deemed important by 56% of respondents, whereas 23% agreed and 21% strongly disagreed.

Among cultural elements such as food, music, people, and lifestyle, 67% of SAs, 14% of As, and 19% of SDs are involved. Educating people about their hidden culture, which includes things like ethics, values, beliefs, attitudes, etc., SD18%, A24%. Although 9% were sceptical, 85% felt that newspapers really have real-life cultural content. Just 12% of Bangladeshi teachers agreed, 65% strongly agreed, and 12% were opposed to adjusting their methods of instruction to meet the cultural needs of their students. In conclusion, when asked about culturally appropriate textbooks, 75% of respondents strongly agreed, 21% agreed, and 4% disagreed.

Instructors' plans to employ EFL cultural pedagogical resources were lastly revealed by the collected data. Things are resources that define culture. Videos, songs, books, articles, newspapers, and television programs are common real materials used in English classes. Feedback from teachers, student polls, and classroom observations all pointed to this.

Regarding the incorporation of culture into lesson plans, below are the opinions of teachers. The Daily Newspapers provides these new items in English.

Formal report from the educator: This lesson is titled "Films, music, news" in the course outline. Before discussing one, students read it. "Charts, posters, CD, videos, newspapers, magazines, articles, souvenirs" were some of the class activities that were based on the readings.

The research project's findings demonstrate that the English program's first effort to raise awareness among educators about the cultural contexts that are lacking in English classes was successful despite the lack of data. Culture should be a daily lecture topic, and students should be able to compare and contrast their own

culture with the target culture via reflections and instructional activities. Regardless of the fact that EFL classes at Bangladeshi universities have adopted culturally sensitive pedagogies. Initial results point to a long way to go before the Intercultural Awareness course in Languages is fully operational.

4. Conclusion:

A key component of fostering cultural awareness in the classroom is assisting students in differentiating between the cultural norms, attitudes, and practices held by the majority of the speaking community and those held by individuals or groups that deviate from these standards. Students should have the confidence to talk to people of other language about their own culture as they go through school.

Make use of their knowledge of a different language. You should use two lines of citation, debate, or explanation at the same time. Language instruction is a long process without absolute success; therefore we can't expect all pupils to develop native-like behavior.

Learning about other cultures is an enjoyable and instructive way to expand one's horizons in many areas, including language, tradition, ethics, science, social concerns, and more. Track down the information that resonates with your class. The knowledge that children gain will serve them well throughout their lives. They will see the value in learning a second language and be more driven to do so in the long run.

Any language teacher worth their salt would do well to see the value of cultural education and look for ways to impart it, as this example shows. To sum up, educators should not limit their students' access to resources that are culturally diverse or linked to their specializations; rather, they should use all textures and materials at their disposal.

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