THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CULTURE ON EFL LEARNERS DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT: *This article aims to investigate the relationships between culture and Language. The motivation for this article is driven from the need to understand how culture plays an effective role in learning EFL through suitable specific instructional strategies. One of the educators ' attempts is to take the advantage of the technology to invest the culture to get effective learning of the English Language through E-tools. And this serves and support education in the age of COVID-19.Language is the backbone of communication. It is more than vocabularies and grammar, it comprises cultural, social, and communicative settings that were considered the fruitful environment to learn the language. Teaching cultural content via E-tools is a unique method of teaching the English Language in the crisis to bridge the educational gaps in the students' learning in the E- space of learning. There are cultural issues that are deserved to be learned and adopting them in the educational system for widening the pupils 'minds toward learning English as a second language. Those issues could be implemented by suitable teaching strategies to let students learn professionally as well as to overcome the cultural challenges in light of COVID-19.*

KEYWORDS: culture, language, second language, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Education has been hit by the global pandemic in 2020. Schools are closed, and face-To-face education has been suspended. The educational trend becomes towards online learning and Blended Learning due to the spread of COVID-19. UNESCO (2020) indicated through a report that more than 1.9 billion students have been oriented their learning system from traditional to online system in the world.

It is a time for teachers and educators to think critically and out of the standard box to maintain the continuity of the learning process in the emergency of COVID-19. The elements of the instructional core shed light on technology to process the educational challenges. Our duties as educators in this crisis are providing students with opportunities to learn the English Language as a Foreign Language by investing their cultural background through virtual learning space.

Students reflect their culture through their interaction and communication with their peers and teachers. Their stereotypes have a strong impact on how they communicate, think, behave, speak, and react. Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) confirmed the strong relationship between communication and culture. They added that culture helps people to encode the content of their message, the nature of the environment of the message, their position in which the message is said. In other words, it is possible to describe the culture as a foundation stone of

communication. This scene is moved to the virtual one, culture is the power of the virtual commination. Students in the Learning English Language settings have different cultural areas. It is good to let the students learn English in their virtual space through their cultural knowledge.

The nature of culture:

Condon (1973) considered culture a style of life, it plays an effective role in life people more than many things such as the place where they live and the manner they behave. Various areas are included by the culture such as customs values, beliefs, thoughts, and core issues that five special frameworks to particular a group of people. Culture could be considered as the power that affects the individuals' behaves cognitively and emotionally.

UKEssays (2018) showed that culture has different characteristics that vary from one region to another. This is due to every group of people or region has a similar view of life, customs, beliefs, and way of lifestyle. It showed also that many people identify the culture in various ways such as the manner of life way or style for people.

Culture is created from the norms in society that come from sustainable learning. The culture of the community consists of traditions that are crested by norms. Individuals in one community start to adapt specific patterns of behavior and nature sustainably, then naturally, those norms become a basic part of the community.

Language and communication are two things that cannot be separated, because the culture doesn't impose on you how to talk with other and the topics that are talking about, but it helps the people to solve implicit meaning code between the speech and convey the required meaning to the opposite person. Then we can say the culture is the communicative basis. We don't understand others and their attention if we don't understand their cultural backgrounds. Culture is a strong tool to develop social and establish strong relationships between people. However, we can say culture is weak and it is breakable, it can be changed easily and it lacks its value if it isn't kept on it (Samovar, Porter & Jain,1981).

The nature of Linguistic:

It is the science that is concerned with the study of language in a scientific manner. It is a major branch linking sociology, natural science, and human sciences(Harris,1951). And it is also known as classifying language as a subject of scientific subjects, so it studies the structure of language, the method of synthesis of its vocabulary, the formation of words and expressions in them, knowledge of the sounds specific to each word, and the nature of its pronunciation. It is a major branch that connects sociology, natural science, and human sciences(Harris,1951). Linguistics is an exciting field, not because of its special effects but because of its effects on the other fields. And also through studying linguistics, we try to answer several questions, including what is the language? To what extent does it reflect on the thinking? Linguistics focuses on describing and explaining language. Linguistics is concerned with explaining the similarities and differences between languages at the same time. Also, linguistics is a social science that has common rules with other social sciences such as psychology and anthropology. To understand the changing nature of language, we must take a look at the psychological

factors of a person, such as the ability to learn and perceive in addition to the social factors of the individual.

The relationship between linguistic and culture

Language and culture look like twins in terms of the strong relationship between them. And Each of them greatly influences the other. Language is the code of culture as well as It represents the culture in terms of what speakers have in their minds and vice versa. Culture represents the language as well, it summarizes the economy, religion, and philosophy of the country it represents. The relationship between language and culture is certain, and everyone is sure that culture is important in second language teaching lessons. The continued interest of researchers on this topic to evolve and reach a set of concepts in the field of language teaching. Therefore, it is natural for researchers to seek the necessity of bringing culture into teaching the language represented in mentioning the benefits of teaching culture.

The importance of teaching culture springs from this, and it is considered as the fifth skill added to reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This cultural skill gains the learner to make him understand the values of the culture of that language and how to accomplish the work.

Introducing the cultural content on an online platform to learn the English Language makes the learning process attractive and enjoyable. This because meets the students' needs and interests and is very closed to their cultural background. And in this aspect, the students will master learning the English Language deeply

Thanasoulas, D. (2001)indicated how it is important to realize the importance of teaching culture for students and how they can benefit from their learning the culture of the target language. They can develop their cultural knowledge in terms of life's style, thoughts, beliefs, and perspectives and how there could be paraphrased by the target language. Teaching culture lets students take the roles of characters from the target language. Under those circumstances, students will be able to enrich their cultural competence and being a real part of the target culture in a real situation.

Researchers carried out a lot of studies that were relevant to exploring the relationship between language and culture, They found from their attempts to researching and investigation that culture is abstract and couldn't explain the nature of relationships in terms of beliefs and behaviors. Cultural linguistics is an effective environment to understand and clarify the components of culture deeply (Sharifian, F.,2017).

Effectiveness of language on the culture

Gleason(1961) indicated that culture doesn't only produce the language but Language is a symbol of the culture .Language is formed to reflect our thoughts and concepts, the direct relationship between language and culture is approved, as the language expands, the culture develops, language is codes of social communication. Therefore language is flexible and unlimited, and this means that the world is changing and social media symbols are changing. Language' concepts are influenced based on Social and historical changes. For example, one word but is indicated to it through various meanings due to the differences in cultural

background. The relationship between language and culture manifest in three faces that are expression, embodiment, and coding.

Effectiveness of Culture on Second Language Learning

It is possible to define culture as a combination of habits, values, and traditions that are taught to people (Greey,1994). It includes patterns of social behavior Beliefs, institutions. We can say that the culture holds between ethnic and other backgrounds that affect on the language as well as it could change the peoples' habits and their manners of life. Cultural knowledge is important for achieving linguistic skills. The culture of the society may be changed according to the used language. This could be noticed in educational settings. Culture has a dynamic role in teaching language. Therefore, it should be blended in any instructional content even if the content is digital content or a traditional one

English Language impacts on the students' culture, this could be done when the students learn about the culture of the countries that their first language is English.

Strategies for teaching the second language within the cultural framework.

: Providing cultural educational materials 1-

The teaching of language isn't limited to teach vocabularies and grammar but Cultural and thematic activities should be greatly organized and included in the second language teaching plans to enrich the teaching content. It is important to apply strategies that include the cultural materials in the classroom curriculum texts. These materials can be introduced via online platforms. This after designing digital cultural materials through E- slides and sharing relevant videos. Integration of digital culture through virtual learning is supportive for students' learning even they at home. It could be pushed them forward and their parents as well.

Using the right cultural E-materials can help students engage in real cultural experiences. This material includes movies, news programs, and TV shows, websites, magazines, newspapers, and other digital materials. Teachers can adapt their use of cultural materials to suit the level of language proficiency and student age.

Use a digital story and proverbs as tools to learn the English Language.

Teachers can ask their students to read English short stories and tell their peers about them on online platforms. This strategy has enhanced collaboration skill and let them express. This affects their personality emotionally and psychologically in a positive way. One of the benefits of this strategy is students can get rid of their stress and worried that may come from pandemics. The discussion about common proverbs in the target language can help students understand how proverbs differ from their proverbs or similar in their mother tongue. It can help them understand the historical and cultural differences of each country (Ciccarelli,1996).

Using proverbs as a tool for discussion and teaching a second language helps students discover the two different cultures and can guide student's compass to identify what are the similar aspects and the different ones between cultures. There are proverbs that their words are different, but they have the same meaning. For example between Arab and English culture:

دعب رس عم السرى ي   After the storm comes sunshine

زاد ين ط الة لب   Add insult to injury

Students can benefit from this strategy as an online game. They are able also to share the proverbs from their culture with students from different cultures, this enhances the communication skills and digital citizenship locally and globally in light of learning space. They can pass the barriers to interact with each other and exchange the aspects of their culture by using the English Language. This meets their interests. Therefore, educational outcomes become effective and real.

The exchange of roles and the cultural and social curriculum

This strategy is considered a useful educational method in the socio-cultural curriculum. The socio-cultural curriculum is the most useful way to teach a second language. The teacher can motivate students to adopt roles as well as encouraging students in the classroom to revive famous Arab occasions such as the national day of each country and wearing the traditional dress of that country, and discuss popular songs, customs, traditions, and special foods. This could be implemented via E- tools, ZOOM, TEAMS Microsoft, turn on the camera, designing paintings, recording videos.

Using computer technology to help students obtain cultural information

(Salaberry,2020) indicated teachers note that current computer technology has many advantages over the second language and cultural learning. The computer and the associated language educational programs can provide second-language learners with a lot of independence in the classroom and allow them the option to work on their educational material at any time of the day.

Students who would like to learn a second language usually come from different countries and have different cultures, but it is difficult to create a large variety of different levels of students because of the limited space in the regular semester. However, using a computer can provide multiple cultural interactions without the need for pupils in the classroom. It is easy to use computers to create different virtual spaces to meet the needs of each learner.

Second language learners can use computers and the Internet, and link anywhere, anytime to access relevant materials and information about the language they want to learn. The World Wide Web can provide instant access to websites in other countries, and learners can find resources written in the target language and learn about other countries' cultures. These websites contain a variety of topics, including news, sports, entertainment, health, and more. It thus provides various opportunities for cultural learning for students to continue their cultural understanding and practice reading skills and vocabulary for the second language (Kuo, M., & Lai, C., 2006).

The student is himself a cultural source

Currently, the second language classes are more diversified in terms of culture, due to a large number of foreigners from different countries in the same class. Therefore, teachers can benefit

from the cultural materials in the classroom, and teachers can invite exchange students or international migrant students to the class as living sources. To display aspects of their own cultures in this educational activity.

Students not only learn the diversity of cultures, but they also have opportunities to organize and link their indigenous cultures and the target language culture through these presentations.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article is to discuss the relationship between culture and language and the methods used to implement educational strategies for teaching the second language through culture to enhance students' linguistic understanding.

Learning and discovering other cultures helps us change our world view and view from a different perspective, and it helps us understand the relationship between culture and language to develop new strategies in teaching the second language.

(Kramsch, 1998) indicated that teaching language through culture is neither easy nor expensive. To achieve true linguistic understanding, culture and language must be learned together because they are like water and life. They cannot be separated from each other.

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