
THE NEED TO INCREASE EFL LEARNERS' CULTURAL AWARENESS AT CHIRCHIK STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7879114>

Nilufar Kurbanova

EFL teacher at Chirchik State University

E-mail: kurbanova.nilufar@cspi.uz

miss_alisa85@inbox.ru

Abstract

The main topic of this article is how language and culture interact. Culture and language are intertwined. Because any language is an essential component of its culture, it is impossible to learn the target language properly if one is not aware of the cultural contexts. Additionally, there can be misunderstandings between speakers whose first language is not English and speakers whose first language is English. According to the author, students at Chirchik State Pedagogical university and other Uzbekistan EFL programs still lack an essential cultural component in their foreign language curricula. Therefore, learning English at Chirchik Pedagogical university should focus on both language acquisition and cultural understanding. English teachers in schools are required not only to teach language but also to impart cultural background knowledge and further to effectively deal with the relationship between language and culture in order to improve students' sensitivity to cultural differences between the West and the East and to raise their cultural awareness. This article begins by discussing the need of incorporating cultural awareness into English instruction in schools. It then goes on to highlight some typical cultural grammatical errors made by English language learners at Chirchik State Pedagogical university .

Keywords.

EFL learners, cultural difference, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity

Introduction

It is well acknowledged that culture and language are intertwined. No foreign language program can teach language and its culture separately. One could consider language to be a verbal representation of culture. We are all aware that learning a language requires comprehending not only the four language skills but also some aspects and traits of the culture. Intercultural communication is a necessary component of international communication, and doing so almost

certainly exposes us to culturally specific issues. Every language has this kind of distinction, such as where actions take place. For instance, apologies, refusals, suggestions, compliments offered and accepted, etc. Many English-learning students still respond to what is spoken in English in ways that are influenced by their native cultures. As a result, through this study, the author will explore the significance of raising EFL learners' cultural awareness as well as some common cultural linguistic errors made by students of Chirchik Pedagogical university. Previous studies in the same area have been conducted by EngKeeSia (International Management, Management Development Institute of Singapore, 501 Stirling Road, Singapore 148951(2015) in the study student motivation, Intercultural competence and transnational higher education system in Uzbekistan was discussed (a case study) .

The study placed a strong emphasis on the description of the difficulties teachers have when imparting the target culture, but they paid less attention to the examination of the cultural linguistic errors made by students. Apart from student motivation, professional teacher development courses were mentioned as a good initiative to develop cultural awareness in the target language and the learning outcomes. In order to increase the students' cultural awareness while studying English as a foreign language, the researcher will explore the cultural language errors made by students as EFL learners at Chirchik Pedagogical university. Students must be able to employ the language's structure, such as its grammar, in the right cultural circumstances in order to fully operate in that language. Unfortunately, training in foreign languages in Uzbekistan classrooms is only concerned with linguistic proficiency, which frequently emphasizes the structure of the language. Because of this, even when kids have been learning the foreign language since they were in primary school, their communicative talents cannot grow. The emphasis should instead be on teaching pupils the social and cultural aspects of the target language, according to Silberstain (2001, p.103), who asserts that "Grammatical knowledge alone does not guarantee communication." Students need to be taught about the cultural context of language usage only by their teachers. Without instruction on the context in which the language is used, pupils may acquire symbols that have no real meaning or they may interpret what is being taught incorrectly. When speaking the newly acquired language, the pupils may do it improperly or in the wrong cultural setting, negating the goal of language learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Language

Language is a tool for communication that helps us engage with others and convey our thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Language is a system, which implies it is made up of several parts that follow a pattern and can be understood. Language is a part of culture and a part of human behaviour, says Sapir (1921): "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desire by means of voluntarily produced symbols." The idea that language serves to convey information and express ideas is one that is frequently accepted.

According to Krech (1962), language serves the following three purposes:

1. Language serves as the main means of communication;
- 2). Language is a reflection of a person's history, culture, and personality. In turn, it influences the development of culture and personality;
- 3). The development and transfer of culture, the continuity of societies, and the efficient operation and management of social groups are all made possible by language. It is clear that language is crucial for the creation, development, and transmission of culture and language because it allows us to save meanings and experiences for later use in communication. The role of language in communication is so crucial that some academics even overestimate it. The most well-known is the linguistic determinism hypothesis, which holds that language and culture are inextricably linked. According to Nida, this idea causes major barriers to cross-cultural communication.

2. Culture

Various people may have various definitions of culture. It is important to note how ambiguous the term "culture" is. It may include various ideas put out by various academics from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, ethnography, literature, cultural studies, etc. A particular group of people's culture can be characterized by its language, religion, cuisine, social customs, music, and arts, among other things. The Centre for Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further and defines culture as a set of socially taught cognitive conceptions, shared patterns of behavior and relationships, and knowledge. Thus, it might be interpreted as the development of a group identity supported by particular social patterns inside the group. The word "culture" is derived from a French term that itself is derived from the Latin verb "colere," which meaning to cultivate and nourish or to tend to the ground and grow. "It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth," Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London,

told Live Science. Culture is characterized by how people live in an anthropological perspective (Chastain, 1988, p. 302). According to Brown (1994, p. 170), culture is a deeply ingrained component of the fundamental fabric of who we are, but language—the means of intercultural communication—is the culture's most obvious and accessible representation. As a result, a person's worldview, sense of self, and a

shift from one culture to another can cause problems with how people think, act, feel, and communicate. Similar to this, Tang (1999) advances the idea that culture and language are inextricably linked. He contends that in order to think effectively in a language, one must be able to speak it, and mind is a very potent tool. Language is the lifeblood of the nation and its citizens. Since language and culture are closely interwoven, we should instead consider the pros and cons of intentional vs accidental exposure to culture rather than whether it should be taught as a subject in foreign language curricula.

3. Cultural Awareness

The importance of cultural awareness has grown in modern language teaching as a result of a growing understanding of the interdependence of language and culture and the necessity of preparing students for cross-cultural dialogue. The basis of communication is cultural awareness, which involves the capacity to step back from oneself and become conscious of our cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. Why do we behave in such a manner? How do we interpret reality? Why do we respond that way specifically? When we must communicate with individuals from other cultures, cultural understanding becomes crucial. Because people see, interpret, and judge things in different ways, what is generally regarded suitable behaviour in one culture may not be in another. Different people define cultural awareness differently. Being aware of the similarities and contrasts within and between cultural groups is what the NCCC refers to as "cultural awareness" (Goode, 2001, updated 2006). Intercultural effectiveness, according to Winkelman (2005), begins with understanding of cultural differences and how they affect behaviour. According to him, "cultural self-awareness includes recognition of one's own cultural influences upon values, beliefs, and judgements, as well as the influences derived from the professional's work culture In today's culture, contacts in a wide range of industries, such as business, science, and technology, are becoming more and more common. People from all across the world wish they could converse with people from other cultures. It is crucial to keep teaching about culture in order to prevent unforeseen misunderstandings that result from a lack of

understanding of cultural differences. Since culture and language are interdependent, English language instruction must include culture instruction.

Despite the fact that educators have long understood the value of teaching about culture, it is not widely practised in schools. The benefits of cultural education are evident throughout the entire English teaching curriculum. First of all, teaching culture is very beneficial to language learning and language acquisition. Culture lessons will undoubtedly be a helpful adjunct to English language instruction since, as we discussed above, the structure and expression of the English language are tied to culture. The process of acquiring cultural knowledge occurs concurrently with the improvement of language skills. Secondly, educating pupils about culture satisfies their interest in the vastly different surroundings of the host nation. The people and the country in which the language is used are what English language learners are most interested in learning about, not just the language's sounds. In order to accomplish the purpose of language education, educators might exploit learners' increasing sensitivity to cultural factors as well as their motivation. Thirdly, learning a new language requires interacting with old and new information as well as understanding the meaning of words, phrases, and texts. Learning English well entails more than just mastering the language's syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary; it also requires understanding the culture, which reflects ideas, practises, way of life, and beliefs. . As a nation's characteristic, culture includes not only its history and cultural background but also its attitude on life, way of living, and modes of thought (Deng & Liu, 1989). HU (1989) also made the point that culture and language acquisition should be done at the same time. Otherwise, language will tear culture apart. Furthermore, the issue of culture is more significant than the issue of language. Learning a language well will be quite challenging if students only focus on learning the letter itself and disregard the meanings hidden behind. Grammar errors are known to be easily detected by listeners while yet being acceptable to them. Failure in practise, however, is handled differently. The listener will assume that the speaker is rude if the phrases are used incorrectly. The capacity to utilise the English they are learning correctly is one of the goals of English learning, and culture can help extend learners' horizons. Language carries culture, and cultural sensitivity can help learners better grasp the cultures of English-speaking nations. English language learners should have a thorough understanding of the target language's cultural context in order to really appreciate it. The improvement of cultural knowledge may help people speak English more fluently.

Yuliah(2015,The Necessity of Improving Cultural Understanding and Awareness, p. 124.) states that the majority of young men are quite shy when expressing their feelings to their partners. The phrase "I love you" won't be used directly. They'll come up with another way to say what they're feeling. Little girls will ask God for a happy family in their prayers. Young girls won't clearly voice their desires. People's introversion and indirect behaviour is a result of their exposure to Confucianism and the feudal mentality. As stated by Confucianism, "the enjoyment is expressed without being licentious and the grief is expressed without being hurtfully excessive" (Zhu, 2007, p. 163). The ideology of feudalism is traditional. Both have an impact on people's personalities. From this vantage point, learning a language, including learning about culture, offers pupils a good chance to broaden their knowledge base.

C. METHODOLOGY

The participants and process subsections of this section are each given a full account below.

a. Participants

The students who were taking Intercultural Communication course in the second semester participated in this study. 17 Foreign language and literature Faculty students took part in the discussion.

Procedure

A qualitative methodology was adopted in this study. The process started with the drafting of questions or statements that the students were required to respond to or answer. These questions or statements dealt with topics such as complimenting someone, addressing them, inviting them, recalling prior activities, expressing hate, and expressing feelings. The researcher conducted interviews with the students to get their responses to the questions requested of them for the purpose of this study. The errors made by the pupils were subsequently revealed through an analysis of the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Any person who speaks a language that is not their first will inevitably make blunders. It is an international phenomena. However, if we focus on particular cultural and linguistic groups, we can see specific types of errors that are typical of that group. The following are some typical cultural linguistic errors made by EFL students at Chirchik state Pedagogical university

1. A: You look lovely
2. B: Really (Incorrect)

3. B: I appreciate your compliment. (Correct)

In this instance, speaker B responds inappropriately to speaker A's compliment. B doesn't seem to think she's beautiful. When someone receives a compliment in English, she should express gratitude for the compliment.

2. A: Your watch is very good,

B: This watch is inexpensive. (Wrong)

B: Oh, Appreciate it. (Correct) In this example, speaker B likewise receives praise for her watch, but he doesn't express gratitude.

4. A: Let's go out to dinner.

B: Yes, thanks. I'm full. (Incorrect)

B: No, thanks. I'm full (Correct)

In this situation, the speaker was invited to join the dinner but declined because he was already full. When we decline an offer in English, we are supposed to say No, thanks, yet the speaker responded with Yes, thanks.

5. A: You look very young. (Wrong)

B: Wow, you look fantastic for your age (Correct)

Here, the speaker employs a term to compliment a man on how good he looks for his age. He used the erroneous words, "You look so young," nevertheless. It is as a result of cultural influence.

6. Welcome, Mr. (Wrong)

7. Good morning, sir. (Correct)

Uzbekistan residents typically refer to foreigners as Mister without using their names. In English, it is rude to address someone as Mr. without using his name. 'Sir' is the proper way to address a guy in English.

8. Did you visit Uzbekistan before (Inaccurate)

Have you ever visited Uzbekistan before? (Correct)

Present Perfect is a difficult concept for the students at Chirchik state Pedagogical university. Because of their culture, they employ Simple Present instead of Present Perfect Tense when requesting someone's past travel history.

9. My hair was cut yesterday. (Inaccurate)

10. I cut my hair yesterday (Inaccurate)

Yesterday, I had my hair cut. (Correct)

When attempting to convey something done by someone, EFL students frequently make mistakes. I cut my own hair when I say that. When I say, "I have my hair cut," it usually refers to a hairdresser doing the cutting for me.

11. I recently visited a mall. (Wrong)

I visited a mall yesterday. (Correct)

Tense confusion is another error students make when speaking in English. They lack specific tenses markers. The entire conversation is in the present tense. When they discuss a past event, they do so in the present tense.

12. A: I'm not a fan of rock music.

B: Me too (Inaccurate)

B: I don't either. (Correct)

The issue of determiners is another issue when speaking in English. "Too" is a negative term they use. Because of the impact of their culture, people employ the same word—"too" both for a negative and positive statement—to indicate their agreement or disagreement with an idea.

13. A: You didn't show up for class yesterday, did you?

B: Yes. (Wrong)

B: No. (Right)

The students at Chirchik state Pedagogical university likewise struggle with the tag questions. Their society, which consistently affirms the negative assertion, has an impact on them.

14. A: .I'm boring to go to the canteen . (Wrong)

A: I don't want to go to the canteen because I'm bored.(Correct)

B: What's the reason?

A: The meals are the same each day.

Instead of using the word "ed," the pupils use the word "-ing." The line would be appropriate in some circumstances, but it's more likely that students mean "I'm bored" when they use it. It can be very confusing to mix up -ing and -ed participles because the former explain how individuals feel, while the latter describe the things or persons that make those feelings.

According to the findings, the mistakes made by the students were frequently brought on by their tendency of responding to the language they are learning in their own tongue. Like when someone compliments you but doesn't say "thank you," when you say "yes" to an invitation or an offer then decline it, or when you use the present simple tense to describe past events.

CONCLUSION

Language is a significant part of culture, a supporter of culture, and a key tool for communicating messages, which are intrinsically linked to culture. In varied degrees, learning a second language also requires understanding that language's culture. On the other hand, culture has an impact on and shapes language. It illustrates culture. The most significant factors in cross-cultural communication that lead to miscommunication, discomfort, and even conflict are cultural differences. Therefore, knowledge about cultural communication should be given more attention by both foreign language students and teachers.

Language and the use of language cannot be divorced from culture, according to Yuliah(2015) in *The Necessity of Increasing Cultural Awareness*. One needs to comprehend culture if they wish to learn a language successfully. Due to the unique interaction between language and culture, learners must fully appreciate the value of culture while they learn the language. Thus, English teachers should not only help students to develop their four fundamental English skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – by teaching them the language, but also help them to become more culturally aware through a range of efficient means. They ought to make every effort to increase students' cultural understanding while fostering their language proficiency. All of the language instruction should incorporate cultural understanding. Students can enhance the quality of their English learning and prevent making errors in cross-cultural communication by doing this. That kind of teaching methodology makes up for the shortcomings of conventional foreign language instruction from a cultural perspective. Teachers who have a significant impact on this process should tailor their instruction of cultural background information about English-speaking nations to the needs of their students. Teachers must employ effective teaching strategies to increase their students' cultural awareness in order to help them learn about the cultural norms of English-speaking nations and how they live. Some of these strategies include making good use of teaching resources, assisting students in comparing vocabulary from various cultures, and encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities.

REFERENCES:

1. Brown, H.D. (1994). US: Prentice Hall Regents, "Principles of Language Learning and Teaching."
2. K. Chastain. (1998). *Gaining proficiency in a second language*. United States: HBJ Publishers. the Murshed Haider Choudhury. (2013).

3. Implications, difficulties, and strategies for teaching culture in EFL. Saudi Arabia's King Khalid University.
4. Liu, R. Q., and Deng, Y. C. (1989). Culture and language. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing.
5. T. Goode. (2006) revision of 2001. Crucial definition. National Centre for Cultural Competence, Centre for Child and Human Development, George Town University, Washington, D.C.
6. Trang Thi Tuy Nguyen, 2017. Learner outcomes for integrating culture into language teaching and learning. Vietnam's Kon Tun College. Edward Sapir, 2000. An introduction to the study of language. a. New York. Bartleby.com.
7. June 2019, Volume 5, Number 1 129 Silberstein, S. (2001). Social Linguistics, in R. Carter and D. The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages is published by Nunan. Press of Cambridge University, Cambridge.
8. Romana Tang. (1999). A Reflection on "Culture" and Its Place in Foreign Language Classrooms. TESL Journal on the Internet, Vol. No. 8 of Volume V, August 1999. <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Tang-Culture.html>.
9. M. Winkelman. (2005). Cultural Sensitivity, Competence, and Awareness. Eddie Bowers Publishing Co, Inc. ZHU, Z. Peosta, Iowa. L. (2007). Confucian epochs. The Changan Press, Beijing