

Running Head: The Need to Foster Cultural Competence

The Need to Foster Cultural Competence in the Teaching and  
Learning of a Foreign Language

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Submitted to the School of Human Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of B.A in the Department of

Linguistics and Languages

Universidad de Nariño

September, 2016

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## The Need to Foster Cultural Competence

Las ideas y conceptos expresados en el siguiente Trabajo de Grado  
son de responsabilidad del autor.

Artículo 1 de acuerdo número 324 de octubre 11 de 1966 emanado del  
Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

The Need to Foster Cultural Competence

Nota de aceptación

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*San Juan de Pasto, Septiembre de 2016*

# The Need to Foster Cultural Competence

## Resumen

Este documento de investigación examina los conceptos de lenguaje, cultura, aprendizaje y enseñanza de la cultura, y contexto. Esta revisión se completará para explicar la relación cercana que existe entre lenguaje y cultura, y luego respaldar la necesidad de enseñar la cultura objeto en salones de clase de segundas lenguas de tal manera que los estudiantes puedan desarrollar no solo competencia lingüística sino también competencia cultural.

Adicionalmente, este documento proveerá una serie de pasos, sugerencias y actividades adaptables para enseñar cultura de manera efectiva junto con la lengua objeto de estudio.

Palabras Clave: lenguaje, cultura, aprendizaje de cultura, enseñanza de cultura, contexto.

**Abstract**

This research paper examines the concepts of language, culture, culture learning and teaching, and context. This revision will be completed in order to explain the close relationship existing between language and culture, and then, to support the need to teach the target culture in 12 classrooms so that learners can develop not only linguistic competence but also cultural competence. Additionally, this document will provide a series of steps, suggestions and adaptable activities to effectively teach culture along with the target language.

Keywords: language, culture, culture learning, culture teaching, context.

# The Need to Foster Cultural Competence

## Table of Contents

The Need to Foster Cultural Competence in the Teaching and Learning of a Foreign Language .....	8
Rationale for Implementing Culture along with the Teaching and Learning of a Foreign Language .....	10
Understanding Basic Concepts: Language, Culture and Context.....	13
What is language? .....	13
Language as Code.....	15
Language as a Social Practice.....	16
What is Culture?.....	18
Culture Learning.....	19
What is Context?.....	23
Relationship between Language and Culture.....	25
Teaching Language and Culture.....	27
How to Teach Language in Context and Integrating Culture with Language: A Guide.....	32
The Use of Authentic Materials.....	36
Conclusions and Implications for Language Teachers.....	37
References.....	39

**The Need to Foster Cultural Competence in the Teaching and  
Learning of a Foreign Language**

With the rapid development of globalization around the world and due to the need for most societies to create connections that allow them to strengthen their economic and cultural exchanges, learning to communicate in a foreign language, especially English, has become a number one priority in order to attain mentioned purpose. For that reason, it is evident that many experts (Street, 1993; Robinson-Stuart, & Nocon, 1996; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Kramsch, 1998; Bex, 1994) in the area of language teaching have come up with a wide variety of methods and strategies to improve language learning. Such methods, which have appeared over the last few decades, have been developed under the umbrella of what is known as communicative language teaching or CLT for its acronym. They involve methods such as content-based instruction (CBI) and task-based instruction (TBI), to name just a few. This kind of methods are characterized by the idea of developing communicative competence in language learners. That is to say, that students are able to successfully communicate in the target language because they can produce and understand language according to setting, purpose and interlocutor (Richards and Rogers, 1986). The previous idea tends to be one of the



principal, if not the most important, objectives of many foreign language (FL) courses and programs: to make students speak and communicate in the foreign language. Yet, this might not be enough in an era where being a global citizen should be a new must-have characteristic of human beings. In order to achieve that purpose it is necessary to add a complement to language learning which should be culture learning so that communication is not limited by beliefs, customs or social habits. Many experts such as Krashen (1993); Kleinsasser (1993), and Kane (1991), believe that the target language culture should be hand-to-hand taught in L2 classrooms but many L2 teachers usually fail at this task, only because they are not experts in regards of teaching the target culture. Traditional teachers or even modern teachers, followers of the current philosophies of language teaching (i.e. CLT) usually limit to teach the functions of language and the rules to use certain language parameters. For that reason this research paper aims at examining in detail the concepts of language, culture, and culture teaching and learning in order to provide guidance to L2 teachers on effective culture teaching strategies that help them shape the way they teach a foreign language and accomplish effective results regarding this essential point which is cultural competence in the L2 classroom.

**Rationale for Implementing Culture along with the Teaching  
and Learning of a Foreign Language**

As Kramsch (1993) states, a constant finding within literature concerning the field of language teaching is that the actual practice of teaching a second language does not seem to have changed significantly over the past half century, and is still dominated by grammar instruction. In other words, language instruction appears to have given little attention or importance to the teaching of culture-oriented skills. The aforementioned might be because culture learning is not exclusively the domain of language educators.

Even though language instruction oriented to culture learning may not be an area of expertise for language teachers, the field of culture has received considerable attention as a topic of research to the extent that it is highly interdisciplinary in nature and several contributions to this field of knowledge have come from areas such as psychology, linguistics, anthropology, education, intercultural communication scholars and elsewhere.

Anthropologists, intercultural communication scholars, and psychologists in particular, have studied cultural phenomena quite apart from their relationship to language learning. There exists quite a lot of literature and scholars

who have focused on the studies of culture (e.g. Kleinsasser, 1993; Kane, 1991; Kramsch, 1993) but yet, much of the available literature is not totally related to language education.

In response to this issue, it is implied that as language educators we need to start to change the way we teach a foreign language, especially in foreign settings like Colombia. Usually language is taught as a code and as a series of rules to be learnt by memory. In foreign language settings, students might usually be limited to develop linguistic competence given that teachers may not be prepared to shift to a new approach that involves not only ensuring that students master linguistic skills (i.e. grammar and vocabulary) and an understanding of the functions of language. More than that, it should be considered at the top core to incorporate an integrated way of teaching that not only develops linguistic competence but also cultural competence, so that students achieve a better understanding of the target language and learn the how's and why's behind the use of language in specific contexts and settings.

Teachers of a new era of language teaching should not continue to stick to the old-fashioned methods of teaching such as the grammar translation method. On the other hand,

current teachers should develop a series of skills that empower them to bring to class the best ways to ensure that students learn in a more effective and efficient way. The new needs of language learning require that teachers become more holistic and eclectic and should have certain characteristics that place them into a new model of teaching. For instance, Hughes (1986) states that a teacher "should be a philosopher, geographer, historian, philologist, and literary critic." To Altman (1981), the teacher functions as a "skillful developer of communicative competence in the classroom", "dialectologist," "value clarifier," and "communications analyst" (pp. 11-13). As Kleinsasser (1993) suggests, the new role of a teacher is that of being an educational sociologist. And with reference to Kane's (1991) outstanding "Taxonomy of Cultural Studies Objectives" (pp. 245- 247), it is necessary for the teacher to become an anthropologist and ethnographer, intercultural educator, and, of course, comparative sociolinguist mastering the ins and outs of culturally-determined linguistic variation.

On one side there are scholars who propose that we should teach a language by means of preserving the learners' local culture as it is heritage of their community and it should be respected for that reason (Bibeau and Germain, 2002 in Salazar, 2013). On the other side, some authors like Gomez

(2005) and Adda (2006) affirm that teaching a foreign language involves the purpose of preparing the learners towards a world which is in constant change, and in order to help their community they should develop at the same pace that the rest of the world does, and that is only possible by going beyond the local context (Gomez, 2005; Adda, 2006, in Salazar, 2013).

### **Understanding Basic Concepts: Language, Culture and Context**

In order to understand the existing relationship between language and culture it is foremost important to start by clarifying these concepts individually as a way to have a better idea of how they can be intertwined inside the classroom. The main reason to the previous idea, is that the way we teach language and culture depends mostly on the way we understand these concepts which sometimes might not be completely accurate. Therefore, the following is a detailed discussion of these concepts taken from experts in each topic.

#### **What is language?**

Theory in the field of language is vast and broad as it has been a focus of study in many areas of social and human sciences such as linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and

psychology to mention a few. To have an appropriate understanding of what language is, this paper has examined the most relevant definitions of this concept that are related with the central topic of the same.

For instance Kramsch, (1998) points out that language is "the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives" (p. 3). This means that language works as a vehicle that enables us to develop as individuals inside an organized group or a society. Moreover, as the author mentions, "when it is used within contexts of communication it is bound up with culture in multiple ways" (p. 1). Similarly, Malmstrom (1965) states that every human has a language and she explains that an individual would not be able to live together with other members of an organized social group without a language. Malmstrom adds that a language is a humans' "tool for carrying on their affairs - for working, trading, and living together" (p. 3).

Equally, Sapir (in Mandelbaum, 1949; p. 162) explains that a language represents the social reality. We can see this reflected when we compare the different societies around the world and the different speech communities with their advancement in science, technology, ways of living and education. We can see how civilized and modern societies who

share universal languages have progressed in all of the previous aspects. On the other hand, we can see how marginalized social groups and minority communities have been fading away and disappearing because they are not given much importance, although that is not a point of discussion in this paper, they are examples of how language embodies the realities of societies.

Additionally, it is possible to say that language both expresses and creates categories of thought that are shared by members of a social group and is in part responsible for the attitudes and beliefs that constitute what we call "culture." Kramsch (1998, p.235). Moreover, the same author explains that language is the medium that allows us to carry out our social lives and when its purpose is communication, it is "bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways" (p. 1).

### **Language as Code**

In traditional settings of language teaching, language is seen as a code. This means that language is viewed as words and rules that connect words together. If language is seen from this perspective, it means that learning is limited to learning vocabulary and the rules needed to construct sentences. However, this view of language learning is very

simplistic because it does not examine the infinite complexities regarding the use of language for communication purposes.

### **Language as a Social Practice**

In order to expand language learning and to make it more engaging for learners, language needs to be understood as 'dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal'.

If language as a social practice involves meaning-making and interpretation, then it is not enough for language learners just to know grammar and vocabulary. They also need to know how that language is used to create and represent meanings and how to communicate with others and to engage with the communication of others. This requires the development of awareness of the nature of language and its impact on the world (Svalberg, 2007).

The way we understand language, from a perspective as languages educators, plays an important role in our professional practices, as such, modifies or orients our curriculum, planning and classroom pedagogies. Teachers who see language simply as code tend to make grammar acquisition and vocabulary the primary, if not the only, objective of language learning. Within such a limited approach, it is not



possible for students to engage with language as a communicative reality but simply as an intellectual exercise or as a work requiring memorizing.

At this point it is necessary to reflect on the ways we have been teaching language. Do we teach students to learn how to form sentences and to memorize lists of vocabulary? Are we bombarding them with rules and restrictions of how to use words and sentences? Or on the other hand, are we creating a learning environment that integrates language in context to trigger communication and interaction skills? These are a series of questions that need to be solved before deciding what to teach inside the 12 classroom. What do we want our students to learn?

So far, we have seen the concept of language which refers in general terms to the essential element human beings need to communicate, exist and develop within a society, it has been clarified how an understanding of what language is represents the way it is taught. If it is understood as a code, teachers might limit to teach grammar, and rules. In contrast, if it is understood as a social practice, teachers encourage their students to interact and create a meaningful use of language.

Now that the concept of language has been clarified, it is equally important to revise and study in depth the definition of culture, which is another core concept that constitutes the framework of this document.

### **What is Culture?**

Defining culture is a task that requires deciding the side from which it is intended to be understood. This, owing to the fact that there exist a variety of definitions and contributions to this concept. Similar to language, culture is defined from different perspectives in several knowledge areas involving philosophy, anthropology, and the mentioned above. The most relevant definitions of culture for this document are the following.

Kramsch (1998, p. 10-11) states:

"Culture is defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community its members retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. These standards are what is generally called their culture. Culture is the product of socially and historically situated discourse

communities that are to a large extent imagined communities, created and shaped by language.”

An additional definition is provided by Goodenough (1957, p. 167, taken from Wardhaugh, 2002, p.219) who defines culture as the participatory responsibilities of its members. He argues that the culture of a social group is composed of certain knowledge or beliefs in order to act or behave in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves.

### **Culture Learning**

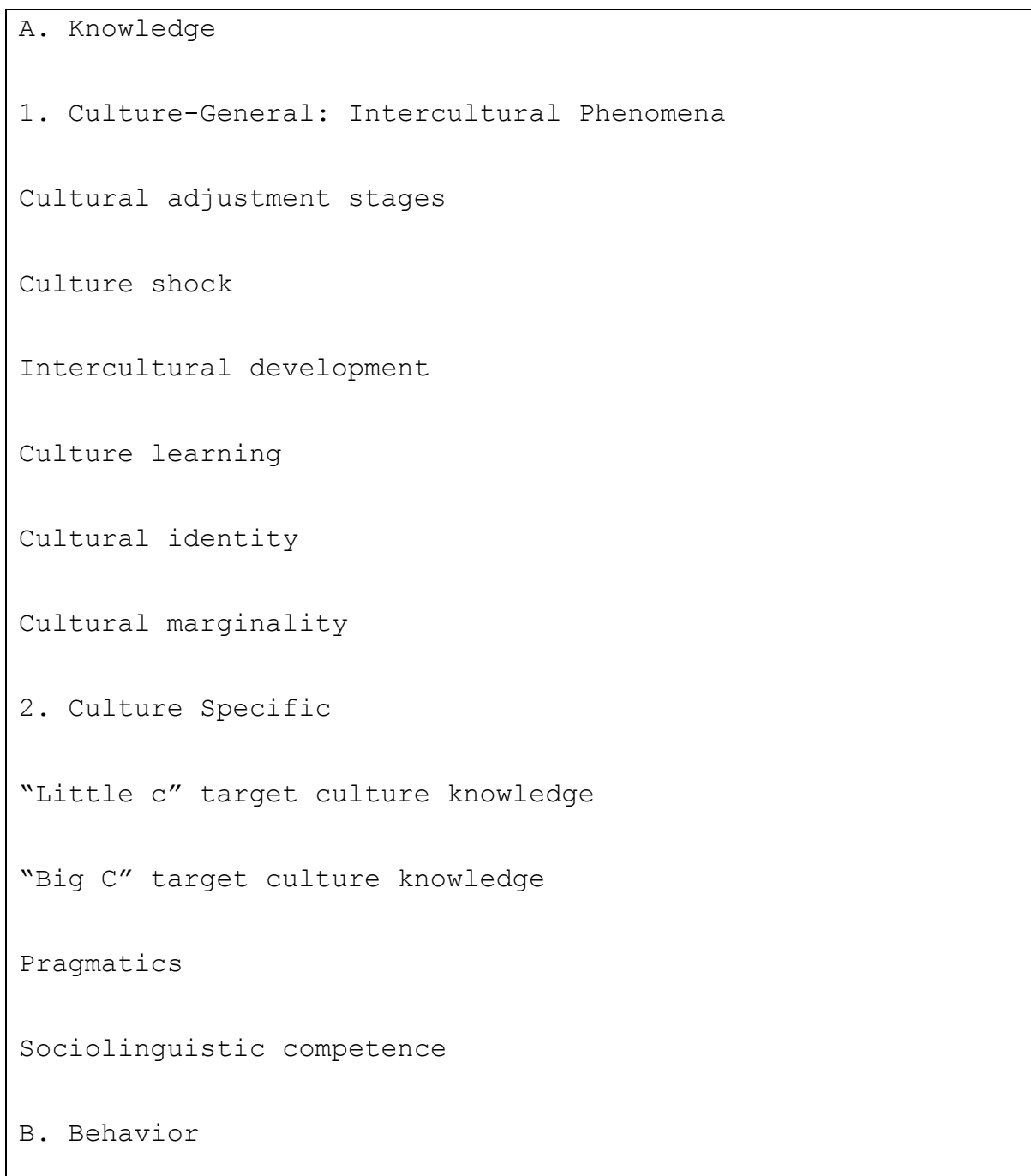
A clear explanation of culture learning is provided by Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby (2003).

“Culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively” (p. 4).

From this point of view, culture learning aims at developing intercultural competence skills. By culture-specific and culture general the authors above mentioned

explain these terms from three different perspectives that include: knowledge, behavior and attitudes. They are shown in figure 1 below. The figure was taken from Paige et al (2003).

Figure 1: A Conceptual Model of Culture Learning



1. Culture General: Intercultural Skills

Culture learning strategies

Coping and stress management strategies

Intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural perspective-taking skills

Cultural adaptability

Transcultural competence

2. Culture Specific: Target Culture Skills

Little "c" culture-appropriate everyday behavior

Big "C" culture-appropriate contextual behavior

C. Attitudes

1. Culture General

Positive attitude toward different cultures

Positive attitude toward culture learning

Ethno relative attitude regarding cultural difference

2. Culture Specific

Positive attitude toward target culture

Positive attitude toward target culture persons

Culture-specific learning makes reference to the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a given "target culture," i.e., a particular culture group or community. Culture-general learning, on the other hand, refers to knowledge and skills that are more generalizable in nature and transferable across cultures (Paige et al, 2003).

In some classrooms, culture tends to be seen as knowledge that is learned as something additional to the target language class topics; as curious facts, or as complementary information to relate to language. However, culture is not simply a body of knowledge but rather a framework in which people live their lives and communicate shared meanings with each other. Thus, teachers need to ensure that students are provided with the opportunity to go beyond the typical understanding of culture and let them explore the dynamics of culture, how to learn culture and become more competent in their language learning processes.

In order to arrive at the end of the definition of the key concepts that are the central focus of this document, the next section will explain the definition of context as a way to have a clear idea of its relation with the previously studied concepts.

**What is Context?**

Byram (1988) suggests there is no function of language independent of the context where it is used. Therefore language always refers to something beyond itself: the cultural context.

The cultural context permits to define the patterns of language that are used when certain individuals gather around given circumstances at a particular time and place. This combination of elements always has a cultural meaning which influences language use. Thus, understanding the context means consequently acquiring or using a specific behavior appropriate to the circumstances of a certain context.

Going beyond the sole definition of context Gudykunst and Kim (1992) explain an additional definition of context by providing two kinds of this concept which are considered to be essential in intercultural encounters. They are internal and external contexts. External context emphasizes the variety of locations or settings where interaction takes place and the meanings society attaches to them. For example, two people might talk to each other more formally in an office setting than if they were to meet outside at a bar or at a restaurant because the culture perceives the workplace as a more formal and professional, rather than social,

setting. External context, therefore, refers to social meaning on the grand scale, i.e., "the ways in which a particular culture group construes the various settings for human interaction and communication" (Paige et al, 2003). On the other side, internal context makes reference to the cultural meanings that people themselves bring into an encounter. It is the internal context that creates the conditions for understanding or misunderstanding among members from different cultures because, as Hall (1976) clarifies, there are many cultural factors influencing the way people perceive situations and each other; these range, for example, from how far they stand apart during a conversation to how much time they are willing to spend communicating (Paige et al, 2003)

Culture is key to all of the types of context mentioned by these authors and researchers. It is not the context itself that modifies language use or how the interacting people behave, what does so is the meaning associated with that context, and that meaning is determined by the culture. It is essential, therefore, for language learners to also be effective culture learners. They must know how to "read" the context. This suggests that language instruction must provide opportunities for students to be exposed to, or better yet, immersed in the target culture in order to gain skills in



'detecting' the cultural meanings of time, place, person, and circumstances.

As a way of concluding what has been said up to this point, it is possible to state that a major priority for language teachers is to raise awareness about the importance of constructing a better understanding of the concepts of language, culture and context because that is what may determine the approach or pedagogical ways to introduce them in our profession and to find better ways to teach them in an integrative way.

Additionally it is believed by this research paper's author that teachers need to teach culture. Although in EFL settings like Pasto it may seem difficult it is advisable as it was seen above, culture plays an important role in the development of language learning process.

### **Relationship between Language and Culture**

Understanding the essence of how culture and language are related is central to the process of learning another language. For instance, the need of learning a language by integrating the culture is based on the idea of communicating in a more efficient way for cultures express the individual's world views. In this sense, culture and language learning

involve a dynamic relationship between the situation and the actors in which cultural context, prior experience, and other factors come into play (Street, 1993). Thus, culture being put at the core of language education means enabling students to become culture learners and shift from a traditional way of language learning to a new and integrated approach that may lead to significant learning experiences.

In this sense, as educators, recognizing that a relationship between language and culture does exist, leads us to consider how this understanding can apply to language education and language policy.

Let us see a few more examinations of the relationship between these two concepts in order to have a further idea of the relevance and close linking between language and culture.

Through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality (Kramsch, 1998). We can see how this is true with the many artifacts that cultures and social groups around the world come out with throughout history, culture creates meanings that are expressed by language orally or in written form such as literature works, arts, music, poetry, and the like. In addition, language symbolizes cultural reality because language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value and speakers

identify themselves through the use of language. They view their language as a symbol of their social identity.

Kramsch (1998) asserts that culture imposes rules on language users. We can see this reflected in reality when individuals see themselves involved as part of a social group (family, school, neighborhood, ethnic affiliation) they develop a common way of viewing the world by interacting with the other members of the same group and at the same time they develop rules for speaking, behaving and addressing other individuals in a certain group.

Those ways of viewing the world are inherently interpreted and transmitted or might be modified by the use of the language shared by the members of that culture.

### **Teaching Language and Culture**

In developing a professional stance to language teaching, it is important to consider how language as code and language as social practice are balanced in the curriculum. Following, this section will explore a teaching methodology when culture is the priority.

Crawford-Lange & Lange (1984), Kramsch (1993), Seelye (1994), and, particularly, Byram (1988) suggest a methodology which is in accordance with Paige's definition of culture

learning in that it is divided in three fundamental learning processes: (1) the learners' exploration of their native culture; 2) the discovery of the relationship between language and culture, and 3) the learning of the heuristics for analyzing and comparing cultures. Meta-awareness and cross-cultural comparison are the central task of such pedagogy. This implies providing opportunities for interaction such that "members of the host culture can impart their own epistemology, their own way of seeing things" (Jurasek, 1995, p.228) on the learner.

Considering the classroom as an environment for culture learning is usually criticized by many scholars of the subject matter. Damen (1987), for example, argues that classroom-based learning is cognitive and deductive in nature, relying far too much on rule-ordered pedagogy.

Equally important, learning becomes superficial; students limit to simply memorize the material without reflecting or integrating it into a larger cultural knowledge base. Moreover, taking into account a review of studies carried out on classroom interaction, Ellis (1992) asserts that the discourse in the average classroom is strictly controlled by the teacher, who determines who speaks, how long they speak, and when they start and stop.

This type of setting does not provide a lot of chances for students to learn how to accurately engage or disengage the communication process (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Similarly, Pica (1983) found that the formal classroom emphasizes rules, sequence, and predictable error correction by the teacher.

Naturalistic settings do not function this way. There is no clear articulation of rules, the meaning is more important than the form, and error correction rarely occurs. In line with these ideas, Jurasek (1995), Robinson & Nocon (1996) have argued that with a lack of direct cultural experience, culture learning is only "cognitive boundary crossing" (Robinson and Nocon, 1996, p. 434), the acquisition of a "scholarly skill" which leaves unexamined and unchallenged the learners' previous beliefs and attitudes. On the other hand, there is only so much foreign culture that can be "brought" into the classroom, and preserving authenticity under these conditions is a challenge in itself (Kramsch, 1993).

Opposite to the above mentioned, other authors have theorized that the classroom as an artificial community can provide some unexpected benefits for language and culture learning (Mitchell, 1988; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1993). In

particular, they set the hypothesis that the classroom is a safe environment where students can feel free to make mistakes without any lasting repercussions, in contrast to a student who is studying abroad and makes a mistake which can have enduring consequences.

This protective setting enables students to safely experiment with the language and thus encourages them to make sense of the language and culture for themselves.

Ellis (1992) argues that although there are many differences between learning environments, the discourse and learning produced depend on the roles employed by the teacher and learner, the tasks that are utilized in the classroom, and the purpose (i.e. outcome or process) of the learning. Freed (1991) reiterates this by noting that the crucial variables do not seem to be the external environment, but the internal one created by factors such as the type of instruction, the level of the class, and the individual differences associated with the teacher and the students.

This does not mean that the external context is unimportant, as each type brings different potentials and problems, but it is the interaction between external and internal context that dictates the type of learning that will occur (Freed, 1991). Breen (1985) suggests that we look at

classrooms themselves as living cultures which are interactive, differentiated, collective, highly normative, asymmetrical, inherently conservative, jointly constructed and immediately significant. Rejecting two previous metaphors (the classroom as "experimental laboratory" and the classroom as "discourse") for neglecting the "the social reality of language learning as it is experienced and created by teachers and learners" (p. 141), Breen argues that the metaphor of the classroom as "culture" or as "coral gardens" (p.142) allows us to perceive the psychological change and social events characteristic of the classroom as "irrevocably linked and mutually engaged" (p. 151). Such a perspective on classroom can help explain more fully the relationship between classroom input and learning outcomes, and is particularly relevant in the culture learning situation.

Bex (1994) suggests that "Awareness of cultural diversity can be introduced into the classroom gradually, first by developing the pupils' perceptions of the grosser differences between their own culture and that of the target language, and then by comparing linguistic variation within their own culture with linguistic variation within the target culture" (p. 60).

**How to Teach Language in Context and Integrating Culture with  
Language: A Guide**

Since the main purpose of this paper was to provide L2 teachers with effective language strategies, this section will focus on how to develop activities that integrate language learning along with culture exploration as an essential part of language learning experience in order for students to become effective and competent language users.

**Suggested activities**

Some of the activities suggested include dialogues and role-plays involving real-life and in-context use of language (idiomatic expressions, vocabulary, useful situational language, and the like).

The following are sample descriptions of adaptable activities involving the characteristics mentioned above. These were designed by the author of this document.

**Activiy 1.**

**Name of the activity.** Detect the Intruder

**Main goal.** By means of this task students will be able to identify and detect the odd elements that are being used in a given dialogue and reconstruct the same by using the



correct language or vocabulary that fits the context where the dialogue is taking place.

**Language.** Depending on the level of the class, different vocabulary and expressions considered important for the teacher may be used.

**Level.** All

**Materials.** Scraps of paper.

**Description.** In separate scraps of paper write different words that represent different situations, persons and language. For instance, for situations you can write: a phone call, a party, meeting a new friend, asking for directions; for persons you can write: friends, strangers, boss and employee, etc.; finally, for language you can write formal or informal. The idea is that you have all these words in different bags or containers so that the participants choose one word per bag. This activity can be done in pairs or more depending on the teacher's interests. Ask two students to volunteer and tell them, or one of them, to pick up three cards only, one per each bag. They will have to create a dialogue in which they include the elements they have in their cards. At this point you can allot a few minutes for students to think and plan their dialogue and you can help

them with vocabulary or language they might need. Once students present their dialogue, it is now turn for the rest of the class to detect the context, language and persons that they perceived in the dialogue. After this point, students also have to decide if the elements they used were appropriately related or if one of the elements needs to be changed (e.g. the language used was not accurate for the situation because it was a formal phone call between a boss and their secretary and they used slang to address each other).

**Assessment of the activity.** Highlight the importance of being able to “read” the context of a given speaking situation in order to communicate effectively and to express our ideas in a better way. You can ask students to make a summary or a flow chart of the different expressions and language that is used in each of the contexts that you bring into your class.

Another kind of activities that can be implemented to teach cultural points inside the classroom are known as meta-cognitive activities including making comparisons between the native culture and the target culture on specific topics such as arts, food, music, politics, and education among others.

**Activity 1.**

**Name of the activity.** Managing to be polite around the world.

**Main goal.** Raise awareness about the different social customs around the world

**Level.** All (adaptable)

**Materials.** HSBC culture ads (videos about cultural differences around the world, which are available on youtube), online search engines (Google, Yahoo, Wikipedia, etc), pictures and stationery supplies (scissors, paper, glue, etc.); a world map.

**Language:** useful expressions and phrases to make generalizations: you are expected to, it is traditional to, it is (perfectly) acceptable to, it is normal to; modal verbs: should, should not, can, cannot, must, etc.

**Description.** This class will be very helpful to teach modal verbs, phrases to make generalizations and to learn about cultural differences around the world. Start the class by showing a map of the world (it can be a poster in physical form or projected with a video beam). In order to draw your students' attention start by eliciting from your students ideas about social customs they know from other countries and

then ask them why it is important to know about cultural differences. At this point you can raise awareness about this point and tell them about how important learning about other culture can be when you travel in order to display an appropriate behavior in a host culture or country. As a way to link the previous idea or to strengthen this point of view you can show a few videos from Youtube of HSBC culture ads. Students watch videos and discuss the different social customs around the world. After this, divide students in groups and ask them to choose a country they would like to visit. Then, ask them to research about social customs in that country and make notes on what they find. Ask them to make a brochure indicating the kind of correct behavior accepted and seen as polite in each culture. At this point you can reinforce the use of modal verbs and the language described above. To finish, you can have a roundtable in which students share their work discuss their conclusions

**The Use of Authentic Materials**

Using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows; Web sites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed

materials. Teachers can adapt their use of authentic materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. Even beginning language students can watch and listen to video clips taken from a television show in the target language and focus on such cultural conventions as greetings. The teacher might supply students with a chart, diagram, or outline to complete while they listen to a dialogue or watch a video. The teacher can also engage the students in discussion of the cultural norms represented in the segments and what these norms might say about the values of the culture. Discussion topics might include nonverbal behaviors (e.g., the physical distance between speakers, gestures, eye contact, societal roles, and how people in different social roles relate to each other). Students might describe the behaviors they observe and discuss which of them are similar to their native culture and which are not.

### **Conclusions**

The main purpose of this research paper was to carry out a deep revision of the concepts of language, culture, and culture teaching and learning as a way to guide 12 teachers on how to effectively teach culture. This was done by explaining the importance of developing cultural competence

among L2 students and not only communicative competence, which is the usual approach used in language learning environments. As illustrated above, language and thought interact constantly and linguistic competence is not enough for learners to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999, taken from Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

In order to attain the goals suggested in this document it is implied that teachers study the needs to develop authentic materials that help to attain cultural competence. In the same manner it would be necessary to devote more time for instruction that meets the needs to create a target-culture-friendly environment capable of facilitating the learning of the L2 culture. Furthermore, it is viewed as something highly important, teachers need to be completely aware of our culture and that of the language being taught if it is desired to orient instruction based on the learning and teaching of cultural competence. Therefore, integrated studies of language and culture are needed if language learners are to become competent language users.

The creation and enforcement of an integrated language policy that reflects the need for learners to be educated about both target culture(s) and language(s) is needed if

language learners are to be expected to achieve any degree of real competency in any language.

Many teachers and students seem to lose sight of the fact that knowledge of a grammatical system [grammatical competence] has to be complemented by culture-specific meanings [communicative or cultural competence] (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994, p. 4, taken from Thanasoulas, 2001).

As a way to summarize, this document gathered significant data and literature that supported the main idea of this research paper which was to demonstrate the importance of developing not only linguistic competence but also cultural competence in the L2 classroom. As a way to show how to effectively integrate this new approach in L2 instruction, this document suggested a series of strategies, suggestions and activities that can be adapted in order to base L2 classes on learning about culture which is necessary if students are to become the new kind of learner ready to understand and speak to the world.

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